

The Friendly Companion



“For He saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth...”
Job 37. 6.

January 2012

Editor: Mr. G.D. Buss, "Bethany", 7 Laines Head, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 1PH.

Tel: 01249 656910. Email: gdbuss@tiscali.co.uk

All correspondence to be sent to the Editor.

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

This month is the first of the year 2012. So on January 1st we are reminded again that another year has passed and we have entered upon another year of which only God knows what its history will be. Paul, writing to the Corinthians about a matter he was not sure about said: "God knoweth." To those who fear God, the fact that God knows is their comfort. He has promised 'to bring the blind by a way that they know not, and lead them in paths that they have not known.' So may it be for us as it is in John 10. 4: "When He (the Good Shepherd) putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them." All the sheep need to do is to keep their eye on the Shepherd and follow His steps. This is what Solomon meant in Proverbs 4 when he said: "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee (*that is not to be asleep!*). Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left; remove thy foot from evil."

When I was a lad in the Sunday School, the superintendent, who was a most godly man, would give us a 'motto card' for each year, on which would be a Scripture text, which he hoped and prayed would be a guide to us that year. The words just quoted from Proverbs 4 would be a good 'motto text' for the year 2012. But we need God's grace to follow the sound advice.

In the early years of the 20th Century, a young lad named Harry Salkeld, was growing up, who attended with his parents what is called a low church of England. Here many godly people worshipped every Lord's Day. One of these, an old man, would stand at the door and speak especially to the young hearers as they left. He would mention a Scripture text to them which he hoped they would remember. One Lord's Day at the end of the morning service, young Harry got to the door, and this kindly old man looked down at him and said: "I want you to remember this text: 'Hold Thou me up and I shall be safe.'" (Psalm 119. 117)

No doubt, young Harry had heard him mention many other texts, which had been soon forgotten. However this one stuck fast in Harry's mind 'as a nail in a sure place.' God fixed it there and it became his first prayer.

So if our motto this year is Proverbs 4. 25-27, may our prayer be Psalm 119. 117. If God should fix these as a nail in a sure place in our hearts, we can be sure that those things about 2012, which only 'God knoweth' will be for our good.

With every best wish for a Happy New Year.

Your sincere friend and Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

The beautiful snow scene on our front cover this month shows the handiwork of our Creator, God. Every flake of snow is different, and yet when examined closely each tiny flake is a hexagon (i.e. having six sides to it).

The Word of God is likened to many things, among which is the snow. In Isaiah 55. 10,11 we read these words: "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, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, so shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

When the snow falls, for a little while it remains on the earth. Up in the mountains of course it remains much longer than down in the valleys where it is warmer. In this way God very kindly retains the snow as an icy reservoir of moisture that will be needed by the crops later when the spring gets under way. Then under the warmth of the sun the ice melts and releases the water for the good of the earth.

God's Word is often sown in the wintertime in a spiritual sense. For example, before a sinner is born again, it is winter in the soul. There is no feeling, the heart is hard, and no response to the Word. Yet during that time, many can

remember how godly parents, Sunday School teachers, and ministers brought the Word of God to the mind. Many verses perhaps had to be learned and memorized. But like the icy snow there seemed no effect as those who watched and prayed over you looked on. But a time came when the Sun of Righteousness dawned in the soul. Then the warmth of these sacred beams melted the heart and the Word of truth stored in the memory sank into the heart and began to bear its fruit.

Again sometimes it is wintertime in the experience of a child of God. It was with Joseph in his many trials. He had the Word of God but it seemed that it was buried beneath a long wintertime! But when the Lord's time came, then the Word was fulfilled and the promise realised, and the winter yielded to the spring time of his deliverance.

So we see the snow has its place in God's dealings, and perhaps the Word of God for us this month is this: "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1. 4).

"I HAVE AND I WILL"

Here is some helpful guidance from Matthew Henry on this text: "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies" (Psalm 119. 59).

1. "I have sinned." Psalm 41. 4.
"I will do no more." Job 34. 32.
 2. "I have done very foolishly." 2 Samuel 24. 10.
"I will behave myself wisely." Psalm 101. 2.
 3. "I have ... perverted that which was right." Job 33. 27.
"I will never forget Thy precepts." Psalm 119. 93.
-

Even a heathen could remark: "I suppose that many might have attained to wisdom had they not thought they had already attained it."
C. Bridges

*FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES***RAHAB HIDES THE SPIES**

Joshua sent two men to spy on Jericho, a city in Canaan. They went into a house on the town wall, where a woman named Rahab lived. She had heard of the great power of the God of Israel. Perhaps she hoped to learn more about Him. Soon the king of Jericho tried to find the spies at Rahab's house, but she hid them on the roof. Rahab told the spies: *"I know that the LORD hath given you the land ..."* She also said: *"... the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath."* In return for her kindness, she asked them to save her life and all her family when they took the city.

Rahab helped the spies escape through a window at night. She let them down the wall by a cord. They told her to bind that red cord in the window as a sign of their promise to save her life. Rahab quickly did so. She and her family must stay inside that house with the red cord in the window. How often she must have looked to be sure it was firmly tied there!

When the spies returned to Joshua, they said: *"Truly the LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land ..."*. They told him about Rahab and how the people of Canaan feared Israel.

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Joshua send two men to do?
2. Who lived in the house they went into?
3. What did she ask them to do in return for her kindness?

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. *Contributed*

ANSWERS TO DECEMBER QUESTIONS

1. Joshua.
2. The LORD thy God.
3. The land of promise.

*“By faith
the harlot
Rahab
perished
not ...”*

*Hebrews
11. 31.*

BIBLE LESSONS**TEACHINGS OF JESUS**

The following day (Tuesday), Jesus and His disciples again made their way over the well-known road between Bethany and Jerusalem. As they journeyed, they came to the fig tree that Jesus had cursed just the day before. With wonder and awe the disciples stared at the tree. Not only were the leaves dried and shrivelled up, but the roots were also. Finally, Peter said: "*Master, behold, the fig tree which Thou cursedst is withered away.*" What a witness that Jesus was truly ALMIGHTY GOD!

Jesus taught an important lesson from the fig tree to His disciples. He told them that whatever troubles or needs they had, if they prayed in faith, the power that dried up the fig tree would do wonders for them.

When they arrived at the temple, how different the atmosphere was from the night before! The buyers and sellers were no longer there. No doubt it was much quieter, so the people were able to hear the lessons Jesus taught them without all the distractions. What a mercy it is when the Lord takes away all the distractions when we go to His house.

As Jesus began to teach the people, the chief priests and elders came to Him. They demanded to know who had given Him authority to cast out the sellers and moneychangers the previous evening and now to teach the people. However, Jesus knew that they intended to use His answers to accuse Him and put Him to death.

Calmly Jesus said that He would also ask them one question. If they answered Him, then He would tell them by what authority He did those things: "*The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?*" What confusion the chief priests were in! They did not expect such a question. If they answered that John was a true prophet, Jesus would ask why they did not believe him. If they answered that he was a false prophet, the people would be angry with them: for they believed John was a prophet of God. They dare not give an answer. Jesus had confounded them.

Then Jesus spent the day teaching many practical and solemn lessons to the people through parables. First, He told them of a certain man who had two sons and said to the first: “*Son, go work to day in my vineyard.*” However, this son rebelled and refused to go. How terrible! What a wicked son to act in such a way! What a picture of us, who have refused to obey God’s Law!

When the father asked the second son to go work in the vineyard, he replied: “*I go, Sir.*” How different from the first son! We would think that this son loved his father more. What a good example he seemed to set!

Yet, the parable did not end there. The Lord said of the first son: “... *but afterward he repented, and went.*” He thought on his ways and was ashamed. He was sorry for what he had said and how he had acted. What about the second son? He said that he would go work in the vineyard, but the Lord declared that he: “... *went not.*”

Jesus asked: “*Whether of them twain did the will of his father?*” That was an easy question; even the little children could answer.

Then Jesus explained that the two sons were two classes of people. The first son represented those people whom the chief priests and the Pharisees called publicans and sinners. They repented at the preaching of the Gospel. The second son represented the chief priests and Pharisees who thought they had always kept the commandments of God and needed no repentance.

You can read about this in Matthew 21 verses 18 to 32 and Mark 11 verses 20 to 33.

QUESTIONS:

1. What happened to the fig tree Jesus cursed?
2. What did the first son do “afterward”? (3 words)
3. Who did the first son represent? (3 words)
4. Who did the second son represent?
5. Which son really loved the father more?

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. Who is this?
2. The fig tree.
3. The house of prayer.
4. A den of thieves.
5. Praise and thanksgiving.

G. L. Tenbroeke

A MOST UNLIKELY PLACE

In the time of the Reformation, when the light of the gospel was beginning to dispel the darkness of Rome's false religion, a man, who by his accent was definitely from Germany, was heard preaching the gospel to a man who kept a bookshop. His grasp of the truth was so clear and his words so forceful that one of the bystanders went to him and asked how he had come to know the truth so clearly.

"In the very last place, you would think," he replied.

His account was as follows.

His parents were Roman Catholic, and had brought him up to believe what this church taught. However as soon as he was old enough he threw away all pretence of religion and went to great lengths in sin. So much so, that even his ungodly companions trembled at some of the language and deeds he engaged in.

One day he was thinking about the life he had been living and he had to acknowledge that it was one of extraordinary evil. For the first time his conscience was stirred with the thought, that after all his atheism there might after all be a place of eternal punishment for sinners. If such a place existed, he pondered, then of all the people on the face of the earth it was certain that he would be found there on account of his wicked life. This sobering thought so gripped him that immediately he left his sinful life and companions and determined, if it were at all possible, to find a way of salvation from the inevitable punishment of his sins. He decided to find

the strictest monastery and submit himself to the most severe of punishments and life styles there to purge himself of the guilt which lay so heavy on his conscience. By this he hoped to find favour with God and perhaps after all escape the eternal punishment due to his sins.

With this in mind he made his way to the La Trappe Monastery in Sicily where he had heard the regime was the most severe of all monasteries. The monks here rose very early in the morning to go to their chapel, after which they ate a very simple meal and then spent the whole day working hard in the fields whatever the weather. Their beds were made as uncomfortable as possible, being made of hard knotted ropes. Punishments for any lapse were severe. "This is just the place for me to purge away my sins," thought the young seeker. He had to walk many miles over several weeks to reach La Trappe, but eventually, tired out and footsore, he reached the monastery one evening. He made for the gate at the rear of the monastery and then, with bated breath, waited while he rung the large bell which hung at the side.

After a while the door slowly opened and an old monk peered through the gap. "What do you want?" he asked the stranger at his door.

"I want to be saved," said the weary traveller.

The face of the old monk softened immediately, and he drew the young man through the door and admitted him to a small room and sat him down.

"Now tell me your story," he demanded kindly.

The young German related the sad account of his misspent life, and the horror of eternal punishment that had come upon him. He told the old monk how he had left his sinful ways and companions but felt the burden of his sins so much that he would endure any punishment on earth, and submit himself to any discipline if only his sins could be forgiven and he be delivered from the torments of hell. He ended by saying: "The harder it is, the more I shall be thankful if I may do it. Only tell

me what I am to do, and I will do it gladly.”

The old monk looked kindly upon the young seeker, of whom he was sure that the Holy Spirit had begun to work in his heart, and said to the astonishment of the young German: “There is nothing for you to do. It has already been done!”

“How can that be?” he asked in astonishment.

The reply was as follows:

“There is One who has come to earth, and even before you were born has finished all that was necessary, leaving nothing else to be done. Did you ever hear of Jesus? He is in heaven now. Why is He in heaven? Because He has finished the work He came to do. If it were not so He would still be here. He has lived the perfect life that God demands of sinners, and has paid the penalty and endured all the punishment of those who are brought to believe in Him for salvation. He has left nothing for them to do. He has done the work that you want to do already. You can stay here if you wish but the worst thing you can do is to submit yourself to all the rigour of the monastery in the false hope that this will purge away your guilt. It is as if Jesus has not done enough to save sinners and you must do something more.”

The young seeker drank in these gospel tidings with great joy, the Holy Spirit accompanying the old monk’s words so that they fastened as a nail in a sure place in his heart. For three days he stayed in the monastery listening to more of the work of the Saviour, from the unlikely lips of a monk! He then retraced his steps to Germany, and like the Mad Gadarene did as the Saviour bid him: “Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.”

The name of the old monk was never known, but he was known to the Lord, and even in that dark monastery, he had so learned of Christ, to be able to point this young sinner to the cross. Truly God’s ways are past finding out.

Adapted from ‘Strange Events in the Log Cabin’

GOD REVEALED IN HIS NAMES

JEHOVAH JIREH! He'll provide:
 No harm shall reach thee near His side,
 'Your Father knoweth all your need,'
 Before you at His footstool plead:
 Nor can a mother's pity be
 More tender than is His to thee. (Genesis 22.14)

JEHOVAH SHALOM! He is peace;
 His voice shall bid the tempest cease;
 And on thy soul a calm shall be
 As deep as once o'er Galilee. (Judges 6. 24)

JEHOVAH SHAMMAH! God is there,
 Where'er we cast on Him our care;
 Nor need we climb the mountain's brow
 To worship and before Him bow;
 If thy heart seek Him, He is nigh,
 To wipe the tear and hush the sigh. (Ezekiel 48. 35)

JEHOVAH ROPHI! He will heal,
 And all thy heart's deep yearnings feel:
 His Word reveals Him thus to be,
 The LORD; "the LORD that healeth thee!"
 (Exodus 15. 26)

JEHOVAH TSIDKENU! He'll bless,
 And feel for thee in thy distress;
 He is "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS!"
 (Jeremiah 23. 6; 33. 16)

JEHOVAH NISSI'S name shall be
 Our banner borne to victory;
 The gathering nations round it sing,
 And own Him Lord, - of kings the King;
 'All flesh shall His salvation see'
 And low before Him bend the knee!
 (Exodus 17. 15)

Friendly Companion 1899

CATERPILLARS

On recently looking at a book on insects, we came across several photographs of different caterpillars from which it was extremely difficult to distinguish between the caterpillar and the twig or leaf to which it was attached. Like many other creatures, they appear so similar to their background or plant (to which they are attached) due to their characteristic shape or colour, making them very hard to see. This is, of course, a wonderful means by which they are protected from predators.

We were reminded of a comment made recently by that arch-proponent of the false theory of Evolution, Professor Richard Dawkins, who stated that “evolution has no foresight.” As it is understood by those who believe it, the theory implies that everything we see around us today and all creatures have ‘evolved’ from something else. On this basis there should, of course, be thousands or more examples of these all around us. If what they say is true, these caterpillars had to change from what they were once, to a very specific design, to become what they are now. We presume that previously they were more visible to predators and were being eaten up. However they had to be of a detailed design in terms of shape, profile and colour, and would have had to have a liking for a particular plant which they were to mimic. But we are told that evolution has no foresight, so that could not bring about such changes which would surely require an immense amount of foresight! It is not just a haphazard series of changes that would be required, but something very specific. The poor caterpillar would only have a few weeks to do anything about it anyway, and it is entirely preoccupied with eating as much of the plant as possible, before strange things begin to happen to him and he becomes a chrysalis. So evolution cannot bring this to pass so what does explain the amazing camouflage?

You know the answer! All the above reasoning of the evolutionist is really nonsense. The simple yet profound truth is that all the wonderful things you see in nature, including the caterpillars, with all their beauty and complexity, and yet

harmony, are all the work of an Almighty, all-wise and gracious God, who made all creatures 'after their kind' and who designed them properly for their particular purpose. The psalmist said: "Oh LORD, how manifold are Thy works; in wisdom Thou hast made them all; the earth is full of Thy riches." (Psalm 104. 24)

Contributed

A PRODIGAL ATTITUDE (Luke 15. 12)

Why did the prodigal son desire to have his portion in his own hands? Was it that he might apply himself to business and trade with it and so make it more? No, he had no thought of that.

1. He was weary of his father's government, of the good order and discipline of his father's family, and was fond of liberty, falsely so-called, but indeed the greatest slavery, for such a liberty to sin is.

2. He was willing to get from under his father's eye, for that was always a check upon him and a check to him.

3. He was distrustful of his father's management.

4. He was proud of himself and had a great conceit of his own sufficiency. He thought he could manage it better than his father did and make a better figure with it. There are more young people ruined by pride than by any one lust whatsoever.

M. Henry

"ONE THING"

"One thing have I desired of the Lord ..." What was it?

"One thing I know ..." What did he know?

"One thing is needful ..." What is it?

"One thing I do ..." What did Paul do?

"One thing thou lackest" What was this lack?

I wonder how many of our readers know the answer to these questions without a reference Bible? And how many of us know to the good of our souls the answer to these important questions?

“WHAT IF MY NAME SHOULD BE LEFT OUT?”

Towards the end of the Second World War, when the forces of the United States of America were overthrowing the Japanese in the Far East, the island of Biak in New Guinea, was taken. The Japanese had been scattered, but the Americans did not know where they were. So they set up camp at sea off the coast of the island and determined to send a reconnaissance patrol on a covert three-day mission. This would be a highly dangerous expedition, not least because of the ferocity of the Japanese, and also because of the extreme humidity the radio contact was very poor. So damp was the atmosphere that it was impossible to light a normal match. Special wax matches had to be used. The expedition was to be put on shore by a landing craft and picked up after three days.

The entire company was assembled on the deck and the names of those selected for this perilous operation were to be read out. On the parade deck was Mr J. K. Stehouwer, now pastor at “Zion,” Grand Rapids. How he hoped that his name would *be left out*. How low his heart sank, when the dreaded moment came and the Commander called: “J K Stehouwer!” So he had to go, and no doubt prayerfully committed himself to the Lord for His gracious care and keeping.

As he thought on this solemn moment, he remembered that there would come a day, when he would wish his name *not to be left out!* That is the Great Day of Judgment on which the names of all of Christ’s church will be read out. How the well-known lines of our hymn resonated through his heart:

“When Thou my righteous Judge shalt come,
To take Thy ransomed people home,
Shall I among them stand?
Shall such a worthless worm as I,
Who sometimes am afraid to die,
Be found at Thy right hand?

I love to meet among them now,
 Before Thy gracious feet to bow,
 Though vilest of them all.
 But can I bear that piercing thought,
 What if my name should be left out?
 When Thou for them shalt call.”

(Our dear friend told this to the Sunday School at Grand Rapids on Lord's Day October 9th 2011) *Editor*

THE KING LEADS NATION IN DAY OF PRAYER

(The Daily Telegraph – Monday September 8th, 1941)

The King and Queen and the two princesses yesterday went to church to join with millions throughout Britain in a common act of prayer.

By the King's wish, it was a National Day of Prayer, the fourth since the war began. The response was so general that some churches were filled to overflowing, while bombed churches overcame their difficulties by holding services in halls or the open air.

In churches of all denominations people prayed for added strength and gave thanks for many gains during the second year of war, particularly for success in the Battle of Britain and for the Russian armies' stand.

There were many uniforms in these congregations. Men of British and Empire forces, Home Guards, Civil Defence workers, nurses, and women of the auxiliary services, with land workers in green jerseys, formed a mighty parade of service. In many places they marched to church with factory workers.

The B.B.C. provided a series of services, during which there were broadcasts by Church leaders, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Lang; the Archbishop of York, Dr. Temple; the Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, Dr. J.A. Gregg the Archbishop of Wales and Dr. C.A. Green.

How good it would be if our present leaders recognised the indispensable need of God's help in these perilous times. (Editor)

**TURTLES,
THE NAVIGATORS THAT NEVER GO OFF COURSE**

The following remarkable information demonstrates yet again the amazing wisdom God has given to His creatures: a wisdom which has not evolved but given exactly suited to the pattern of life God intended.

Editor

Leatherback turtles are famed for their epic voyages across the world's roughest oceans. But, until now, nobody quite appreciated just how good they were at navigation.

A study by British scientists has discovered that the gigantic females can swim for thousands of miles in a perfectly straight line.

They complete the astonishing feat during an epic journey from Central Africa to South America, following the shortest possible route across the Atlantic.

Exactly how the turtles can swim in a straight line remains a mystery to biologists. However, they are thought to use vision – relying on the position of the stars and sun – and a sense of the Earth's magnetic field.

The findings come from a study led by the Centre for Ecology and Conservation at Exeter University.

Over five years, the researchers attached satellite tracking devices to the shells of twenty-five females as they left their hatching grounds in Africa to seek food. They discovered one 4,699-mile route taking the creatures straight across the Atlantic from Gabon to the waters off southern Brazil and Uruguay in a 150-day trek.

Dr. Matthew Witt, who published the findings in the journal, "Proceedings of the Royal Society B," said: "No one has been sure about the journeys they take in the South Atlantic until now. What we've shown is that there are three clear migration routes."

Biologists hope the data will help to conserve the turtles, who spend virtually all their lives at sea and can grow to more than 6ft (2 metres) long.

SLANDER – TALEBEARING – GOSSIP

“Have you heard what has happened at such-and-such a place?” “Have you heard what so-and-so has done?” Sadly, this kind of talk is too common. He was a wise minister who, whenever confronted with this kind of question, met it with one of his own: “Is it something good you are going to tell me?”

The Word of God abounds with advice and warnings concerning the use of our tongue, “that unruly member,” as James describes it. We are told that “the words of a wise man’s mouth are gracious.” How sad it is that the people of God do not always speak graciously! A man (or woman) who would be shocked at the thought of theft or adultery seems to have so little conscience about the way he speaks.

What is slander? *Saying untrue things about a person.* It is as simple (and solemn) as that. God’s Word is very express:

“Thou shalt not raise a false report” (Exodus 23. 1).

“Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile” (Psalm 34. 13).

“Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off” (Psalm 101. 5).

But how is it possible that God’s people can be guilty of slander? Usually through careless repetition. Some story is misheard, or the person gets the wrong name, or the wrong place, or there is some exaggeration. But oh the havoc it causes! The psalmist David found that, among his many trials, “the slander of many” was not the least.

But what if the tale is true? (This is the usual justification.) Well, there are solemn warnings given against talebearing. Again the Word of God is express:

“Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people” (Leviticus 19. 16).

“And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not” (1 Timothy 5. 13).

We well remember seeing a little plaque on the wall of a

friend's house with the following inscription:

“WHERE NO WOOD IS, THERE THE FIRE GOETH OUT: SO WHERE THERE IS NO TALEBEARER, THE STRIFE CEASETH” (Proverbs 26. 20).

It was very true what cursed Ham knew about his father's dreadful fall; but *he* was the one who bore the punishment – for exposing it. And his two brothers were honoured for taking a garment and walking backwards to cover their father's nakedness.

“When free from envy, scorn and pride,
Our wishes all above,
Each can his brother's failings hide,
And show a brother's love.”

This does not mean sin is to be connived at. There is a clear, Scriptural pattern, if we hear of something that distresses us: to go directly to the person concerned and speak to him in love. (And it is always wise to begin by enquiring if what we have heard really is true.)

Idle gossip is of no value to the church of God. In days of real prosperity “they that feared the Lord spake often one *to* another” – not one *about* another. It will be remembered that John Bunyan speaks of passing a few old women outside a cottage and he says they were “gossiping the gospel.” Oh for more of this!

SLANDER – TALEBEARING – GOSSIP! May the Lord deliver us and our churches from these three evils.

You remember the story of the old lady who, before repeating anything, put it through three sieves (as she called them):

IS IT TRUE? IS IT KIND? IS IT NECESSARY?

It was said of the younger Ryland (author of “Sovereign Ruler of the skies”) that his word could be relied on as much as the Angel Gabriel's oath! “Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt” (Colossians 4. 6).

“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye

kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4. 31, 32).

The Lord Jesus never spake an untrue, an unkind, an unnecessary word.

"Brethren, suffer the word of exhortation." It is needful. We think often of the dear old godly lady who, when people were speaking to her, would say: "We do need to ask the Lord to set a watch over the door of our lips."

One final word:

"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, *this man's religion is vain*" (James 1. 26).

B. A. Ramsbottom (Gospel Standard February 1990)

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

JOHN 17 – THE PRAYER OF JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD (I)

Jesus Christ is our example

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven."

Jesus Christ is a sacred holy example to all Christian believers. He gave His disciples instruction on the important subject of prayer (Matthew 6. 5-15). In Luke 18 He instructs us that, *"men ought always to pray, and not to faint."* Here in John 17 He gives us a wonderful example and the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews directs us to Jesus Christ in His path of humiliation and suffering on earth: *"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"* (Hebrews 5. 7-9).

The oneness of the church in Jesus Christ

This prayer is not only a wonderful example for us to follow but it is full of the most precious doctrine, (teaching),

concerning the Lord Jesus Christ and His Father and the sacred eternal relationship between them, and through Jesus Christ, the church, the bride of Christ, is reconciled unto God. It is the doctrinal aspect of this prayer that I would like to bring before you. This doctrine is most beautifully expressed in the following verses: *“That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me” (John 17 21-23)*. This doctrine is a source of unspeakable joy to the living child of God. In the previous three chapters the Lord Jesus emphasises this point of doctrine. Chapters 14 – 16 of John’s Gospel are known as the valedictory discourse of the Lord Jesus because it was the last discourse He gave to His disciples before He suffered, bled, died and rose from the dead as a Surety for His beloved bride. One of the ways that Satan, the great enemy of God and the church of God on earth, seeks to undermine the children of God is to try to separate them from a sense of the love of their Heavenly Father in Christ. We find this with the disciples and it is very common among the Lord’s people today. We read of the love of the Father and His constant care for His children in Romans 8. 32: *“He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”*

In John 14, the Lord Jesus opens this sacred simple truth to His disciples and to us: *“Philip saith unto Him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father,*

and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works' sake" (John 14. 8-11). He continues: "And in that day ye shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16. 23-24).

(To be continued)

J. R. Rutt

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about DESCRIPTIONS OF BIBLE CHARACTERS. 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 write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

Which person in the Bible was described as:

1. The saint of the LORD? (Psalm 106. 16)
2. A cunning hunter, a man of the field? (Genesis 25. 27)
3. A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house? (Acts 10. 2)
4. A Friend of publicans and sinners? (Matthew 11. 19)
5. The friend of God? (James 2. 23)
6. A fruitful bough by a well? (Genesis 49)
7. A woman "full of good works and almsdeeds"? (Acts 9)
8. A burning and a shining light? (John 5)
9. The son of consolation? (Acts 4)
10. That fox?

ANSWERS TO DECEMBER QUESTIONS

1. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father."
2. "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered."
3. "Thou understandest my thought afar off."
4. "For I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them."
5. "For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, Thou knowest it altogether."

6. "For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins." (Amos 5. 12)
7. "He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names." (Psalm 147. 4)
8. "Shall not God search this out? for He knoweth the secrets of the heart." (Psalm 44. 21)
9. The Pharisees. "For that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." (Luke 16. 14-15)
10. "Thou knowest all things." (John 21. 17)

Contributed

"OPEN THOU MINE EYES" (Psalm 119. 18)

O LORD, when I Thy Word behold,
Its sacred truths to me unfold;
For I can never read aright
Without Thy gracious help and light.

Open mine *eyes*, that I may see
Thy wondrous words declared by Thee;
Open my *heart*, that I may feel
The wondrous love those words reveal.

How bright the promises do shine!
And yet I dare not call them mine
Until Thy own almighty grace
Adapts them to my needy case.

Great peace have they that love Thy law;
And I from thence would comfort draw.
I often read, and read again,
But often seem to read in vain.

O LORD, be pleased to give me sight,
That I may read with new delight;
O give me faith, Thy Word to prize,
And make me to salvation wise.

Anon

The Friendly Companion



“The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil:
He shall preserve thy soul.”
Psalm 121. 7.

February 2012

Editor: Mr. G.D. Buss, "Bethany," 7 Laines Head, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 1PH.

Tel: 01249 656910. Email: gdbuss@tiscali.co.uk

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

The Lord Jesus Christ once took a little child and set him in the midst of His disciples and said: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18. 3). One of the great truths He was stressing was that if we are taught of God, we receive the truth, as a little child would believe and trust the word of its father.

Thomas Edison was a famous American scientist, who is remembered for the invention of the light bulb with which we are all familiar, (although even he might be astonished to see the energy saving bulbs which are replacing the ones he invented). Although Thomas had a brilliant mind, he had a most simple way of explaining difficult theories. He often told his students that a simple straightforward approach to a problem was often the quickest way of getting an answer.

One day he gave an odd-shaped glass bulb to one of his assistants, and told him to find the volume of the bulb. The assistant scratched his head and looked at this odd shape in front of him. He had never been told a formula which would help him to know the answer! He noticed that the bulb was in fact made up of various shapes, and so he tried to calculate the volume of the various parts but even then he was sure he had not taken account of all the awkward corners. After some hours Thomas Edison came in and asked him how he was getting on. Seeing that his assistant was nowhere near getting an accurate result, he took the glass bulb from the assistant and filled it with water. He then poured the water into a measuring jug and straight away he could read the volume of the bulb: such a simple answer to a seemingly intractable problem. The assistant must have been annoyed with himself for not thinking of this way of finding out the answer. It was so simple once it had been shown to him!

So it is in the things of God. The Bible asks: "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto

perfection? (Job 11. 7). But when these things are seen and are revealed by God, then even the most simple of minds can receive the truth, and sometimes much quicker than those who cling to their own reason and intellect.

The supposedly great minds of our generation stumble at the first chapters in Genesis. So rather than accept what is so clearly stated there, they invent their theories based on false premises which are eagerly embraced by those who neither fear God nor wish to do so. It was this same spirit of darkness which stumbled the Pharisees when the Lord Jesus was here on earth. Rather than believe that He is the Son of God, because it did not fit in with their natural understanding, they crucified Him.

It was this truth which the Lord Jesus spake when He said: "I thank Thee O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight." True believing comes when God reveals to our hearts the truth. If God left us to our own wisdom we would never know the truth. But when He opens the eyes of our understanding, then we wonder why we did not see such a plain truth before! But of course "... faith ... is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2. 8, 9).

May God make us humble enough to receive His truth as a little child.

"Make me like a little child,
Of my strength and wisdom spoiled;
Seeing only in Thy light,
Walking only in Thy might."

With best wishes from your friend and Editor.

EDITOR'S POSTBAG

First answers to the monthly questions have been received from JOSEPH MOL, HARVEY PARISH and TOM RICHE.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

How good to see the Word of God so prominently displayed, as the stone on our front cover shows this month! Here to the open view of all who pass by is the Word of God, amidst the creation of which He is the Maker.

The words, of course, come from Psalm 121, often known as the "The Traveller's Psalm." You will notice in your Bibles that this is one of the songs of degrees. There are fifteen of these and it is supposed by many scholars that these were sung by the Israelites as they made their way to the temple to worship. Having to walk many miles in some cases, it would have taken several days. So they occupied their time well as they made their way to Jerusalem three times a year. Many of our forefathers had to walk to God's house, and many of God's servants had to walk also to preach. In John Kershaw's biography there is a vivid account of the dangers he encountered crossing the Lancashire moors. He needed Psalm 121 and, no doubt, pleaded it many times. (See the extract from his writings on Page 38.)

It is noticeable how the Psalm speaks of our eyes, our feet, our hand, by implication our head, and above all our soul. Each of these is important in our travels. The Israelite had to look ahead; watch where his feet trod; and needed his head shielding from the intense heat of noon and the extreme cold of midnight. Above all these things, he needed his soul preserving. It is a wonderful mercy to arrive safely after a journey, however long or short, but if it should be that we one day set out on a journey and never reach our destination, then the security of our soul will be the only thing that matters. That is why the verse: "He shall preserve thy soul," is the most important promise in the Psalm. May it be the most important verse to us.

Many years ago there was a man who feared God greatly. He was a farmer. One Lord's day he heard a minister preach from the words: "It is well." He was so blessed in hearing that he told his wife that if he should die suddenly, she should know

that it would be well with his soul. Just a few days later a tractor rolled back and he was killed instantly. It was a great comfort to his bereaved family to know that his soul was safe in the arms of Jesus.

I wonder how safe our soul is?

THE POWER OF PRAYER

From the northwest of Canada comes this very old story of a woman who lived in a log cabin.

Her husband was off on a trapping expedition and might not be home for days. Her nearest neighbour lived miles away. She was used to being lonely, and while she had been busying herself with domestic affairs and feeding some poultry out of doors, she had never given a thought to the coming night. Her chores more or less completed, she sat in a rocking chair by the fire – her first sit-down of the day. The light was beginning to fade. She was tired. Then she looked up at a mirror ... and saw in it the face of a man.

Instinctively she opened her lips to scream. But she stifled the cry – and, in any case there was no one to hear. For a moment she was in a panic. Then she opened the Bible which was in her lap, and read aloud a few verses, after which she prayed to her faithful God ... and as she prayed she heard a footfall and the opening of a door.

When she looked up, the man, with his hand on the latch, said: "I came here to steal. I cannot do it. You prayed the prayer my mother used to pray. You read verses I knew as a boy. Pray again that God may forgive me."

Adapted from The Friendship Book of Francis Gay

Answers to "ONE THING" in January "Friendly Companion"
are found in:

Psalm 27. 4; John 9. 25; Luke 10. 42;
Philippians 3. 13-14; Mark 10. 21.

CONSCIENCE

He who tries to quiet an awakened conscience is like the man who one night was unable to sleep because a faithful dog kept howling under his window. He called out to it and bade it lie down, went back to bed and tried to sleep, but still the howling continued. When the creature would not be quiet, the man took a gun and shot the dog in his anger.

He ought to have known that the dog wanted to tell him that burglars were trying to enter his house, and the faithful dog was trying to save his master's life. After the dog was dead and the man had fallen asleep, the burglars entered the house, stole everything of value, and ended by killing the man himself.

The devil is trying to destroy many a sinner's soul; the sinner's conscience, like the faithful dog, gives the alarm, but the sinner cries to it: "Lie down." The quieting of an awakened conscience can only be rightly done by getting rid of sin, and to get rid of sin there is but one way, that is, to be washed in the blood of the Lamb.

Author unknown

"Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD He is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else."

Deuteronomy 4. 39

Where is God? Unbelievers sometimes ask it contemptuously, while believers ask it when overwhelmed by tragedy, trial, and sorrow. Where is God? Let the Bible tell you. God is *above* His people (Psalm 91. 1-4); *beneath* His people (Deuteronomy 33. 27); *before* His people (Exodus 13. 21); *behind* His people (Isaiah 30. 21); *around* His people (Psalm 34. 7); *with* His people (Isaiah 41. 10); Matthew 28.20); and *within* His people (John 14. 23). Make time to look up these references and be assured that whatever your circumstance God is above, beneath, before, behind, around, with, and within you.

W. Ross Rainey

*FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES***CROSSING JORDAN**

The children of Israel must go over the Jordan River to enter Canaan. But the river was deep and swift and wide. How could they safely cross with all their children and tents and animals?

At God's command, the priests carried the ark before the people. As soon as their feet entered the waters of Jordan, God did a great miracle. Far up the river, the water began to pile up on a heap. The water before them flowed away until the river bed was dry. Then the priests went forward with the ark and stood firm in the middle of the river. All the people crossed over Jordan on dry ground.

Twelve stones were taken from the middle of the river, one by a man from each tribe. They were set up in the place where the people camped in Canaan. Twelve other stones were set up in the middle of Jordan where the priests stood. The stones were "*for a memorial*" to the children of Israel. They were never to forget how God stopped the River Jordan until they passed over.

QUESTIONS:

1. What must the children of Israel go over to enter Canaan?
2. What did the people cross over on? (2 words)
3. What were taken from the middle of Jordan? (2 words)

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. Spy on Jericho.
2. Rahab.
3. Save her life (and her family).

Contributed

*“For the LORD
your God dried
up the waters
of Jordan from
before you,
until ye were
passed over.”
Joshua 4. 23*

BIBLE LESSONS**THE WEDDING FEAST**

With so many important things to tell the people about His Father, Himself, Heaven, and His Kingdom that was to come, Jesus spoke many more parables. One such parable was about a wedding feast. Perhaps you have had the privilege of attending a wedding.

A lot of excitement is felt on the wedding day. But what a lot of work and planning takes place before that day! Special invitations are sent to family and friends of the bride and groom. A large amount of food must be prepared to feed all the guests. A great expense of money and time is involved. What a disappointment it would be if, after all the preparation, those invited refused to come to the wedding!

Jesus told the people of a great King who made a wedding feast for His Son. (The great King represented His Father in heaven.) When the wedding day arrived, He sent out His servants (His ministers) to remind those who had received an invitation to come to the wedding. The servants were instructed to say: *“Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.”* That is what gospel ministers are sent to preach.

Sadly, the people made light of it (mocked it). They went their way, one to his farm, another to his merchandise. They even wounded some of His servants, and worse still, they killed some. We do the same when we despise and make light of the gospel. Jesus told them that the King would send His armies to destroy those murderers.

The King told other servants to go into the highways and invite as many as they could find to the marriage. Soon the wedding feast was filled with guests, both bad and good. No doubt many of them were very poor and their clothes dirty and worn. But see the kindness of the great King! He gave to each guest a wedding garment to cover his or her shameful condition. Thus all were to appear in a garment provided by

the King Himself. No one need despair because of his own uncleanness.

The beautiful wedding garment provided by the King, represented the righteousness of the Lord Jesus, by which He clothes His people. In the Book of Revelation we read: *"... 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 (clothed) in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."*

When all the guests were present, the King came in to see them. How carefully He looked at each one. Nothing escaped the eye of the great King. He saw a man who did not have on a wedding garment. This man thought his own garment was as good as the one the King provided. How MISTAKEN he was! He represented the Pharisees, and all others like them, who think their own righteousness is sufficient. They rely upon their good deeds, their obedience, their prayers, their chapel attendance, or their church membership to make them acceptable.

What a question the Lord asked him: *"Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?"* What could the poor man say? The Bible tells us that he was speechless. He was *"found wanting."* Really, he was no different to all those who had refused to come to the wedding in the beginning.

What fearful words he then heard! *"Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

Then the Lord Jesus added: *"For many are called, but few are chosen."*

You can read about this in Matthew chapter 22 verses 1 to 14.

QUESTIONS:

1. What did the King give to each one who came to the wedding?
2. What was granted to the Lamb's wife to be clothed with? (5 words)

3. What does it represent? (4 words)
4. What was the man missing when the King came in?
5. How many did the Lord say are called?

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. It withered away.
2. Repented and went.
3. Publicans and sinners.
4. The scribes and Pharisees.
5. The first son.

G. L. TenBroeke

GOD'S WORD ON DISPLAY

Whilst visiting the Tate Britain art gallery at the Millbank, Central London recently, I was surprised to find myself reading an engraving by the artist William Blake (1757-1827) from the first two verses of Job. Over the illustration and verses were the words: "Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name," and "Thus did Job continually."

But what struck me more was the centre plate to the engraving which read: 'The letter killeth, The Spirit giveth life'; and also: 'It is spiritually discerned,' the latter two being from 2 Corinthians 3. 6 and a slight adaption of the last clause from 1 Corinthians 2. 14: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

There were many beautiful paintings by J.M.W. Turner, Constable and others within that gallery, but those words seemed to transcend them all. May the Lord grant the hearing ear and the understanding heart to all those that read them.

T. Hart

We hated God without a cause, and He loved us without a cause.

JONAH AND THE FISH

A simple widow lived in a house she rented from a rich gentleman. Every month this man visited her to collect his rent. She lived all alone, and her only pleasure was perusing the Word of God and reading the sermons of those ministers who gave evidence in their writing that they were no strangers of the grace of God. The Word of God was her meat and drink and she defended God's Word against those who dared to contradict it.

The landlord usually came in the morning hours of the day to collect the rent, but one day he was late and came just at lunch time. "Come in," she said, "I am eating my lunch, but if you don't mind, sit in the room with me; after lunch I will pay you." When she was finished eating, she took the Bible as was her custom, opened it at Jonah, the first chapter, and began to read aloud. After finishing and saying her prayer, the man said: "May I ask you a question?"

"Surely," she answered.

"You read about Jonah, that a great fish swallowed him. Do you really believe that? You know, perhaps," he went on, "that according to the findings of the biologists, it is impossible that a fish could swallow a human being. Its throat simply is not big enough for that. So what you read cannot be true."

"Ah, poor man," she answered, "never doubt the truth of God's Word. If there had been written that Jonah had swallowed the big fish, I would believe it. Why? Because the Bible is the Word of God, and that Word cannot lie, because God is a God of truth. Besides, it says in the last book, the last chapter – I'll read it to you: '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.'"

The man stood up without contradicting, asking for his money, and left. He was put to shame.

Religious Stories For Young and Old (IV)

JOHN KERSHAW

On one occasion, whilst walking across the moors, I was caught in a dreadful thunderstorm, and not a living creature near me but a few sheep. Like Moses and the children of Israel, when at the foot of Mount Sinai, I exceedingly feared and quaked. "What an awful thing," thought I, "it would be if I should be killed in the storm, as both man and beast often have been." I was led to examine the ground I stood upon for eternity. As a poor guilty sinner, I saw my need of the dear Redeemer and His finished salvation, and a giving myself up into His blessed hands, and I had such a precious view of Him by faith that all my fears fled away. I knew that the thunder was the voice of my heavenly Father. I had such a confidence given me of my safety and security in Christ Jesus that I was as happy as I had just before been miserable, and descended from the great moors, singing:

"Should storms of sevenfold thunder roll,
And shake the globe from pole to pole,
No flaming bolt could daunt my face,
For Jesus is my hiding-place.

On Him almighty vengeance fell,
That must have sunk a world to hell.
He bore it for a chosen race,
And thus became their hiding-place."

(Brewer)

On another occasion, passing over these moors, I was lost; there came on a dark thick fog, so that I missed my way, and soon became so confused that I could not tell which way to set my face to go right. I wandered about for some time in great agony of mind, fearing that if night came on before I could find my way, I might lose my life. While thus filled with terror and dismay, I heard the voice of a shepherd and the barking of his dog, which gladdened my heart. I called to him, and told him I was lost. He spoke kindly to me, and inquired where I was going, and from whence I had started; when to my surprise he

told me that I was within a few yards of the place I started from in the turnpike road, which I left by a footpath, being a much nearer road. How thankful I was when the shepherd put me right. I walked along, thinking of my lost state and condition as a sinner, and of the Good Shepherd finding me upon the dark mountains of sin and iniquity, and of His showing me my lost, ruined state by nature, and the distress I was in when I could see no way of escape. I was led also to think of the joy and gladness I felt when Jesus said: "Look unto Me, and be ye saved ... I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

As soon as I began to preach, and before I was settled over the church at Rochdale, the Lord opened up a way for me into different parts of the Forest of Rossendale, where I went once a month, and where I have gone occasionally ever since.

There have been two churches planted, one at Bacup and another at Goodshaw as the effect of my ministerial labours. Many a rough journey have I had into Rossendale over Rooley Moor, sometimes wet through with rain, at other times up to the knees and loins in snow, labouring in it till the sweat dropped off me and I was nearly out of breath, and had to rest before I could proceed.

I well remember on one occasion it snowed and drifted so violently, and I toiled till almost ready to faint, so completely was I exhausted, that I was brought to a stand, nearly up to the middle in snow. After resting awhile, I became quite easy, and felt exceedingly drowsy, but just as I was about to fall into a deep sleep, it came powerfully into my mind that if I fell asleep, I should be smothered in the snow and lose my life, as I had heard of others having done. This gave me fresh vigour. I exerted my remaining strength, and, through mercy got off the moor safely. I was not to be lost in the snow, as my work was not done. The Lord be praised for His goodness.

Afflictions are blessings, when we can bless God for afflictions.

WHEN THE NATION PRAYED ...**The Providential Hand of God in the Second World War****Dunkirk 1940**

27 May, The German High Command announced: "The British army is encircled and our troops are proceeding to its annihilation."

Churchill said: "I thought – and some good judges agreed with me – that perhaps 20,000 or 30,000 men might be re-embarked. ... The whole root and core and brain of the British army ... seemed about to perish upon the field or to be led into captivity."

But, the previous day, Sunday, 26th May, at the request of His Majesty King George VI, was observed as a National Day of Prayer. In a stirring broadcast, the King called the people of Britain and the Empire to commit their cause to God. The whole nation was at prayer. Three miracles then happened:

- Hitler stopped his general advance.
- A storm of extraordinary fury grounded the German Air Force on 28 May.
- A great calm settled over the English Channel for several days.

335,000 men of the British Army were evacuated from Dunkirk!

The Battle of Britain – Another Miracle

Hitler did not follow on after Dunkirk to cross the Channel and invade Britain whose army had lost all its weapons. He continued to hesitate all through June 1940, giving Britain a breathing space. Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding, Commander-in-Chief of Fighter Command, was asked: "What are your plans for defeating an overwhelming number of the German Air Force?" He replied: "I believe in God. And then there is radar."

Field-Marshal Goering told his Air Commander that the way ahead for launching an invasion was to destroy the Royal Air Force.

On 30 August, 800 enemy aircraft darkened the skies of Southern England, flying in to put key airfields out of action. By 6 September, Fighter Command was in serious trouble. Aircraft and pilots were being lost at a rate far in excess of replacements. Defeat in the air appeared inevitable, and this would open the way to invasion.

Hitler suddenly ordered the Luftwaffe to switch its attack to London, and this saved Fighter Command. For the Germans it was a catastrophic blunder. Fighter Command built up its strength. Dowding later said: "By mid to late September, we were all right for aircraft. I think it was because we had faith."

The King, as if gifted with some foreknowledge, had expressed the wish that Sunday, 8th September, should be fixed as a National Day of Prayer. There was a tremendous response. At a crowded service in Westminster Abbey, the final prayer began: "Remember, O God for good, these watchmen, who by day and by night climb into the air. Let Thy hand lead them, we beseech Thee, and Thy right hand hold them."

Germany had massed barges in ports from Ostend to Le Havre, sufficient to carry 50,000 men and much of their equipment. But by 10 September, the RAF had still not been destroyed and abnormally bad weather for the time of year caused Hitler to postpone his invasion plans.

Douglas Bader, DFC, later said: "The 15th September 1940 was the day that the battle was won. It was a Sunday." By the time the Sunday worshippers were leaving their churches, the routed German air armada was in full flight. In the afternoon, Air Vice-Marshal Keith Park commanding 11 Group was asked what fighter reserves were available. Park replied: "There are none." Ten minutes later, the action ended. The Germans had cracked. The miracle had happened.

On 17th September, a teletype message clacked out from the German Supreme Command postponing the invasion of Britain, "until further notice."

Selected

THE "ARABIA"

A STEAMBOAT BURIED IN A CORNFIELD

In 1856, while on a voyage up the Missouri River, the steamboat *Arabia* hit a concealed log and slowly began to sink! It had a full contingent of passengers and crew. Also on board was a cargo of new store goods including clothing, elegant china, preserved foods, tools and medicines, representing many of the necessities and small luxuries of life for the settlers of the western frontier.

Eventually the steamboat disappeared completely beneath the water, but not before all the passengers and crew were rescued. A poor mule went down with the ship, along with the cargo. At first, attempts were made to recover some of the goods but the heavily mud-laden waters and fast-flowing current proved too difficult for the salvagers. The steamboat and its contents remained undisturbed on the bed of the river.

Over the years the river shifted its banks, with the result that the steamboat became deeply buried in river sediment. Where it sank became a cornfield, more than 800 metres (over half a mile) from the present course of the river. *Arabia's* exact location was lost, and her story passed into legend.

But in 1988, using modern geophysical equipment, explorers rediscovered the wreck. Although not a small steamboat, at 52 metres (171 feet) long and able to carry 222 tons of freight, the *Arabia* was buried 14 metres (45 feet) underground. Large excavators and a crane were needed, and the salvagers ended up digging a hole as big as a football field.

The walnut log that caused the sinking was still piercing the hull, and the bones of the long-dead mule were on the deck. Hundreds of the diverse cargo goods were recovered, many beautifully preserved. Today you can visit a museum displaying some of these items which provide a fascinating insight into the fashions, habits and styles of those frontier times.

Secular geologists often say that it takes eons of time for sedimentary layers to form. But the steamboat *Arabia* was

completely buried in sediment in about 50 years. This gives a tiny insight into how the vast waters of Noah's Flood, global in magnitude and laden with sand and mud, would be capable of depositing much greater quantities of sediment than the Missouri River, over a much larger area, and in a much shorter space of time.

Creation

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

**JOHN 17 – THE PRAYER OF JESUS CHRIST,
THE SON OF GOD (II)**

Praying unto the Father

I have heard it said that you cannot pray to the Father; this suggestion is from Satan himself the great enemy of God and Truth. I certainly would not encourage a presumptuous approach unto the Father, I abhor a light, easy over-familiarity in prayer but if you have been brought to know Jesus Christ, if He has been made precious to your soul, if you see Him as the altogether lovely One, the Chiefest among ten thousand, it is because you have a Heavenly Father. You feel so drawn to Jesus in all your need as a poor empty sinner, there is only one reason for this: *“No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day”* (John 6. 44). The precious love of a heavenly Father in Christ draws.

Our doctrine must always be drawn from the Word of God. If we have thoughts and meditations which are inconsistent with the Word of God, it is our thoughts that are wrong: the Word of God is pure and inerrant. I have heard it said by some people whom I would hope are the children of God: “We cannot pray unto the Father only unto Jesus Christ.” This is wrong and we must resist it. Think of those lovely words to the Ephesians concerning Jesus Christ: *“For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.”* (Ephesians 2. 18).

Then let us look through these chapters in John and how the Lord Jesus labours this point. *“Howbeit when He, the Spirit*

of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall shew it unto you” (John 16. 13-15). Now consider the following Scripture: *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit Itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Romans 8. 14-16).*

Have you been born again by the Holy Spirit?

Are you being led by the Holy Spirit?

This is the Scriptural evidence of being a son or daughter of the Lord God Almighty. The word Abba means: my Father: it is a personal relationship. The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Christ, they are one with the Father. The Lord Jesus emphasises this doctrine in this discourse: *“And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you” (John 14. 16-18.)*

The Apostle confirms this precious truth in the Epistle to the Galatians: *“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. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” (Galatians 4. 4-7).*

If we have been born again, the Holy Spirit dwells in our heart: this is the evidence that we have a heavenly Father in Christ. Carefully read the following words of precious doctrine

which reveal the sacred oneness of Father, Son and Holy Ghost: you cannot have one without the other: *“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him”* (John 14. 23). This indwelling is by the Holy Spirit: the We is the Father and the Son. We cannot have one without the other: *“For there are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these Three are One”* (1 John 5. 7).

Another strategy of Satan is to try to portray the Father as being so holy, distant and angry against sinners that you cannot possibly approach Him and that the Lord Jesus is the only One you can approach unto because the Father is holy angry and austere always. It is true that God is holy, pure and righteous altogether: this is true of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. It is true that we can only approach the Father through Jesus Christ, and we cannot know Jesus Christ except the Holy Spirit reveal Him to us. Let us again look at the words of Jesus: *“Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall shew it unto you”* (John 16. 13-15). Let us compare spiritual with spiritual as we are instructed to. *“Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost”* (1 Corinthians 12. 3). *“For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”* (1 Timothy 2. 5-6). Bearing all this in mind, listen to the teaching of God’s Word regarding the Father’s love in Jesus Christ: *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have*

everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3. 16-17). “And in that day ye shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. Hitberto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask in My name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father” (John 16. 23-28).

(To be continued)

J.R. Rutt

THE CONVERSION OF ST. BERNARD

By Martin Luther

Adapted from *Sermons on the Gospel of St. John*, chapters 1-4

Text: John 3. 16, Repeated also in his *Table Talks*.

St. Bernard was an exemplary monk; he observed the rules of his order scrupulously, and he fasted so assiduously that his breath stank and no one could abide his presence. But on the threshold of death he exclaimed: “Oh, I have lived damnably! But heavenly Father, Thou hast given me Thy Son, who has a twofold claim to heaven: first, from eternity, by reason of the fact that He is Thy Son; secondly, He earned heaven as the Son of man with His suffering, death, and resurrection. And thus He has also given and bestowed heaven on me.” Thereby St. Bernard dropped out of the monastic role, forsook cowl and tonsure and rules, and turned to Christ; for he knew that Christ conquered death, not for Himself but that all who believe in the Son should not perish but have eternal life. And so St. Bernard was saved.

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about PEOPLE WHO WERE UNWELL. 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 write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. Two sisters sent a message to Jesus: "Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick." Who was sick? (John 11. 1-3)
2. King Hezekiah was "sick unto death," only to receive a solemn message from Isaiah the prophet. What did Hezekiah do? (2 Kings 20. 1-2)
3. Which godly king was diseased in his feet, yet, sadly, "sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians"? (2 Chronicles 16. 12)
4. A woman "came behind Him [Jesus], and touched the hem of His garment." What disease did the woman have and for how long had she been ill? (Matthew 9. 20)
5. A man came to Jesus saying: "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." What illness did he suffer from and what did Jesus reply? (Mark 1. 40)
6. Of whom was it written: "For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him"? (Philippians 2)
7. Who lied to the messengers of Saul when she said: "He is sick," and to whom was she referring?(1 Samuel 19)
8. Which king, as prophesied by Elijah, was smitten with "great sickness by disease of [his] bowels"? (2 Chronicles 21)
9. What was the name of the pool in Jerusalem where the impotent man was healed, "who had an infirmity thirty and eight years"? (John 5)
10. The Bible tells of one woman and two men who were smitten with leprosy in judgment for their sin. Who were they?

ANSWERS TO JANUARY QUESTIONS

1. Aaron.
2. Esau.
3. Cornelius.
4. The Son of man (the Lord Jesus Christ).
5. Abraham.
6. Joseph. (Genesis 49. 22)

7. Tabitha or Dorcas. (Acts 9. 36)
8. John the Baptist. (John 5. 35)
9. Barnabas. (Acts 4. 36)
10. Herod. (Luke 13. 32)

Contributed

There is a time coming when many will repent too late, and believe too late, sorrow for sin too late, and long for heaven too late. Myriads shall wake up in another world, and be convinced of truths which on earth they refused to believe. Earth is the only place on God's creation where there is any infidelity. Hell itself is nothing but truth known too late.

Knowing without doing God's will, will make the case worse. It will heat hell the hotter. Many a man's knowledge is a torch to light him to hell.

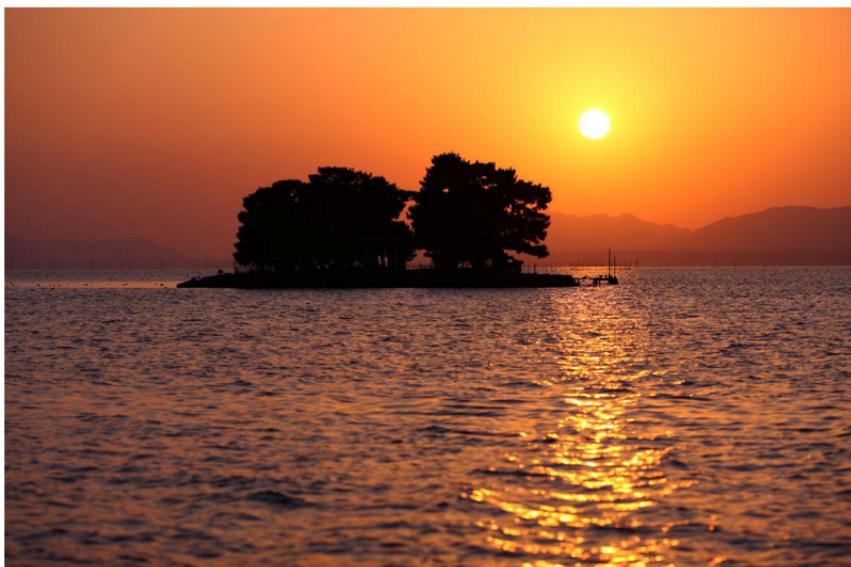
J.C. Ryle

PSALM 121 (*A Song of Degrees*)

I to the hills will lift mine eyes,
 From whence doth come mine aid.
 My safety cometh from the Lord,
 Who heaven and earth hath made.
 Thy foot He'll not let slide, nor will
 He slumber that thee keeps.
 Behold, He that keeps Israel,
 He slumbers not, nor sleeps.

The Lord thee keeps, the Lord thy shade
 On thy right hand doth stay:
 The moon by night thee shall not smite,
 Nor yet the sun by day.
 The Lord shall keep thy soul; He shall
 Preserve thee from all ill.
 Henceforth thy going out and in
 God keep for ever will.

The *Friendly Companion*



“... the sun, ... his going forth is from the end of the
heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it:
and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.”
Psalm 19. 4 & 6

March 2012

Editor: Mr. G.D. Buss, "Bethany," 7 Laines Head, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 1PH.

Tel: 01249 656910. Email: gdbuss@tiscali.co.uk

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Page 31, February Friendly Companion: A Further Comment:

The comforts of God's presence mentioned are to those who are walking in God's fear and not to those walking in rebellion to His revealed Word.

OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

I expect you have heard it said of some people, that they look at someone “through rose-tinted” glasses. That is, they cannot see any wrong in that person, even when it is very evident that it is otherwise at times. “Mr. So and So is such a kind man I cannot believe he would do anything wrong.” Other people seem to have “green-tinted” glasses, meaning that they cannot see any good in someone they dislike, even though this person may be acting rightly. Perhaps the past reputation of the person colours their opinion, as the saying: “give a dog a bad name,” suggests it is hard to throw off a bad reputation. James warns us against this partiality, telling us that the wisdom from above is “without partiality.” This very common fault has often brought troubles in families and even amongst God’s people. Even Nathanael could not believe at first that any good thing could come out of Nazareth. How wrong he was, and how glad he was that he had been mistaken when he knew Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God. How partial David was to Absalom and yet with what terrible results! God Himself, “is no respecter of persons.” He looks on the heart of each of us and penetrates through the outward appearance which so often governs our opinion of people and matters.

If we go back to our thoughts on coloured glasses, however, there is a wonderful truth which the laws of nature that God has ordained, teach us. If you took a pair of red glasses and looked at a red geranium, the geranium would appear white! That is because the red in the glass absorbs the red colour of the geranium and leaves it appearing white.

Some years ago there was a young girl who was deeply convinced of her sins. There seemed no answer to the misery she felt within. However, one of her friends had been taught by the Holy Spirit that the answer to her own sins’ guilt was in the precious blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son. She saw the distress her young friend was in and showed her what the red glasses

did to a red geranium. Applying this simple truth to the gospel she said: "When God looks at the repenting sinner, He looks at their scarlet sins, and crimson iniquities through the red of the blood of His dear Son. To His all-seeing eye the sinner appears white." This is no aberration, or false hiding of the truth, for the Bible tells us: "...if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1. 7). Here is no false partiality because the guilt of that sinner has been borne away by the blood of Christ, leaving in God's view, no stain!

How true then are the words of God through Isaiah to those who are mourning over their sins. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1. 18). May the Holy Spirit help such, so to do.

With every best wish from your sincere friend and Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

The Power of the Sun

In November 2011, a loyal member of the congregation at the Old Baptist Chapel, Chippenham, and resident of the Studley Bethesda Home, Mr. Horace Painter, passed away. Between the Second World War and his retirement in 1980, he worked at the Met. Office, where he became an expert in the power of the sun. For many years sunshine has been measured by using a glass sphere to concentrate the sun's rays so that they burned a piece of card marked with a time line that was analysed and replaced each day. Mr. Painter conducted experiments on its accuracy by comparing the burn marks with more scientific, but expensive, instruments that directly measured the sun's power placed at the same location. Clouds, sunrise and sunset each had their impacts on the quality of the measurement. Mr. Painter understood these effects in detail and used his knowledge to help with the introduction of automatic sunshine recorders. For

all but the last few months of his career, he worked at the Kew Observatory, close to the famous Kew Gardens.

Now, I am sure that Mr. Painter also knew the Power of the Son – the Son of God. He would have known it experimentally, in that his faith in this Power was tried and proved. Do we know the Power of the Son in our lives? Has He shone into our cold hearts and warmed them (even burned them) with His love? Do we feel anything when we consider the Lord Jesus Christ as the only One that has power to forgive our sin and save us? If not, are we praying that we may know what it is to have the day dawn and for the Sun of Righteousness to arise with healing in His wings? The power of the natural sun is remarkably constant; if it were not, we would experience such confusion in our climate that we could not exist – crops would fail, animals would die. The power of the Son of God is even more constant – Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Jesus has no less power to save now than when He walked this earth.

That does not mean to say we always feel the power of the Sun of Righteousness: the spiritual equivalent of night-time, winter and clouds are all known by the Lord's people. At such times when the power is not felt, we are in measure left to ourselves, sometimes not desiring to feel His warmth, at others praying for His return. But as with the natural sun, which provides the heat that both causes the clouds to form and also melts them away, so the Sun of Righteousness governs the hiding of His power in our lives and returns it when His wisdom sees fit. Be it night, winter or cloudy, the sun still shines and whom once the Son of God loves He never leaves, but loves them to the end – after which follows that morning without clouds, beyond the grave, that Mr. Painter now enjoys.

M. Lee

EDITOR'S POSTBAG

First answers to the monthly questions have been received from ALEX MAIN and JETHRO NORTHERN.

*FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES***THE CAPTAIN**

At last the children of Israel were in the land of Canaan. God had promised to give them this land to live in. But first they must fight against many strong enemies. Joshua, their leader, was walking by Jericho, the nearest city. It had high walls and the gates were locked. How could they fight against it? Suddenly Joshua saw a Man with a sword in His hand, ready to fight. Was He a friend or an enemy? He told Joshua that He had come as: "Captain of the host of the LORD." This was the LORD Himself, appearing as a man. Joshua fell on his face and worshipped. Then he took off his shoes, for the presence of the LORD made it a holy place.

The words of the heavenly "Captain" must have been a great comfort to Joshua. The LORD would tell them what to do. He would fight for them against their enemies.

QUESTIONS:

1. What did the Man have in His hand?
2. What did He tell Joshua He had come as? (1 word)
3. The presence of the LORD made it a _____. (2 words)

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. The Jordan River.
2. Dry ground.
3. Twelve stones.

Contributed

“... for the
LORD your
God He
shall fight
for you.”

Deuteronomy
3. 22.

BIBLE LESSONS**PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES CONFOUNDED**

Oh how the Pharisees' anger was stirred up against the Lord Jesus! In many of the parables Jesus had spoken, He showed that the Pharisees, (who were their religious leaders), refused to obey the Word of God.

They *"took counsel how they might entangle Him in His talk."* First they appeared to come in a very friendly manner, then they spoke to Him with very flattering speech: *"Master, we know that Thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth."* What deceit and evil designs were hidden behind their false front! How wicked it is when we pretend to be kind in order to harm another!

They asked Jesus if it was lawful to give tribute (tax money) to Cæsar or not. The Jews did not like to pay taxes to the Roman government. Thus, if Jesus said they should pay, the Pharisees would call Him a betrayer of the Jews and a friend of the Romans. Surely that would stop the people from listening to Him anymore. But if He said the people did not need to pay tribute, they would go to the Roman authorities and report that Jesus was teaching rebellion.

How ever would Jesus answer such a question? They watched like greedy vultures ready to jump at His answer. But Jesus knew their evil design and answered: *"Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites?"* He asked to see some tribute money, and they brought Him a penny with the image of Cæsar on it.

Jesus asked: *"Whose is this image and superscription (name)?"* They answered: *"Cæsar's."* Jesus quickly replied: *"Render ... unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's."* For a moment there was a great silence, as the men marvelled at His answer. Quietly they walked away ashamed and disappointed.

A little later another group of men called Sadducees approached Jesus. The Sadducees did not believe there would be a resurrection. They taught that when a person died, he could never live again.

Oh what deceit there was in this teaching! If there was no resurrection, there would be no heaven or hell. Thus, they could live just as they pleased, without any consequences.

They told Jesus of a very strange case, intending to overthrow His teaching of the resurrection. They reminded Jesus that Moses said: *“If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed (children) unto his brother.”* Then they told Him of a family with seven brothers. The eldest brother took a wife and died shortly after, without having children. The second brother then took her to be his wife and also died. In the end, all seven brothers had her for a wife and died without children. Last of all, the woman also died. They asked Jesus whose wife she would be in the resurrection, for all seven brothers had her for a wife.

Jesus answered that they erred because they did not know the Scriptures or the power of God. *“For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.”* Oh how Jesus confounded them with what He said next! *“But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”* What did Jesus mean? Very simply: although the bodies of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lay in the grave, yet their souls now live in the presence of God in heaven.

Like the Pharisees before, the Sadducees were astonished at His words and went away ashamed.

You can read about this in Matthew chapter 22 verses 15 to 33, Mark chapter 12 verses 13 to 27, and Luke chapter 20 verses 19 to 40.

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Jesus call the Pharisees for their evil design?
2. What did Jesus say they should render unto Caesar? (5 words)
3. What did Jesus say they should render unto God? (5 words)
4. Whom did God say that He was *not* the God of? (2 words)
5. Whom did God say that He *was* the God of? (2 words)

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. A wedding garment.
2. Fine linen clean and white.
3. The righteousness of saints.
4. A wedding garment.
5. Many.

G. L. TenBroeke

WHEN THE NATION PRAYED ... (II)

The Providential Hand of God in the Second World War Malta

There were later divine overrulings in the Mediterranean, the outstanding example being Malta, which lay in the path of Italy's vital supply lines to North Africa. With the fall of France and the entry of Italy into the war, Malta was hemmed in by enemy powers.

The island was virtually unarmed, having only sixteen anti-aircraft guns and four Fleet Air Arm Gloster Gladiators in crates in store!

General Dobbie was appointed as Governor of Malta. He was a Christian, a man of faith who testified to the power of prayer. He issued an Order of the Day to the garrison which included the following: "I know that the courage and determination of all ranks will not falter, and that with God's help we will maintain the security of the fortress."

General Ironside sent General Dobbie a personal telegram containing the Bible reference, Deuteronomy chapter 3 verse 22. Looking up the text, Dobbie read: "Ye shall not fear them: for the LORD your God, He shall fight for you."

Miracles followed one another during the two following years

Remarkably, Italy did not attempt invasion. God sustained all on the island through the devastating 2,000 aerial bombardments. Remarkably, the German General Rommel, on arrival in the Western Desert in 1941, did not invade either, in spite of the island hindering his supply route. Brigadier

Desmond Young noted later that the Germans were strangely blind in failing to see until it was too late that the key to all supply problems and indeed the key to the control of the Mediterranean, was the capture of Malta.

Rommel later wrote in his official 'Papers': "It had actually been intended that Malta should be taken by Italian and German parachute landing forces early in 1942 ... but for some unaccountable reason our High Command abandoned the scheme." Surely this was a sign of the restraining hand of God resting on the German High Command.

At the end of April 1942, Brigadier Young recorded that Hitler gave permission for a surprise attack on Malta – Operation Hercules. It was twice put off and finally postponed "until after the conquest of Egypt," which never happened.

General Dobbie later wrote: "The very fact that in spite of all her disadvantages, Malta has remained in British hands ... that surely is a miracle which cannot be gainsaid. It is God who works such miracles."

At the gate of Cairo

After the fall of Tobruk, the Eighth Army was in full retreat, reaching the El Alamein line of defence on Monday 29 June 1942. Rommel's army came up to it next day. Alexandria was only sixty-five miles away. The German radio boasted that Rommel and the Afrika Korps would sleep in Alexandria on Saturday night. Suddenly the advance stopped, the panzer divisions rolled westward. This sudden receding of the tide remains a mystery. Rommel, in his 'Papers' said: "Our strength failed in front of El Alamein."

The turning of the tide

Two dedicated Christian men were appointed to the most responsible position in the Middle East on 15 August 1942, Field Marshal Alexander was Commander-in-Chief and General Montgomery as Commander of the Eighth Army.

On 3 September, according to the wish of King George VI, there was held another National Day of Prayer. People flocked to the churches all over Britain.

On 23 October, Montgomery issued this Order of the Day to the Eighth Army: "Let us pray that the Lord, mighty in battle, will give us the victory."

A succession of remarkable occurrences followed. When the attack on the German forces was opened, Rommel was in Germany, sick for the first time in his life. General Stümme, appointed to take his place, died of a heart attack the next day, leaving the German High Command structure in a hopeless state of confusion. At the same time, Rommel's Chief of Staff was actually on leave. And, due to faulty intelligence, the Afrika Korps was taken completely off its guard when the bombardment began. Then, too, Montgomery's tremendous pre-offensive build up had remained completely hidden from the Germans, although it included the movement of 900 tanks. Finally, the German Military Attaché in Rome, responsible for ensuring that supplies of petrol reached the Afrika Korps, had been on leave and was unable to give sufficient attention to the problem.

By the time Rommel arrived back at his headquarters in North Africa on 25 October, the battle was already lost. As his General Cramer said: "Alamein was lost before it was fought. We didn't have the petrol." Surely none of these things could have been due to coincidence.

Said Churchill afterwards, concerning the Battle of Alamein: "Before Alamein we never had a victory. After Alamein we never had a defeat."

Selected

LESSONS FROM LOCUST WINGS

The challenges confronting designers of small robotic aircraft are many. For example, fixed wings, like those used on passenger aircraft, become very inefficient in tiny robotic planes. So aeronautical engineers are looking at flapping wings as an alternative.

Researchers at the University of Oxford (UK) and the Australian Defence Force Academy decided to study locust flight because locusts are such efficient flyers.

“They can fly for a very long time, over long distances with very little energy,” explained lead researcher Dr. John Young. His team videoed locusts flying in a wind tunnel in order to identify “some of their tricks.” Sadly for the engineers, who had hoped that simple flat wings (i.e. without the locust wings’ veins and corrugations) might suffice for miniature robotic aircraft, the wind tunnel videos and computer simulations revealed a hitherto unrealised design secret. As *Science* journal summed it up: “The complexity of insect wing venation (vein arrangement) directly affects the aerodynamics of flight via the intermediary of wing deformation.” In other words, the locust’s power and efficiency comes from the wing’s complex construction and in-flight control of wing shape.

“The locust is using the bending and folding of its wings to control its aerodynamics in a very efficient way,” Young said. “The results show that if you want to model the insect you have to get as much detail as you can and build wings that do most of what the insect wings do.” Any artificial wing that is not modelled on the “optimised” design of the insect wing is less efficient.

The researchers now plan to use their findings to build their own small robotic aircraft. These aircraft could be used to fly “anywhere you don’t want to send people, but need to navigate a complex environment,” e.g. for defence surveillance purposes or earthquake-affected buildings.

If merely copying locust wing design requires such thoughtful observation and intelligence, what does that say about the Designer of the original wings? And in other flying insects, too, the inherent design is increasingly obvious to aerodynamics engineers – e.g. the opening line of the locust researchers’ journal paper said (emphasis added): “Insects achieve remarkable flight performance with a diverse range of complex wing *designs*.”

Surely, men are “without excuse” (Romans 1. 20, Psalm 104.24).

LIONEL THOMSON (died January 9th, 1952 aged 5 years)

(Part I)

This touching account of the call by grace and early death of a young Scottish lad is printed by kind permission of Mr. Fraser MacDonald, the author, and esteemed former pastor of the Free Presbyterian Church at Portree. (Editor)

“Grace is a plant where ’ere it grows,
Of calm and heavenly root,
But fairest in the youngest shows,
And yields the sweetest fruit.” (*John Newton*)

A little more than a year has elapsed since the subject of this short sketch was called home to be for ever with the Lord (written in 1953). That year has passed quickly enough for us in this present time state, but how much more so for him in the city where time is not marked at all. Here, there are sighs and sorrows which often make us feel our short life to be long enough, but there, time is swallowed up in an ecstasy of holy interest and joy, for

“There the blessing God commands,
Life that shall never end.”

This dear child, who is now with Christ on the mountains of myrrh and the hills of frankincense, was quite recently an inhabitant of this world. Like all the children of God, he was a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth, and gave early and undeniable evidence that he had no desire to build his nest here. His one desire was: “to be with Christ which is far better,” a request which was granted him at a very early age. Lionel was only in his sixth year when he departed this life. The voice of his sudden and early death was solemnising, but still more solemn was the voice of his short life of piety and love to the Saviour. He being dead, yet speaketh to us all, and it is this posthumous voice which we desire young and old to hear. His death, humanly speaking, was tragic and accidental, but as far as it concerned the One who came for him, it was

neither tragedy nor an accident but the happy and blessed appointment of the pre-determinate counsel of God.

It is with a kind of sorrowful pleasure that I endeavour to write of one so worthy to be remembered. Grieved I am to think that I shall see him no more in the body, yet rejoicing to know that now "he gazes not on glory, but on his King of Grace." Perhaps it is true to say that there is no subject more pleasing to the godly than the work of the Holy Ghost in the soul of man. Indeed, next to the theme of Christ Himself, this subject merits and more than rewards our reverent and rapt attention. What is so wonderful as the Work of God in the soul of man, or what can afford us greater pleasure and edification than a humble endeavour to trace the workings of grace in the soul of a poor sinner?

In a peculiar way is this true with regard to children, where despite all the limitations and incapacity of the child, evidence is given of a wisdom and knowledge far beyond their years, in the deep things of God. Such evidence goes far to prove the reality of the supernatural teaching of the blessed Spirit, who is not to be hindered in His gracious work by barriers which defeat and defy human power. The fact that a child's knowledge of divine things must certainly be affected by lack of study and inability to read, like older people, only enhances the glory and verifies the wonder of the secret and supernatural work of the Holy Ghost. The child thus taught will give expression to words and sentiments which infinitely transcend in beauty, reality, excellence and simplicity, the words of Socrates or Plato, or the wisest in worldly wisdom. Such a child then was dear little Lionel, whose memory we desire to keep fresh by means of this brief account. For the incidents here recorded, I may say that I am indebted to Miss MacGillivray, his nursing mother.

Naturally of a quiet and gentle disposition, Lionel differed from the average boy, but this was not the only difference. The seed of grace implanted in his young heart made him hate what other children love, and love what they hate and grow weary of. His natural beauty and sober countenance marked him out among other children. To the discerning eye, such

beauty was but the emblem of that inward beauty of soul which neither death nor sorrow can change or consume. Thus, when we repair to such a tomb to weep, there comes from it a melody sweeter than the sweetest song, and we turn from the charm of the living and find ourselves more at home in the hallowed remembrance of the blessed dead.

Of Jesus, it was said that He loved righteousness and hated iniquity. The same testimony is true of all who follow His steps and bear His image. This twofold aspect of the Christian character was clearly manifested by Lionel. Unable to read for himself, he would go to his friend in the Lord, and sitting there would listen reverently and evidently with joy to the words of eternal life. He could never hear too much about God and His way of salvation. The reader has confessed that she would weary, long before the little listener. Nor would he permit the reading to go on, unless the blessing of the Spirit had been reverently asked. If this were inadvertently omitted the dear little boy with his hands clasped would say: "You forgot to say, 'Lord, bless the reading of Thy Word.'"

Another way in which Lionel showed his love for righteousness was his love for the house of God and the people of God. On more than one occasion, he saw Miss MacGillivray passing down to the Prayer Meeting and running out to meet her, he asked where she was going. On being informed that she was going to the Prayer Meeting, he enquired: "And what do you do there?" This kind lady, having told him simply and plainly what was done, said: "Oh do take me with you." His words are a solemn rebuke to the many who never appear at a Prayer Meeting and an echo of David's desire in Psalm 84, where he sings so sweetly:

"My thirsty soul longs vehemently,
Yea, faints Thy courts to see,
My very heart and flesh cry out,
O living God for Thee."

(To be continued)

MIRACULOUS ESCAPE IN ASHDOD

For forty years, services have been held at an Ashdod synagogue every Sabbath with only one exception, Saturday October 29, 2011. The synagogue's Gabai (treasurer/manager) had undergone an operation during the week and was unable to open the synagogue doors, and as a result there was no service. It was on that day that the building suffered a direct missile strike, a Kassam rocket from Hamas in Gaza. Normally, the area surrounding the spot where the missile hit, would have been full of people during the hours of Shabbat. Netanel Mor Yosef, a member of the congregation, told the Jewish press: "No one thinks about the Kassam itself. All day long the talk is about the miracle, how it happened, and everyone, even those who are not believers, are unanimous in agreeing that what occurred was a miracle." "Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (Psalm 121.4.).

May the day hasten on when they will acknowledge that He that keepeth Israel is none other than Jesus Christ the Lord.

Editor

REBELLION

Many of you will no doubt have heard of what is called the Hadron Collider which has been constructed deep within the mountains of Switzerland. We are told that the aim of scientists is to try to reproduce the moment after what they like to call "The Big Bang," which, they say, was what brought the Universe into being.

We can't imagine what it has all cost, no doubt many millions of pounds, and all in an attempt, yet again, to try to disprove God's Word, which, as you know, says nothing about a big bang. Quite the reverse: the only sound at the beginning, if we may so speak, was God's Almighty Voice which "Spake, and it was done" (Psalm 33. 9).

In departing from the simple, yet profound truths as set out so clearly in Scripture, man's so-called wisdom is turned into foolishness. Consider the vast sums spent on space missions

which we are constantly told will find the answer as to how life began and will discover life elsewhere in the universe. What has been found? No answer and no life. Nothing. But man still goes on almost desperately, seeking to justify his insatiable appetite for the evolutionary theory and his rebellion from God and His Truth.

Yet this is no new thing: all down the ages man has been the same. Before The Flood, man rebelled against God's laws so dreadfully that mankind was all swept away, except Noah and his family. Not very long afterwards, Nimrod led another rebellion and built the Tower of Babel, and as the people were dispersed by the confusion of tongues afterwards, and many nations sprang up, such as the Egyptians and Babylonians and many others, they built huge monuments to impose their rebellious "religions" on the people who worshipped the sun, moon and stars. As in our own country we have monuments such as Stonehenge. It is clear these people were very clever naturally and built amazing structures, yet it was all in the interests of a false notion and a counterfeit religion.

Not long after the early churches were set up by the Apostles, we find that there were those who opposed or rebelled against the Truth and it was not long before proud man introduced the system of popery, which is based on the falsehoods of Nimrod and which has pervaded this world of sorrow ever since. And so it has gone on in one way or another until the present day.

Ever since Adam and Eve rebelled against God's command in the Garden of Eden, man by nature has been the same. How quickly we ourselves can and do rebel against His righteous laws. We are no different. How soon we set up some idol or other and give it our thoughts and affections instead of attending to the things of God. May He in His mercy help us to seek that we may be kept from a rebellious spirit and be given a love for His Word and brought to feel our need of the pardoning love of the Lord Jesus Christ and to be brought to know and feel that the Gospel is even "for the rebellious also."

Contributed

*BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES***JOHN 17 – THE PRAYER OF JESUS CHRIST
THE SON OF GOD (III)****The electing love of the Father**

This sacred truth that Jesus is the only Mediator between God and man is clearly revealed in this beautiful prayer; also the doctrine of divine election. In the doctrine of divine election we see the infinite love of our heavenly Father. Nobody would have been saved if the eternal Father had not chosen a people from the total ruin of the Adam fall. The moving cause of salvation is the electing love of the eternal Father. Fallen man tries to portray God as being unjust in choosing some and leaving others, but God would have been just in leaving the whole of mankind to perish in its sins. It would have been to the eternal glory of His justice. But to show forth the glory of His grace He chose a people and gave them to His only begotten Son to redeem before the foundation of the world: *“As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent”* (John 17. 2-3). The Father has invested in this holy God/Man, all power: not some power, but all power. Just before the Lord Jesus ascended up to heaven He lifted up His hand and said: *“All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth”* (Matthew 2. 18). That power is invested in Jesus Christ by the Father for the salvation of His church, His bride: *“I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me; and they have kept Thy Word”* (John 17. 6). This people are chosen from every nation, tongue, tribe and people. They are a number that no man can number. This people were lost under the solemn curse of Almighty God; this Almighty Saviour was sent by their Heavenly Father to redeem them. To receive further instruction on the electing love of our Heavenly Father, read Ephesians chapter one.

The Son of God

In verse 5 we are instructed that the Lord Jesus Christ existed before He became a Man: *“And now, O Father, glorify thou Me with Thine own Self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was” (John 17. 5)*. This is also revealed in the following Scripture: *“Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8. 58)*. Also in the Book of Proverbs the Person of Jesus Christ is speaking through Solomon: *“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)*. You will notice that the word “beginning,” here means from “everlasting.” The same as it does in John 1 when the Son of God 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” (John 1. 1-3)*. These Scriptures teach us a very fundamental doctrine, that is, that Jesus Christ is not just a Man, He is God: *“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (1 Timothy 3. 16)*.

J. R. Rutt

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about THE BURIAL AND RESURRECTION OF THE LORD JESUS. Younger children need only do five questions – full references are given to some questions to help them. Please give references for all other questions and send your answers to the Editor (see Page 50 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

Read Matthew 27. 57-66 & 28; Mark 15. 42-47 & 16; Luke 23. 50-56 & 24; John 19. 38-42 & 20.

1. What was the name of the person who went to Pilate, asked for the body of the Lord Jesus and then buried it? (Luke 23. 50-53)
2. Where was the sepulchre, or grave, in which Jesus was laid? (John 19. 41)
3. What did the person in question 1 do to stop people entering the grave? (Mark 15. 46)
4. Why did the enemies of the Lord Jesus set a watch (of soldiers) over the grave?
5. Who came first to the sepulchre early on the first day of the week and what question did they ask as they came?
6. The grave was open and an angel was there. What did the angel first say? (Matthew 28. 5)
7. To whom did Jesus first reveal Himself after His resurrection, and what one word did He speak, by which she knew him?
8. On the day of His resurrection Jesus revealed Himself to two going on a journey. Where were they going and what was the name of one of them? (Luke 24. 13, 18)
9. Who came with the person in question 1 to help bury the Lord Jesus, and what did he bring with him? Where else in the Bible do we read about him?
10. Jesus came through closed doors to the disciples gathered together. What words of comfort did He say three times to them?

ANSWERS TO FEBRUARY QUESTIONS

1. Lazarus.
2. Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed unto the LORD.
3. Asa.
4. An issue of blood 12 years.
5. Leprosy. "I will, be thou clean."
6. Epaphroditus. (Philippians 2. 25-27)
7. Michal. David. (1 Samuel 19. 11-17)
8. Jehoram. (2 Chronicles 21. 15-19)
9. Bethesda. (John 5. 2-5)
10. Miriam (Numbers 12. 9-10). Gehazi (2 Kings 5. 27). Uzziah (2 Chronicles 26. 19)

GRACIOUS STEPS

- What keeps a sinner on his knees,
Before the throne of grace?
What makes a sinner cry for peace,
And hide his shameful face?
- What makes a sinner search God's Word,
And find its message sweet?
What makes him crave that heavenly food,
"The finest of the wheat"?
- What makes a sinner love the ways,
He did so much despise?
Though gone, his plans for future days,
Yet calls he God, "All-wise."
- What makes a sinner long to be
Found in the house of God:
At every opportunity,
Praise Him, through Christ the Lord?
- What makes a sinner loathe himself,
And love a precious Christ?
What makes him cast down worldly wealth,
To heavenly treasure rise?
- What makes a sinner rich indeed,
Though nothing he possess;
Riches to help in time of need,
And in each deep distress?
- What makes a sinner what he is,
A sinner, yet a saint?
A soldier, yet a coward he is,
So strong, and yet so faint.
- What makes a sinner fit to stand
Before God's holy face,
When brought into Emmanuel's land,
To the most holy place?

'Tis not of works that these things spring,
 Lest pompous man should boast;
 Works only filthy rags can bring
 Before the Lord of Hosts.

To bring about such change in heart,
 A silent work takes place,
 In which the sinner acts no part:
 'Tis all of God's free grace.

Free sovereign grace to all is given,
 Whom God has foreordained;
 And this will land them safe in heaven,
 With garments all unstained.

R.W.B.

LIST OF NAMES

The following young people have answered questions during the months July – December 2011. The total number is 270, for which we would thank God.

Daryl Aldridge; Harry and Maia Aldridge; Jessica, Megan and Tom Aldridge.

Tommy Baker; Josiah, Lily and Noah Barker; William Bos; Abigail, Daniel, Joanna and Samuel Broome; Jemima and Phebe Burden; Kezia and Olivia Burgess; Jonathan and Nicolas Burton; Jennifer and Sophie Buss.

Bethany, Daniel, Elizabeth and Victoria Chapman; Christopher Christie; Anna-Louise Clark; Ruth and Samuel Cooper; Alice, Beth, Charlotte, Katy and William Cottingham; Annie and Lucy Cottingham; Freddie Cottingham; Alicia, Emma and Jessica Cottington; Grace, Jacob and Zach Cottington; Abigail, James, Rebecca, Sarah and Thomas Crowter; Annabel, Elsie, Esther and Kate Crowter.

Edward Dadswell; Louise Dadswell; Joanna, Jonathan, Nicholas and Peter De Vogel.

Bethan Field; Esther and Rebekah Field; Daisy Funnell.

Adam Green; Edward and Ella Green; William Green; Archie Gudgeon.

James Hanks; Eleanor, George and Jonathan Hare; Cornelia, Joseph, Joshua, Luke and Nathanael Hayden; Ben, Kezia, Susie and Tom Hayden; Marcus and Susanna Hickman; Benjamin, Heidi, Rosalie and Thomas Hickman; George Hickman; Katharine Hills; Harvey, Henry and Sophie Hook; Eleanor Hope; Joseph Hydon.

Abigail and Joshua Izzard.

Emily Janes; Edward and Thomas Jarman; David and George Jempson.

Helen and Marianne Kerley; Rebecca and William Kerley; Thomas Kerley; Matthew, and Naomi Kingham.

Thomas and William Large; Joel and Megan Lucas; Chloe and James de Lullington.

Benjamin Main; Harriet and Lewis Macpherson; Claudia Mercer; James Mercer; David, John and Sarah Munns.

Freya Northern.

Anna, Jonathan, Rebekah and Simeon Pack; Nathan, Rachel and Susanna Pack; Elysia, Harvey and Sophia Parish; Joseph, Matthew, Priscilla and Robert Parish; Elisabeth and John Pickles; Heidi, James, Joseph and Katie Playfoot.

Emily Ramsbottom; Lily Ramsbottom; Jessica and Oliver Raymond; Alexander Rayner; James Rice; Susanna Risbridger; Daniel and Joseph Rosier; Isabella and John Rosier; Ruth Rosier.

Chloe, John and Karen Sadler; Jessica, Rosanna and Timothy Salkeld; Emily, George and Harry Saunders; Ethan and Samuel Saunders; Jasmine Saunders; Joseph and Stephanie Saunders; Clementine, Maria and Nicholas Sayers; Matthew and Rachel Scott; Chloe and Jessica Seymour; Eloise and Ethan Starkey; Emma, Kate and Matthew Stearn; Alexander and Jessica Stevens; Ellen Suckling.

Harry, James and Jemima Tarbin; Elisabeth and Paul Topping; Alison and Andrew Tugwell.

Joanna, Natalie and Thomas Warboys; Beth Wigley; Emma and Joshua Wigley; Bethany, Caleb, Cordelia, Francesca, Jemima, Kitty and Nathanael Wiltshire; Abigail, Edwin, Hannah, Joseph, Kate, Lucy and Matthias Woodhams; Benjamin, Ellen, Jessica, Louise, Timothy and Thomas Woodhams; Sophie Woodhams; Chloe and Lucy Woods.

Overseas Names:

Calvin, Dennis and Kira Glass; Kayla Marie and Walter Hoogmoed; Isaac Knol; Kelly, Matthew and Thomas Mills; Jacob, Joseph, Savannah and Thomas Mol; Derek, Rachel and Shelley Mol; Alfred Mweetwa; Paul Nowlan; Caleb; Danielle and Megan Oudshorn; Emily and Jonathan Quist; John, Luke and Sandra Seymour; Natalie and Zachary Sporte; Abigail, Bethany, Kaitlyn and Michaela Teunissen; Arlicia and Marilene Van de Munt; Benjamin, Danielle and John Van Vugt; Laura Wesdyk; Cody, Dylan and Tyler White; Aaron, Andrew, Carissa, Carolyn, Kristina, Leah, Natalie and Nathan Ymker

The
Friendly Companion



“ ... even Solomon in all his glory
was not arrayed like one of these.”
Matthew 6. 29

April 2012

Editor: Mr. G.D. Buss, "Bethany," 7 Laines Head, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 1PH.

Tel: 01249 656910. Email: gdbuss@tiscali.co.uk

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(Several friends have asked where the picture on the February issue was from. It is of a seat end found overlooking Broadsea Bay from Black Head in Galloway. It was kindly sent by Ethan Saunders. *Ed.*)

OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

On April 10th 1912 one of the daily papers in London reported as follows:

"The world's largest passenger ship set sail from Southampton today on its maiden voyage. The White Star Line says advanced technology and safety features make Titanic the safest ship on the waters today. She is 'unsinkable' they say. Titanic is due in New York on the 17th."

The evening papers of April 15th 1912 reported:

"The British luxury liner Titanic has sunk after hitting an iceberg during her maiden voyage to New York. Over 1,500 people are feared drowned in the icy waters of the North Atlantic. The vessel collided with the 'skyscraper' sized iceberg shortly before midnight on April 14th causing a 300 foot (91m) gash in the vessel's right side. Five of the ship's watertight compartments were punctured, causing the ship to sink at around 2.20 am. The ship's double-bottomed hull, divided into 16 watertight compartments, was said to make her unsinkable. Reports from some of the 691 survivors suggest that there were not enough spaces on the lifeboats for the 2,224 people on board. More lives would have been lost if the liner Carpathia had not reached the Titanic in 80 minutes."

The Word of God says: "Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil" (James 4. 13-16).

It is surely not insignificant that almost on the one hundredth anniversary of the tragic sinking of the Titanic, another cruise liner, *The Costa Concordia*, should suffer a similar fate off the coast of Italy. Thankfully this time the loss of life was much less, but it would seem the lessons of the sinking of the *Titanic* have not been learned.

What are they? Let the Word of God speak for itself: "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16. 18). It was said that Titanic was unsinkable. God, however, had the last word when the foolishness of the captain led him too close to the iceberg, as similarly in the recent disaster the captain sailed too close to an island, it is said to show off to some on shore.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is of the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2. 15-17). The *Costa Concordia* had two full-sized theatres, sports facilities and many other things to entertain carnal minds. Certainly, no God-fearing person would have found either the company or the entertainment conducive. "From such things turn away."

"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh..... Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing" (Matthew 24. 44, 46). We should seek God's grace, so to live our lives, and spend our money, that at what ever time He may come, we should not be ashamed of what we are doing or of what we are spending our money on. The love of sport and the seeking of more and more leisure time in which to forget God, is a great snare to this generation.

May God teach us each to lay these things to heart by "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5. 16)

With best wishes from your sincere friend and Editor.

EDITOR'S POSTBAG

First answers to the monthly questions have been received from JACK MAIN, REBECCA OUTTEN, JONATHAN WESDYK and ALEC WIGLEY.

As postage costs are forecast to rise steeply in the near future, the Editor is quite happy to receive monthly answers by e-mail.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

The beautiful picture of blossom shown on our front cover this month is a powerful reminder to those of us who live in the Northern Hemisphere that Spring is with us once more. How kind is God to clothe the earth with such beauty! How rarely do we hear anyone thank Him for this natural blessing! The Lord Jesus Christ made special mention of the flowers in more than one of His sermons. He said that: "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Solomon's glory as a king was so great that people like the Queen of Sheba came long distances to see for themselves the glory of his kingdom. But Jesus said that the glory of these flowers of the field was more to be admired than Solomon's. That is because the flowers of the field are God's handiwork, whereas Solomon's garments were man-made.

The Lord Jesus had another lesson to be learned by us. The grass and flowers in Jesus' day were often used as fuel to burn in the oven. So one day the flowers could be showing their beautiful colours, and the next day they could be thrown into an oven! He reminded the disciples that if God cared so much for the grass of the field which could so soon be consumed how much more would He clothe and feed those who believe in Him, even though their faith was little!

Isaiah tells us: "The grass withereth, and the flower fadeth: but the Word of our God shall stand for ever." Also he tells us that: "All flesh is grass," so we are as vulnerable in one sense as the grass of the field. Our lives hang on a brittle thread and what a need there is for us to be clothed in a garment in which to meet God. Adam and Eve thought that fig leaves were sufficient but God had a better way which pointed to the coming of the Lord Jesus. He clothed them in the skins of a beast which had to die that they might be properly clothed.

This month is the month when in a special way, the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ are remembered by many of God's people. He died that His children might be clothed with His obedience. The yearly return of the Spring

time, (a type of Christ's resurrection from the dead), is nonetheless nothing to be compared with the righteousness with which Christ clothes sinners. The flowers we see soon wither and die, but Christ's obedience never fades and is always new.

"In Christ's obedience clothe,
And wash me in His blood.
So shall I lift my head with joy
Among the sons of God."

Editor

THE RESURRECTION

Some years ago a young man was preaching the gospel. One of his hearers, an atheist, passed up a note to him: "What has your religion got that all these other religions have not got?" Underneath there was a long list: Buddhism, Mohammedanism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Marxism, etc.

The young man paused for a moment; then wrote an answer to the question: "AM EMPTY TOMB."

We have this wonderful fact – apart from people's beliefs or feelings – the fact that "the Lord is risen indeed."

Someone once said that the resurrection is "the best attested fact of history." Be that as it may, there is certainly as much (or more) proof of the resurrection of Jesus as there is of the coming of Julius Cæsar to Britain in 55 BC.

You all know the story of how Jesus rose from the dead – His lifeless body laid in the grave; the heavy stone; the guard of soldiers; then the angel from heaven rolling away the stone and the Lord Jesus triumphantly coming back to life and leaving the grave. No doubt you can remember how He appeared:

1. To Mary Magdalene
2. To the women coming back from the grave.
3. To Peter.

4. To the two on the way to Emmaus.
5. To the disciples in the upper room.
6. To Thomas (and the other disciples).
7. To the disciples by the Sea of Galilee.
8. On a mountain, to 500.
9. To James
10. To the disciples before ascending.

If someone tells us a strange piece of news which we can hardly believe, we always think: "Can I really trust him?" Well, can we really trust the accounts we have of Jesus' rising? We answer with an emphatic "YES." Why?

1. The writers were honourable men, men who always spoke the truth, men who can be relied on, men always counted as 'saints.' They were men who were willing to *die* for what they believed because they were so certain of it.

2. You cannot help seeing the change in these men. We read of how, when Jesus was crucified, they "all forsook Him and fled." Peter was so afraid that He even cursed and swore, saying that He did not know Jesus. We see them, afraid, in that upper room, the doors locked. A little later they are brave, courageous; they are not afraid to stand up before their enemies. Their preaching is believed by multitudes. What had made the difference in that little time? Had something happened? Yes, their Lord and Master, whom they had seen crucified, had come back to life and they had seen Him and talked with Him.

3. If Jesus did *not* rise from the dead, why did His enemies not produce His body? When Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost (six weeks later) saying that Jesus was alive, His grave was close at hand. But no one could go there and say: 'Here is His body.' No, "He is not here; for He is risen, as He said."

B.A. Ramsbottom

*FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES***THE WALLS OF JERICHO FALL DOWN**

The people of Jericho were afraid of the children of Israel. They locked the gates of the city, and no one could go out or come in. But God had told Joshua what they must do.

Each day the men of Israel marched around the walls of Jericho one time and then returned to their camp. First went the armed men and then seven priests blowing on trumpets made of rams' horns. Next the ark of the LORD was carried, and the rest of the fighting men followed.

For six days they marched in silence around Jericho. The trumpets were blown but no one spoke a word. On the seventh day they rose early in the morning and marched around the city seven times. Then Joshua cried: *"Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city."*

The priests blew the trumpets and the people shouted with a loud shout. And God caused the great walls of Jericho to fall down flat. The spies brought out Rahab and her family and saved them alive. Then the soldiers went straight up into the city and destroyed it.

QUESTIONS:

1. How did they march around Jericho for six days? (2 words)
2. How many times did they march around on the seventh day?
3. What did God cause the walls of Jericho to do? (3 words)

Please send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail (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. A sword.
 2. Captain.
 3. Holy place.
- Contributed*

*“By faith the
walls of Jericho
fell down, after
they were
compassed
about seven
days.”*

Hebrews 11. 30

BIBLE LESSONS**THE WIDOW'S MITES, THE GREEKS' DESIRE**

The last few days before His death were long, tiring days for Jesus. There were so many things He must set in order. Many of the religious leaders must be admonished for their sinful traditions. Pharisees, Sadducees, lawyers, doctors, and many others too, received sharp rebukes from the Saviour.

Often men of high positions demand attention for themselves, and the poor and unlearned are completely forgotten and overlooked. However, Jesus never forgot such despised ones. He displayed wonderful condescension, even amongst all His pressing duties.

As He sat in the temple, Jesus watched as the people cast money into the treasury. This money was used for the upkeep of the temple and to purchase the provisions that were needed.

In many places of worship today, an offering or tithe is received from the people to help pay for the things that are required.

Jesus watched as the rich cast in great amounts of money. They, no doubt, made sure that others would see the large sum they gave. They were so proud of their giving.

After a while, a poor widow woman came into the temple. Being a widow, she would have very little income. She might even be excused if she gave nothing. However, she loved the Lord's house too much to give nothing. No, she would give what she could! Thus, she dropped two mites into the treasury box. It was such a small amount, not even worth a penny.

Would the Lord Jesus be upset that she gave so little? Oh, no! He spoke so kindly of her: *"Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all."* What did the Lord mean? Very simply, it was this: the others gave out of their surplus; they still had plenty more in their houses. This widow woman gave all that she had in her possession; she had nothing left at home. It was a real sacrifice for her to give.

While this was taking place within the temple, something else was taking place just outside. Some men were talking to Philip, saying: *"Sir, we would see Jesus."* These men were

Greeks who had come to worship at the feast. Being Gentiles, they were not allowed to enter the temple. Yet, they hoped that Jesus would come out to them.

Philip went and told Andrew, and the two of them went and told Jesus. Would Jesus humble Himself now to talk to such strangers? Oh, indeed He would, but not with the words they thought! He began to speak about His death. We don't like to talk about that, do we? We do not like to be reminded of it.

Jesus compared Himself to a grain of wheat which must be sown in the ground. There it dies, and in dying, it brings forth much fruit. Thus, Jesus must die so that His people may live forever. Jesus went on to say: *"He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."* What a difficult saying! Who can really understand it?

As the people looked on Jesus, there was a change in His very appearance. His countenance became very sad. His eyes seemed filled with sorrow. His thoughts were filled with the great agony coming upon Him. Finally He cried out: *"Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour."* Could He be saved from it? No; He must go through. He remembered: *"...for this cause came I unto this hour."*

Even under such a dark cloud, Jesus was burdened for His Father's glory. He prayed for His Father to glorify His name. His Father spoke from heaven, saying: *"I have both glorified It, and will glorify It again."*

You can read about this in Mark chapter 12 verses 35 to 44, and Luke chapter 20 verses 45 to 47 and chapter 21 verses 1 to 4, and John chapter 12 verses 20 to 30.

QUESTIONS:

1. How much did the poor widow drop into the treasury?
2. How much did the Lord say the widow cast in? (4 words)
3. What were the men outside the temple saying to Philip? (5 words)
4. Who were these men?
5. What did Jesus ask His Father to do? (3 words)

Please send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail (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. Hypocrites.
2. The things which are Cæsar's.
3. The things that are God's.
4. The dead.
5. The living.

G. L. TenBroeke

YOUR MOBILE PHONE AND THE BIBLE

Just imagine what would happen if we travelled around with our Bible in the same manner as we do with our mobile phones. What would be the result?

- We would then always have our Bible in our pocket no matter where we would be.
- We would look at our Bible the first thing in the morning, and it would also be the last thing we looked at before we went to bed.
- We would look at our Bible frequently during the day to see if it contained any personal messages for us.
- We would return to retrieve our Bible if we came to the realization that we had forgotten it when we left our home.
- We would send all our friends the best messages.
- We would treat our Bible as though we could not exist without it.
- We would have our children carry their Bible with them for their safety.
- We would show our Bible to many people as our most valuable possession and one that contains such worthwhile information.
- We would always pay attention to our precious time of grace.
- And ... (you can fill in the rest)!

Place this mirror before your eyes. Suppose your mobile phone was the Bible? Could there be anything better?

Translated from "de Kerkblad der Gereformeerde Gemeenten in de Classis Amsterdam"

LIONEL THOMSON (II)

Yet another way in which this dear child gave evidence of his love for what was right, was his love for the people of God. Dear little Lionel was always asking his friends to take him to see the Lord's people. Several of our members in Oban had met this child in Miss MacGillivray's house and he expressed more than once an ardent desire to visit them. He was really afraid of going out at night, but even this he was willing to risk if his friend would take him to see some of the godly. After being in Lewis for some time, he told his friend that he loved his grandfather because he would read the Bible to him all day. His love for the Bible was extraordinary. On one occasion he was observed embracing the blessed volume in his little bosom and saying: "I love you, I love you, I love you." Just then he turned to his friend and said: "Oh, I wish our house was just full of Bibles." Why such love to the Bible? Let David answer:

"Eternal righteousness is in
Thy testimonies all;
Lord to me understanding give,
And ever live I shall."

Surely Lionel had found here the same Pearl of Great Price as the Ethiopian found in the desert of Gaza. Scripture tells us that the lustre and value of this pearl of divine wisdom is such that the topaz of Ethiopia shall not even be compared to it. Such burning love for truth, such heart devotion to its unearthly treasures, marked this child out as one of the precious sons of Zion.

In all these things this blood-bought child gave evidence that he truly loved righteousness, but this was most clearly seen in connection with his love for the Incarnate Word, the Lord Jesus. Shortly before he was taken home, he expressed this wish: "I wish that Jesus would take me out of this world at once." "And why?" asked his friend. "Because I love Jesus more than anybody in the whole world." The sweet, modest and joyful way in which he gave utterance to such holy desires does not admit of expression. Those who were privileged to

hear him speak of his heart's longings, know how inadequate words are to justly convey the ecstasy with which he spoke. Truly this darling child was no stranger to the unutterable groaning of the Spirit's intercession. In this tabernacle he groaned being burdened, not desiring to be unclothed but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. His love to righteousness was so consuming that nothing short of Christ and the purity of heaven would suffice for him.

But this child's hatred to iniquity was no less than his love for righteousness. Bad words, rough gestures or anything unseemly caused Lionel to shudder. Even the lawful recreations in which other children indulge with pleasure, made little or no appeal to him. He had little inclination to play with his own brother. No sooner was he home from school, than off he would go to his friend to while away the remainder of the evening, listening to the Word of God. There he would stay until it was time to depart.

On one occasion he was asked to go with other little boys to a so-called Christmas party; Lionel refused to go. The frothy joys of earth were not sweet enough for one who had tasted so early of the Saviour's love. Another day, a nun met Lionel and spoke to him. He appeared to detect below the kindly voice and smile, the corruption of Rome, and ran into the house to tell Miss MacGillivray that he met a nun and that she had spoken to him, "but," he added wistfully, "she is not a good lady."

Further evidence and perhaps the most convincing of this child's hatred to iniquity, was his hatred to the devil. One day he amazed his friend by saying: "Oh, I wish the devil was dead." How much of the spirit of Christ was in these words we may judge of, when we consider a remark made by the beloved disciple. John tells us that for this cause was Christ manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil. It is, however, the distinguishing feature of grace to love and compassionate the sinner while it abhors his sin. This child certainly hated iniquity, when he expressed his hatred to the father of lies; but why did

Lionel desire the death of the arch-enemy? “Because he is keeping sinners from coming to Christ,” was the apposite answer given. Like all the heirs of salvation, like all who have been sweetly and sovereignly saved by grace, he was not content to be a lone partaker of such blessings, but fervently desired others to share in them. It was love to Christ, love to souls, love to all that is pure and holy, that moved him to desire the death of Satan.

A remarkable feature of this child’s remarks was their simplicity. If we may so speak, they resembled the gospel in being profoundly simple. The little questioner once asked his nursing-mother*: “What does it mean to be born again?” An answer adapted to the child’s capacity and mode of thinking was attempted, to which he modestly replied: “It is as simple as this: to come to Jesus.” And, is it not so? What is the sum of Christ’s own teaching on this matter, but Lionel’s simple explanation: “to come to Jesus,” or in other words: to believe in Him? Simple, no doubt, but so simple as to cause many to stumble in their pride. (*See John 6. 35, 45 – Editor*)

It was evident to those who knew the child that his thoughts were in eternity. The things of God pre-occupied his young mind. “Do you believe in ghosts?” he said one day. “Oh, no,” said his friend, “there are no such things.” “Oh, yes,” said Lionel, “but it is true about one: the Holy Ghost.” On another occasion, he told Miss MacGillivray that he had a dream. In this dream he saw heaven and he said: “I saw the captain is there,” referring to Miss MacGillivray’s father, who had passed away shortly before then. Lionel loved especially Psalm 23, and the latter part of Psalm 24 was no meaningless rhyme to him. On listening to the account given in Revelation of the sea of glass mingled with fire, he would most reverently say: “Isn’t that lovely.” The angels and their service was another theme to which he had recourse with pleasure. It could well be said of Lionel that, whatsoever things were pure, whatsoever things were lovely, whatsoever things were of good report, on these things he thought.

(To be concluded)

(*spiritual mother – one who taught the child the things of God)

WHEN THE NATION PRAYED ... (III)**The Providential Hand Of God in the Second World War
A Bumper Harvest**

During 1942 shipping, normally used to bring food to these shores from overseas, was urgently required for carrying men and munitions. Yet Britain had to be fed. A supreme effort was made by British agriculture and a degree of co-operation and united labour was achieved as never before in our history. Added to this were the prayers of innumerable people that God would bless their efforts.

There was a bumper harvest! It had become apparent to R. S. Hudson, the Minister of Agriculture, that God had been with us, for in a postscript to the BBC 9-o'clock news on Old Michaelmas Night 1942, he said: "But this also I would say to you, in humility and seriousness. Much hard work and technical skill have played their part in these mighty yields, amongst the richest of all time. But I believe that we have a higher Power to thank as well, and from the depths of our hearts. Some Power has wrought a miracle in the English harvest fields this summer, for in this, our year of greatest need, the land has given us bread in greater abundance than we have ever known before."

D-Day 1944 – The Deliverance of a Continent

The task was a huge one. A massive instrument was needed and God had been preparing it and the men to lead it. King George VI, General Montgomery, Admiral Cunningham, Admiral Tovey, General Sir Miles Dempsey (Commander of the British Second Army in the invasion of Europe) and General Eisenhower (the Supreme Commander) – all these had a declared testimony of their faith in Almighty God.

There was also the preparation of the forces about to be involved in the coming invasion. The Deputy Chaplain-General, Canon Llewellyn Hughes, said: "The preparation of our armies has not been a last-minute effort. We were asked, and strongly asked, to make our men as aware of the claims of

Christianity as we could, to preach the Word of Christ faithfully because it is true; to seek to bring men to God that He might make them upright. Most of the men are not regular churchgoing men but they are God-fearing men. When General Eisenhower and General Montgomery in their final Orders of the Day asked us all to pray that God would prosper us, that prayer went up, and went up from honest hearts, freely and fully convinced that the business in hand was a liberation according to the will of God.”

The Decision When To Invade

The Supreme Commander, his Commander-in-Chief and their Chiefs of Staff met at 4 a.m. on Monday 5 June, for “the final and irrevocable decision.” Messages went to all the vast forces concerned: the invasion of France would start on the morning of the next day. General Eisenhower gave testimony to the effect that this had on him, when he was speaking in Abilene, Kansas, his home town, on 4 June 1952 (‘Time’ magazine, 16 June 1952). “This day, eight years ago, I made the most agonising decision of my life. I had to decide to postpone by at least twenty-four hours the most formidable array of fighting ships and of fighting men that was ever launched across the sea against a hostile shore. The consequences of that decision at that moment could not have been foreseen by anyone. If there was nothing else in my life to prove the existence of an Almighty and Merciful God, the events of the next twenty-four hours did it. The greatest break in a terrible outlay of weather, occurred the next day and allowed that great invasion to proceed, with losses far below those we had anticipated.”

V.E. Day 1945

The Rev. David E. Gardner, in his book “The Trumpet Sounds for Britain,” Vol. 2 (Christian Foundation Publications), from which the preceding material has been drawn (and is used by permission), writes: “I well remember V.E. Day. London was rejoicing. The royal family, the Prime Minister,

the Service chiefs, and members of the Cabinet, all appeared on the balcony of Buckingham Palace before a joyful and tumultuous throng. It was a proud moment in our history. The Service chiefs came to the microphone in turn, made short speeches, and paid tribute to the part which their respective arm of the Services had played in bringing about this great victory. The Prime Minister spoke – the one who had always been conscious of that overruling providence, that guiding, guardian hand. He must have come straight from the Thanksgiving Service in St. Margaret’s Westminster. His Majesty King George VI then stepped quietly to the microphone. I can still hear his voice today, as he said with great emphasis: “We give thanks to Almighty God for the victory He has granted us in Europe.”

*Written and distributed by Tremore Christian Fellowship,
Tremore Manor, Bodmin, PL30 5JT (01208 831204).
Slightly adapted.*

THE THREE WISE MONKEYS IN SCRIPTURE

I recently read the 400-year-old Japanese maxim of the Three Wise Monkeys, which is in turn based on a 2,500-year-old Chinese code of conduct, being:

- See no evil
- Hear no evil
- Speak no evil

In Japanese culture, monkeys are a symbol of wisdom.

Following a week of trial and worry, trying to control problems which largely arose out of people not following the above maxim, I came to realise that there seemed to be a great deal of wisdom embodied in these words. As the holy Word of God is the only source of true wisdom, the question arose in my mind: are the three wise monkeys encompassed in Scripture and if so, how? What are the Scriptural “Three Wise Monkeys”?

See No Evil

What is evil in this context? Thinking ill of your fellows.

If you see something that shocks you, or you think is wrong, or someone behaves towards you in a way that you perceive to be hurtful and wrong, bear in mind that you may be mistaken in what you think you are seeing; perhaps misunderstanding the signs. So do not jump to conclusions that might be wrong.

“Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again” (Matthew 7. 1-2).

“Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven” (Luke 6. 37).

“Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (John 7. 24).

Hear No Evil

Assume the best in people; what you are being told may not be true, even if the person that is telling you believes that it is.

Even if it was true, we should do as Luther suggested, and cast a cloak of Christian love and charity over each other's infirmities.

“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 truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth...” (1 Corinthians 13. 4-8).

Speak No Evil

What is it to speak evil? This can be answered by looking at another well-known maxim. “Is it true? Is it kind? Is it necessary?” If the answer to any one of these questions is “No,” then it is evil.

Remember, for something to be true, you must have first-hand knowledge and righteous judgment, or positive evidence of the facts: relying on what someone else saw or heard is not sufficient, they may after all be at best mistaken!

The Scriptures are very clear on speak no evil.

“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour” (Exodus 20. 16).

“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice” (Ephesians 4. 31).

“Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile” (Psalm 34. 13).

“To speak evil of no man” (Titus 3. 2).

“Speak not evil one of another, brethren” (James 4. 11).

“For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile” (1 Peter 3. 10).

So then, the Three Wise Monkeys are Scriptural, and so a sound maxim to be followed. May each pray that the tender fear of God might be put in each of our hearts and grace be given to: “See no evil, hear no evil and speak no evil” of our fellows, and especially brothers and sisters in the faith.

“Save me from pride, that angel-form
That swells a poor, weak, sinful worm;
That moves the tongue, the hand, the eyes,
And often takes me by surprise.” *H. Fowler*
Contributed

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

JOHN 17 – THE PRAYER OF JESUS CHRIST THE SON OF GOD (IV)

Believers, the church, sanctification.

The church of Jesus Christ is made up of individual believers. It is only a person who is born again by the Holy Spirit and brought to a saving faith in Jesus Christ that is truly in the church of God. Having believing parents cannot confer upon us spiritual life nor can it possibly give us a right to church membership. The Holy Scriptures teach us most emphatically that there is only one qualification for membership of a Christian church, faith in Jesus Christ. In the

following Scripture we are instructed how faith comes by the new birth: *“But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1. 12-13)*. This Scripture makes it abundantly clear that those who receive Christ do so because they were born again by the Holy Spirit.

What brings us to these thoughts in our current meditation in this sacred prayer are the following words: *“Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth” (John 17. 17)*.

We are instructed: *“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Peter 1. 23)*. The Holy Spirit seals the Word of God into the heart. When He does so, it is a quickening Word, to give spiritual life. It is a reproofing Word, to convince of sin. It is an enlightening Word, to bring from darkness to light. It is a revealing Word, to show the loveliness and glory of Jesus Christ. Above all it is a sanctifying Word, to separate us from this vain sinful world. The dear Apostle Paul emphasises in all his epistles the sanctifying effect of the Word of Grace in the hearts and lives of the Lord’s living family: *“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2. 11-14)*. It is when the Word reaches our heart it sanctifies our life. But when a person that professes to love our Lord Jesus Christ, but lives in the world and follows the fashions and ways of the world and lives as the world, it is self-evident, regardless of what they profess, that that person’s heart has not truly been affected by the truth as it is in Jesus. Read the first chapter of the Epistle of James verses 21-27. The perfect law of liberty is the sacred law of grace.

Consider the doctrine of truth contained in these words of Jesus: *"I have given them Thy Word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world"* (John 17. 14-16). For those of us that profess to love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth: does our walk and conduct honour our Lord Jesus Christ? Are we fruitful unto every good work? Do we walk in love? Do we live separate from the world, in it, but not of it? These are the sacred fruits of the Spirit: *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever"* (1 John 2. 15-17). May those solemn words of our Lord Jesus continually echo in our hearts: *"Ye cannot serve God and mammon."* You cannot have Christ in one hand and the world in the other. If you are, you are living an awful lie.

(To be continued)

J.R. Rutt

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about THE EARLIER LIFE OF JACOB. Younger children need only do five questions. References are to the Book of Genesis unless otherwise stated. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail (see page 74 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. What was Jacob's twin brother called? (25. 25-26)
2. In what ways were Jacob and his brother different? (25. 27 & 27. 11)

3. What did Jacob dream about at Bethel when running away from his brother? (28. 12)
4. Rebekah had told Jacob to flee to Laban for “a few days” (27. 44). How long was it before Jacob actually returned? (31. 41)
5. What did Jacob call the name of the place where he said: “I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved”? (32. 30)
6. What does the name “Jacob” mean, and what two occasions did his brother mention which justified the name given to him? (27)
7. “Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed.” What news had he heard to make him afraid? (32)
8. “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Galatians 6. 7). Jacob deceived his own father – in what way was Jacob first deceived by Laban? (29)
9. In what way did Jacob’s sons deceive their own father? (37)
10. “I loved Jacob, and I hated ... [Jacob’s brother].” Where are these words found in the Old Testament, and where are they referred to in the New Testament?

ANSWERS TO MARCH QUESTIONS

1. Joseph of Arimathea.
2. In a garden near to the place where Jesus was crucified.
3. Joseph rolled a great stone across the door of the sepulchre.
4. They remembered that Jesus had promised to rise again after three days and wanted to prevent it. (Matthew 27. 62-66)
5. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James (and Salome?). “Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?” (Mark 16. 1-3)
6. “Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.” (or the equivalent quotation from Mark 16. 6)
7. Mary Magdalene. “Mary” (Mark 16. 9, John 20. 16)
8. Emmaus. Cleopas.
9. Nicodemus. “A mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.” (John 19. 39) We read of Nicodemus in John 3 and John 7. 50.
10. “Peace be unto you.” (John 20. 19, 21, 26)

Contributed

JESUS ONLY

Only a little Babe,
 Low in a manger laid,
As helpless and as weak
 As other infants made;
But faith, with reverent, bended knee,
 In Him can God's salvation see.

Only a patient Man,
 Treading this earth below,
In poverty and pain,
 In weariness and woe;
But faith beholds God's law revealed,
 By His obedience all fulfilled.

Only a suffering One
 On an accursèd tree;
His enemies deride
 His dying agony:
Faith, gazing with adoring eyes,
 Beholds death conquered as He dies.

Only an empty tomb,
 The place where Jesus lay;
Say, who has dared to come
 And take my Lord away?
Faith stoops to view the place, and cries,
 "Since He is risen, I too shall rise!"

Jesus, Thy life and death
 Are all in all to me!
Through these my soul shall stand
 Accepted, pardoned, free;
Saved by Thy righteousness and blood,
 Faultless before the throne of God.

E.C.

The Friendly Companion



“For how long shall thy journey be?
and when wilt thou return?”
Nehemiah 2. 6.

May 2012

Editor: Mr. G.D. Buss, "Bethany," 7 Laines Head, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 1PH.

Tel: 01249 656910. Email: gdbuss@tiscali.co.uk

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

In every house you can be sure there will be a window, either to let the light in, or for those who live inside to be able to look out. The Bible has some very instructive things to tell us about windows. Here are three windows for you to think about.

Firstly, Noah's window: When God commanded Noah to make the ark, which was to be the way in which he and his family would escape the terrible flood, God gave to him very exact instructions about the building of it. One of these instructions was that there was to be only one window, and that was to be in the roof! So the only way that light could come in was from above, and the only way Noah and his family could look, was up! So it is that God means His children to receive their light (or understanding) from Him, and for them to look up to Him in prayer for all their needs. David said in Psalm 5. 3: "My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up." Another good man once said: "When the outlook is bad try the up-look!" So Noah's window reminds us of God's goodness in times of trouble.

Secondly, Rahab's window: You will remember how Rahab, in faith, received the spies from Israel in peace, and did not betray them to their enemies. She pleaded with the spies to spare her and her family from the destruction which she knew God was going to send on Jericho. As a token to her that she would be delivered, the spies commanded her to tie a scarlet cord in the window, through which they were to be let down. So Rahab's window reminds us of faith and obedience to God's Word.

Thirdly Daniel's window: When King Darius foolishly made a decree that no one was to make a request of any god, but himself, for thirty days, Daniel, who served the One True and Living God, determined that he would still pray to God as he always did. So opening his window towards Jerusalem, he prayed as usual. He would not compromise, even though it put him in danger of the lions' den. How wonderfully was his

prayer answered! He had to go into the lions' den, showing us that it is sometimes God's will that we should go through a trouble, before He delivers us out of it. But see how God sent His angel to shut the lions' mouths and so delivered Daniel from the desire of his enemies! So Daniel's window reminds us of a man who was not ashamed of His God, and proved the power of God in subduing even wild animals in answer to prayer.

You might be able to find other windows in God's Word which teach other lessons. If so, write and tell me.

With best wishes from your sincere friend and Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

I wonder where the road on our front cover picture is leading? Is it a dead-end I wonder? Is it on the way home? Or is the photographer leaving home? None of these questions can be answered by just looking at the picture. It does, however, lead us to a question asked by a king, of Nehemiah: "For how long shall thy journey be? And when wilt thou return?" You can read of this journey in Nehemiah chapter 1 and you will notice that the queen was sitting by the king when he asked the question. This queen was probably Esther, of whom so much is written in the book that bears her name. If so, being a Jewess, how sympathetic she would have been to Nehemiah's request, because he wanted to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls which had been destroyed by the invading armies when the seventy years captivity had begun.

It is very clear that the king had great confidence in Nehemiah, that he would not waste his time and would return at the appointed time. It is very important that those with whom we have to work, study, or live, can trust us. As one employer wrote on the reference of one of his employees who feared God greatly like Hananiah: "You can trust this man with your life." It brings great reproach on the name of Jesus if those who profess to be Christians cannot be trusted by those with whom they have to be. A Christian should never be avoidably late for work; he should never waste his master's time or deal deceitfully in any

matter. Christian employers have a similar example to set!

The important point with Nehemiah was that this was a journey that God had commanded him to take, and was for God's honour and glory. Like godly Eliezer in Genesis 24, he found that the Lord prospered his journey. Jonah could not have said that when he fled to Tarshish could he? Saul of Tarsus could not have said it on the Damascus Road, but then as in the case of Jonah, God intervened and brought both of these men on a journey which He had commanded. How thankful we should be if we have been turned as these two men were!

The hymn writer says:

“The appointed time rolls on apace,
Not to propose but call by grace;
To change the heart, renew the will,
And turn the feet to Zion's hill.”

John Kent

If someone were to ask you how long your journey of life would be, you could not say. That is in God's hand. One thing we know that it is a journey which will end in eternity. There will be no returning as Nehemiah returned to Shushan. How important it is to be able to answer the question as to where our life's journey will end. Paul could say: “Here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.” His spiritual journey began with the new birth on the Damsacus Road. Unless we have been started on the journey to eternity with the same new birth, we cannot expect it to end in heaven with Christ and His people.

May God help you to answer the question? “Whither goest thou?”

EDITOR'S POSTBAG

First answers to the monthly questions have been received from SUSANNA HICKMAN, MILLIE PLAYFOOT and GRACE SADLER.

*FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES***ACHAN'S SIN**

God said that Jericho was cursed. The children of Israel were not allowed to take anything from it for themselves. All the gold and silver were for the LORD alone. But a man named Achan disobeyed God. He saw a wedge of gold, some pieces of silver, and a beautiful garment. He took them and hid them in his tent. He thought no one would find out.

The sin of Achan brought trouble upon Israel. The next time they went out to fight, God did not help them. They fled from the enemy and some of them were killed. The people were afraid and Joshua fell on his face before the LORD. God said: *"Israel hath sinned ... neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you."*

God showed before all Israel what Achan had done in secret. The stolen things were found in his tent, and then the people threw stones at him until he died. What a solemn warning it was that they must obey the commands of God! Only by the help of God could their battles be won.

QUESTIONS:

1. What did a man named Achan do? (2 words)
2. What did the sin of Achan bring upon Israel? (1 word)
3. God showed before all what Achan had done ___. (2 words)

Please send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail (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. In silence.
2. Seven.
3. Fall down flat.

Contributed

*“Be sure
your sin
will find
you out.”*

Numbers

32. 23.

BIBLE LESSONS

THE SIGNS OF THE LAST DAYS

The third day of the week was nearly over, with all its wonderful events and lessons (see January to April). Sorrow now filled the heart of Jesus, which caused Him to weep, saying: *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.”* Jesus then walked out of the temple for the last time.

Silently His disciples followed Him, no doubt pondering the solemn words: *“... your house is left unto you desolate.”* As they descended from the high hill on which the temple was built, perhaps the last lingering rays of the setting sun reflected on the white marble stones of the temple and filled the disciples with awe over its beauty. They called out to Jesus, saying: *“Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!”* Indeed the temple was *“beautiful for situation,”* as we read in the Book of Psalms. They could hardly believe their ears for what Jesus next spoke unto them: *“Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”*

Across the way from Mount Zion where the temple stood, was the Mount of Olives, which Jesus and His disciples now ascended. As they climbed the mount, Jesus sat down to rest, and the disciples gathered close around Him. They were very anxious to ask Him certain questions. The destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem seemed so impossible; yet they knew that the words of Jesus were true and would certainly come to pass. They pleaded with Jesus: *“Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?”*

Jesus knew how heavy and troubled their hearts were. He talked very earnestly with them. He first told them that men

would come, claiming to be Christ, and many would believe them. He warned the disciples not to go after them. He told them further that there would be wars and dreadful conflicts. Nations would fight against one another. Even Israel would be beaten and destroyed by other nations.

Also, there would be earthquakes in many places and great famines, with starvation and pestilences (disease and plagues). Jesus warned them further that they would be hated in every nation for His name's sake. Some of them would even be put to death.

Again, many false prophets (teachers) would arise and deceive many souls. Iniquity (evil) would abound and become worse and worse, and love to that which is good would grow cold. What a sign of the days in which we live! The Lord reminded them that these were the desolations that Daniel wrote about long before.

The Lord warned them to: *"take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged (anxious) with ... cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares."* What solemn words He then spoke unto them: *"WATCH ye therefore, and PRAY always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."*

These things must have seemed overwhelming to the disciples. Jesus added a further word of caution: *"But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."* In view of these things, what were the disciples to do? Jesus would tell them: *"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations."*

You can read about this in Matthew chapter 23 verses 37 to 39 and chapter 24, Mark chapter 13, and Luke chapter 21 verses 5 to 36.

QUESTIONS:

1. What city did Jesus weep over?
2. Finish the sentence. What shall be the sign of: __ (9 words)
3. What would the disciples be hated for? (3 words)

4. What two things did Jesus tell His disciples to do to be counted worthy to escape?

5. Who did Jesus say shall be saved? (7 words)

Please send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail (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. Two mites. 2. More than they all. (all that she had)

3. Sir, we would see Jesus. 4. Greeks.

5. Glorify His name.

G.L. TenBroeke

LIONEL THOMSON (III)

It is true of all who truly love the Lord Jesus and are born from above, that they get to know something of the cross of Christ. A mere sinless example so far from saving and comforting our souls only aggravates our guilt, galling and abashing us from our innumerable sins and shortcomings. Only a faith's view of a suffering Saviour, One dying in the room and stead of the guilty, can avail to lift the sinner out of the dunghill and give him to hope in the atoning mercy of God. Nor was Lionel, this child of the covenant, without such views. "Do you know what I would like to see more than anything else in the whole world?" was a question asked one day by Lionel. An answer was attempted, but who could have guessed what was in the mind of the precious little lamb? "The cross upon which Jesus was crucified." Who cannot here discern the living desire of a conscious sinner for a faith's view of the crucified Lamb? Not many days after, the Spirit-taught child did see the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, for he was soon transported to heaven where, in the words of one like-minded with himself, he was given to gaze unveiled, not only on glory, but on his King of Grace.

Just when the Lord was preparing a chariot for this sweet child, he called to see his friend. It would appear that he had

come to say: "Farewell." He seemed to know that he was leaving soon. Having entered the room, he said: "Let me sit on your knee, please." On being told that he was now in school and rather big for nursing of that kind, he still insisted but this once to sit on her knee. Just then he said: "Perhaps I'll not go to school anymore and my little sister will get all my books." His friend casually took up her knitting. "You will have plenty of time for knitting again." Here is an echo from the divinely honoured house of Bethany, where another of the same flock sat at the feet of Christ and listened to His words. To the utter exclusion of everything else, during that all-too-brief hour of merciful visitation, Lionel chose, as Mary did, to sit fast by the Lord. It was the same holy abandon that constrained this darling boy to exclude all but the Word of God on that last but memorable visit. Well Lionel knew what Jesus meant when He said to the hypocritical, covetous-hearted Judas: "The poor ye have always with you, but Me, ye have not always."

On the day following this incident, the child was blown against the wall in front of his father's house by the force of a high wind. The result was a gash above the child's eye. It was thought proper to run the child to hospital for immediate medical attention. The parents of the child waited for their darling child as the little gash was being stitched, but while they waited their child had gone to join the spirits of the just made perfect. The Lord heard, the Lord answered. Absent from the body, Lionel was present with the Lord. No event of his short life was more characteristic than its close: it was quiet, noiseless, deeply veiled. It becomes us then to pause and exclaim, not in rebellion, but in awful astonishment: "Verily, Thou art a God that hidest Thyself," for "it is the glory of God to conceal a matter." It is thus that we are led to thread our way through the maze of life, in the constant exercise of child-like faith in God. Undoubtedly, the child was in various ways given intimation of a sudden and early departure from this world, but as is generally the case, any premonitions of this

kind are left uncherished. From one point of view, our ignorance of such events is a blessing in disguise, but viewed from another aspect, it appears to us to be such a pity. Had we known that our dear little friend was so near the celestial city, we might have asked more and received more, but on the other hand, the realisation of such things is mercifully hid from us. God had gentle thoughts of him preparing the mode of departure for him. Exempt from that dread of approaching dissolution which the strongest mind can scarcely fail to experience, and spared the disruption of those tender ties which a living and sensitive soul like his would feel, he got quickly over the river which all must pass. And so, we leave him there among the ransomed of the Lord, who have returned to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. Let us return to view the mourners on earth.

Among them was one, and an entire stranger, who testified to the character of dear little Lionel. His presence there was the result of a very short and casual meeting with the departed child. This traveller had been stopped by a little policeman as he motored past Lionel's house. On stepping out of his car, Lionel told him that his front lights were on. A short conversation followed which impressed the traveller so much that on hearing the sad tidings of Lionel's death, he felt that he could not leave the town without paying his last respects to this dear child. Yes, there was something very striking about this child; and what was it? It was the grace of God in his heart.

Should this little sketch be the means of awakening in the soul of one a real desire after that same grace which Lionel so manifestly possessed, we are amply rewarded.

“Ye careless ones, O hear betimes,
The voice of sov'reign love,
Your youth is stained with many crimes
But mercy reigns above.

F. MacDonald

A SHEPHERD'S ROUND

Our shepherd has had an accident and cannot drive his van. He can still attend to sheep within cycling distance of the farm but a driver has to be found for him to see to his daily counting of sheep further afield. I have been the driver throughout September, and will tell you a few of the things I noticed.

Perhaps town people do not realise that whatever other or seasonal work has to be done to the sheep, one thing is all-important: they must be counted every day. Jesus said (Matthew 12. 11): "What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?" So even on the Sabbath day, the sheep had to be counted, though on our farm we took care to get this done early so that even the shepherd, had he so wished, could have attended the house of God for worship.

Usually all went fairly smoothly: we would drive four miles off to a large park where we hired the grazing. The shepherd and his dog, Ben, got over the fence, the sheep were rounded up, and I would see the shepherd, in close concentration, counting them. One morning from my driver's seat I noticed one sheep far away from the others, lying in a queer position and really looking as though it was dead. The dog rounded up all the rest, but I could see that the shepherd was missing one as he counted, looked about and counted again. He sent the dog over the meadow again. It raced about, then suddenly saw this sheep, crept up to it cautiously, sniffed and then gave a sharp bark. Up jumped the sheep: it had been fast asleep and for once unaware of the dog, the disturber of the peace.

This reminded me of a tale my husband used to tell. When he was a boy he was sent on a farming errand about two miles away and on his return told his father he had seen a dead sheep. "Did you go up to it to make sure?" "No, father, but I'm quite sure it was dead, the queer way it lay." His father went the two-mile walk and came back to say there was no dead sheep to be seen. A sheep can be very helpless, and

indeed it *can* die if it gets on its back, but to tell if it is dead you must go to it and really see its condition, turn it over, or give it a whack. Doesn't this make you think of the Good Samaritan who when others let the poor man lie half-dead, went where he was, and saw him and dealt with him.

One foggy morning the shepherd could not get his number right. One sheep was missing and though he and his dog spent a good while searching the furthest ditches, he could not find that sheep. "Maybe she was left behind yesterday when these were moved here," he said, "it was foggy then. We'll go back to that meadow and see if one is left there." It was about half a mile away. We went; no sign of a sheep there, but the fog was teasing. So we did our four-mile trip to the park and back. By then the fog had lifted, and there, in yesterday's meadow, was the one lost sheep. "Shall we drive it up into the van?" asked I. "Ever tried to drive one sheep?" said Jim. "Try if you like, but don't let her out of the gate. I'm going back to the orchard and will bring along those four rams to help us."

While he was away I looked at the sheep. She was a "lamb of a year old," and what a magnificent strong healthy creature she was. When the Israelites were told at Passover time to take a lamb of a year old, it was certainly a prime animal, quite unlike the tiny lambkins so foolishly pictured on religious cards and the like. Such a lamb – it had to be in perfect condition, without blemish of any kind – was a worthy sacrifice, quite a handsome gift from the owner of that weight of meat and that weight of wool. It was not surprising that begrudging worshippers would sometimes contrive to smuggle up a torn, lame or sick sheep (Malachi 1).

Well, I made a dart to catch this fine creature but she eluded me and then suddenly butted at me and nearly knocked me down. What a strength she had! I could see it was impossible, even for a shepherd, to deal with one such healthy unfettered sheep with a whole meadow before her. Presently along came the four rams, driven by two men as well as our shepherd. The

sheep was pleased to see them and in a moment or two all five were penned in a corner. Then the van could be backed towards them. After a jostle or two the errant sheep was hustled up in and captured. The rams were then driven back to their orchard and we drove the van away to the field where the flock was. The lamb was released. All the sheep were lying contentedly chewing the cud, but as she trotted towards them there came a reproving Baa from the first one and then another of quite a number of them. As she met the first one it rose and sniffed at her, a second did the same, then a third. She moved more slowly looking quite abashed, and presently got in among them and began eating grass, hoping all would be forgotten!

So you see, it is not always a pathetic, wounded, exhausted lamb that the shepherd takes pains to find, but *every* lamb, the important thing being that his number must be right. "Having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?" (Luke 15. 4). In this case he did not lay it on his shoulders, but I quite expect he did the "rejoicing" in telling his wife and family of his ingenuity in restoring the lost sheep to the flock.

One day we were on some extensive meadows and the shepherd said that while he counted a flock of over a hundred I could go off to the right and count a flock of forty-six. "Then I'm going to move them over the bridge," he added. I left him, drove across the big meadow, found the next flock and was able to count the forty-six. Now, thought I, it would help Jim if I started driving these sheep to meet him. But do you think I could do that? Not at all. I could shout at them, wave my arms, even try to imitate the shepherd's undecipherable call, but "they know not the voice of strangers" (John 10. 5), so they only looked mildly at me, swerved about a little, but by no means would they trot off together towards the shepherd. Most of them turned away and nibbled the grass. "A stranger

will they *not* follow,” and they wouldn’t obey me. I had to drive back to the shepherd, just report that the number was correct and then drive him and Ben over there. At the sight of Jim, how different the scene. They knew *his* voice and obeyed it. Alert, neatly rounded up, in how orderly a way the whole flock seemed to flow along towards the bridge and over it to fresh pasture.

This flock had been selected to go to market in a few days’ time but out of it the shepherd selected two underlings that would have spoilt the look of the flock. “They can go in with those ewes for a bit,” he said, and sent them through another gate towards the big flock of over a hundred. The two scraggy lambs went forward rather timidly towards these matronly two-year-old sheep. The sheep were at once aware of them. Grazing heads lifted; first one, then another big sheep came gently up and smelt the lamb, murmured Baa and seemed to accept it. Encouraged, each lamb moved slowly forward, stopping every now and then as yet another sheep came to inspect it. It struck me the sheep were welcoming the two newcomers, poor specimens though they were. They took no notice of a young bullock that got in, no notice of a rabbit darting by, but their own kith and kin were gently examined, passed, and received into the family. It made me think of well-established church members receiving inexperienced newcomers into their midst, inviting them to enjoy the same pasture and to feel at home in the one family.

J.H.B. (Friendly Companion 1966)

ARE C. S. LEWIS’ WORKS, CHRISTIAN?

One of our readers has kindly drawn our attention to the subtle dangers and errors that are inherent in the writings of C. S. Lewis. Knowing that his works are often given as reading matter in schools, sometimes even being passed off as religiously based allegory, the facts given below make sobering reading, which every parent should be well aware of. They are taken from a Christian’s analysis of the works of Lewis.

Below are some quotes from C. S. Lewis which reveal the true nature and error of his teachings.

‘All Holy Scripture is in some sense, though not all parts of it in the same sense, the Word of God.’

‘It is Christ Himself, not the Bible, who is the true Word of God.’

‘The facts then are these: that Jesus professed Himself (in some sense) ignorant, and within a moment showed that He really was so.’

‘As I believe, Christ fulfils both Paganism and Judaism.’

‘I had some ado to prevent myself from relapsing into Paganism in Attica! At Daphni it was hard not to pray to Apollo the Healer. But somehow did not feel it would have been very wrong – it would have been only addressing Christ sub specie (a forerunner) Apollinis.’

Among other things which C. S. Lewis maintained are that salvation is not by faith alone, but by sacraments such as baptism and Holy Communion.

John Robbins summed up Lewis’ theology thus: “These statements demonstrate that Lewis not only denied the inerrancy of Scripture, but he also denied the inerrancy of Christ. Lewis taught and believed in purgatory, said prayers for the dead, believed in the physical presence of Christ’s body and blood in the bread and wine: a sacrament he came to call “Mass,” practised and taught auricular confession, believed in baptismal salvation and free will. He also rejected the inerrancy of Scripture and justification by faith alone, as well as the doctrines of total depravity and the sovereignty of God.”

In his book, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and other subsequent books, a fantasy story is woven around doctrines believed by C. S. Lewis. More worryingly it is a deliberate attempt to mould together a specious form of Christianity with many aspects of paganism and the occult.

Aslan, for example, is a representation of the pagan sun god, not a representation of Christ, as some have naively thought. It

is sobering to know that C. S. Lewis is required reading for those who follow the occult. Here is what a former witch said about the Chronicles of Narnia: "As a former witch, astrologer, and occultist who has been saved by the grace of God, I know that the works of C. S. Lewis are required reading by neophyte witches, especially in the U.S.A and U.K."

The editor has a more detailed critique in his possession which he would gladly share with any who wish to know more about this matter. The admonition in 1 Timothy 6. 3-5 is very apposite with regard to C. S. Lewis.

BIBLE LISTS!

I expect many of you, when trying to read your Bible, have come across in certain chapters, or parts of them, long lists of names, many of which seem most unusual, and you may have wondered, as some of us who are now older used to do, why there are such lists of names recorded. They may seem to be of no use or relevance to us, although we may often hear a minister quote those words from the Bible: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God ..." and we may be puzzled by this.

One of the earliest lists of such names is to be found in the 10th and 11th chapters of Genesis and this gives us an account of the people who descended from Noah after the great flood, which had, of course, swept away all but himself and his family in that dreadful calamity. These chapters, and the list of names given, are in fact of great importance, and are known to Bible scholars as The Table of Nations.

They inform us of the families which spread abroad in the earth, particularly following the confounding of their language at Babel, where you remember the people tried to build a tower to reach heaven, in rebellion against God. Many had sadly already turned away from Him so soon after the flood – which God had brought upon the earth because of sin. How soon, we have to confess, we also turn aside unless the Lord keeps us.

What you may find helpful to know, however, is that these

names, far from being recorded only in Genesis, have been found in many ancient and not so ancient documents, and which can be shown to prove beyond doubt that these chapters are indeed a true record of those who descended from Noah and his sons in those early days.

We are sadly aware that you are taught in school these days the God-dishonouring theory (and that is all it is) of evolution, which relies for its defence on so-called millions of years, which it throws around in ever increasing numbers to hide its inability to explain anything. What such teaching cannot abide, however, is the thought that real history, that which is recorded and can be verified, only takes us back a matter of a few thousand years, and that this accords entirely with the facts set out in our Bible. And these lists of names, and others you will find in Scripture, known as genealogies, can be found recorded in many documents from different countries, including our own, which were very carefully kept by the people of old (most of whom did not know the Bible themselves) so that the people could remember from whom they were descended. For example, the ancient Greeks knew that they were descended from a man called Javan, and you will find that he was one of the sons of Japheth, and he was, of course, one of Noah's sons. The name of Japheth itself later became corrupted by the Romans to Jupiter, and by the Sanskrit of India to Pra-Japati. Again Shem had a son called Asshur from whom the Assyrians descended. Another son of Japheth was known as Meshech who founded a people known as the Musku or Mushki and whom we know today as Muskovites after whom the city of Moscow is named. And so we could go on!

So, far from being of no relevance or use, these lists of names are actually another solid proof, if we need one, of the absolute accuracy of The Scriptures of Truth, every word of which is indeed given by inspiration of God and is profitable. We hope you will find this of help and interest.

Contributed

“PUT OFF AND PUT ON”

Matthew Henry often caught the attention of his hearers with striking titles to his sermons. On the subject: “Put off the old man, put on the new,” he gave a list of many sermons in the following plan:

1. Put off pride, and put on humility.
2. Put off passion, and put on meekness.
3. Put off covetousness, and put on contentment.
4. Put off contention, and put on peaceableness.
5. Put off murmuring, and put on patience.
6. Put off melancholy, and put on cheerfulness.
7. Put off vanity, and put on seriousness.
8. Put off uncleanness, and put on chastity.
9. Put off drunkenness, and put on temperance.
10. Put off deceitfulness, and put on honesty.
11. Put off hatred, and put on love.
12. Put off hypocrisy, and put on sincerity.
13. Put off bad discourse, and put on good discourse.
14. Put off bad company, and put on good company.
15. Put off security, and put on watchfulness.
16. Put off slothfulness, and put on diligence.
17. Put off folly, and put on prudence.
18. Put off fear, and put on hope.
19. Put off a life of sense, and put on a life of faith.
20. Put off self, and put on Jesus Christ.

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES**JOHN 17 – THE PRAYER OF JESUS CHRIST,
THE SON OF GOD (V)****A burden for the souls of others**

The Lord Jesus Christ in this prayer prays for the whole church of God on earth. Look at these precious words of grace which reveal to us the sacred heart and mind of Jesus Christ. *“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word” (John 17.20).* The Lord

Jesus Christ is our example in this as He is in all things. *“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead” (Revelation 1. 5)*. In the purest sense of the original Greek, the word “witness” means somebody who gives testimony to the truth at the expense of their life. The Lord speaks to His people from His Word: *“Ye are My witnesses, saith the LORD (Isaiab 43. 10)*. Those of us who have been born again are the witnesses of God on earth.

Some believe that we have to persuade people and convince them of the truth that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour. There is no doubt that this is indeed one aspect of Christian witness. We only have to see the teachings of Jesus Christ and His travelling throughout Israel and teaching in the synagogues; also in Acts 17 the Apostle Paul at Athens preaching to the heathen philosophers etc; also in his defence before King Agrippa, he declares: *“Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles” (Acts 26. 22-23)*. Please do not think I am minimising or condemning such witnessing but I believe the greatest witness is our own walk and conduct, in our family, among our relatives, our neighbours, the people that we work with, our fellow church members. The way that we talk, the way that we dress, the places that we go to, the things we have in our home, or do not have in our home. We witness by doing the following: *“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6. 9-10)*.

We can do no greater good to any boy or girl, man or woman, than to point them to the place where grace abounds in Jesus Christ. If they want to know why you do not have a television or go to the public house or dancing etc. you have

the opportunity to give them a Bible and invite them to come to the house of God. If they are in trouble you help them, if they dislike you because of your Christian living it is all the more reason to help them and support them. Take your Bible and read for yourself the words of Jesus in Luke 6. 27-38.

May it always be our great burden that we may be a true witness to everyone that we come into contact with, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Most will hate you as they did Jesus Christ *“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 reprov’d. 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).

May we shine as lights in this evil world and continually do good unto all men witnessing to both small and great and may our witness bear fruit *“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word”* (John 17. 20).

(To be continued)

J.R. Rutt

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN (See Friendly Companion 2007, p111). Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail (see page 98 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. “Suffer, and forbid them not, to come unto Me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” What are the missing words? (Matthew 19. 14)
2. “Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.” Of whom did Jesus speak this? (Matthew 23. 13)

3. We are all concerned about what we eat, drink and wear. What did Jesus say we should seek first? (Matthew 6. 31-33)
4. "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins." But five of them were foolish. In what way? (Matthew 25. 1-3)
5. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea." What happened when the net was brought to land? (Matthew 13. 47-48)
6. In the Beatitudes, of whom did Jesus say, "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven"? (Matthew 5) [two answers]
7. Who did Jesus say would find it very hard to enter into the kingdom of God? (Mark 10)
8. To whom was Jesus talking when He said: "Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God"? (Luke 6)
9. What did Jesus tell Nicodemus was essential if a person is to see, or enter into, the kingdom of God? (John 3)
10. In which chapter of the Bible are recorded six parables beginning with words similar to "The kingdom of heaven is like...?"

ANSWERS TO APRIL QUESTIONS

1. Esau.
2. Esau was a hairy man, a cunning hunter, a man of the field. Jacob was a smooth man, a plain man, dwelling in tents.
3. A ladder set up on earth and reaching to heaven; the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.
4. Twenty years.
5. Peniel.
6. Supplanter: Jacob had taken away Esau's birthright and then his father's blessing. (Genesis 27. 36)
7. Esau was coming to meet him with 400 men with him. (Genesis 32. 6-7)
8. Laban gave Jacob Leah as his wife instead of Rachel whom he loved. (Genesis 29. 23-25)
9. Jacob's sons killed a kid of the goats and dipped Joseph's coat in its blood to make Jacob think that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal. (Genesis 37. 32-33)
10. Malachi 1. 2-3. Romans 9. 13.

Contributed

HEART RELIGION

'Midst all the opinions, contentions, and strife,
Concerning repentance, salvation, and life,
That ring from the pulpit and teem from the press,
There's one consolation – we are not left to guess.

For Jesus assures us, in language quite plain,
We cannot be saved unless born again.
The works of a creature, howsoever he live,
A fitness for heaven no sinner can give.

The heart must be changed, the mind be renew'd,
An appetite given for heavenly food,
Desires be implanted that never will die,
And needs made most urgent that God must supply.

This change is effected by power divine,
For none but Jehovah the soul can incline;
Though some men assert, with a positive air,
That all that is needed is reading and prayer.

While others, more subtle, their opinions impart,
And tell all their hearers Christ knocks at the heart,
And urge them to open that He may come in
Or He may be offended and ne'er knock again.

The tears of an Esau, the prayers of a Saul,
The repentance of Judas, very short fall:
A Cain may be sorry, a Pharaoh confess,
And all this arise from the works of the flesh.

But regeneration cuts open the heart,
Dissecting the sinner in every part,
And raising him up, by the power of the Word,
To show forth the praises of Jesus the Lord.

R.P.H.

The Friendly Companion



“By Me kings reign, and princes decree justice.
By Me princes rule, and nobles,
even all the judges of the earth.”
Proverbs 8. 15, 16.

June 2012

Editor: Mr. G.D. Buss, "Bethany", 7 Laines Head, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 1PH.

Tel: 01249 656910. Email: gdbuss@tiscali.co.uk

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

One of the former editors of the *Friendly Companion*, Mr L. R. Broome, whom some of us who are older remember with much affection, used to say, "Brief prayers sink deep." Apparently, William Gadsby's pulpit prayers usually lasted no longer than ten minutes. The prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ in John 17 can be read reverently in about the same time. So it is not the length of our prayers that is important but rather that we are taught to pray and that those prayers come from a sincere heart. Sometimes in the Sunday school you may sing:

"I often say my prayers
But do I ever pray?
And do the wishes of my heart
Go with the words I say?

I may as well kneel down,
And worship gods of stone,
As offer to the living God
A prayer of words alone.

For words without the heart,
The Lord will never hear:
Nor will He to those lips attend,
Whose heart is not sincere.

Lord, teach me what I need,
And teach me how to pray:
Nor let me ask Thee for Thy grace
Not feeling what I say."

There are three very brief prayers in God's Word which have been very helpful to those who seek Him. One of a *foreigner*, one of a *follower* and one of a *felon*!

These prayers are: "Lord, help me;" "Lord, save me;" "Lord, remember me..."

The foreigner was the woman of Syrophenicia (probably a native of what we would call Syria today). She was not a Jew, and yet believed that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of David

(the name given by the Jews to the Messiah). Her faith constrained her to bring the case of her afflicted daughter to the Lord with this short prayer: "Lord, help me." Although she had to wait, the prayer received an answer which met all her needs. She found that she was no more a stranger or a foreigner in God's family.

The follower was Peter, the disciple, who having obeyed the Lord's command to come to Him on the water, began to sink. There was not time for a long prayer, so the words: "Lord, save me," summed up all he needed at that critical moment. How wonderful was the Lord's immediate help as Jesus stretched forth His hand and caught him!

The felon (a name for a convicted criminal) was the dying thief, who again had not time for long prayers, as he was on the brink of eternity. The well-known desire: "Lord, remember me ..." received a large and unexpected answer. "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

May these short prayers and their answers encourage you to bring your hard cases to the Lord Jesus Christ, remembering the words of another children's hymn:

"God is in heaven, can He hear,
A little prayer like mine?
Yes that He can; I need not fear;
He'll listen unto mine."

With best wishes from your sincere friend and Editor

QUESTION: *What is effectual calling?*

ANSWER: Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit whereby, convincing them of sin, enlightening their minds in the knowledge of Christ, and creating them anew, He enables the elect to embrace Jesus Christ, freely given to them in the gospel.

John 6. 37 & 16. 8-11, 13-14 & 17. 3; 2 Corinthians 4. 6;
Ephesians 2. 1; 1 John 2. 27; Revelation 22. 17.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

This month marks the official celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee – sixty years on the throne. This is a remarkably long period for any monarch and it emulates the reigns of Queen Elizabeth I and Queen Victoria who also occupied the throne for many years. We wish her Majesty well on this auspicious occasion which God has permitted her to reach.

The Word of God says: "By Me kings reign and princes decree justice." An Old Testament king, Nebuchadnezzar, proved in a very terrible way that he owed his honour to the God he did not acknowledge. After boasting of his pomp and glory, he became insane for seven years and was driven out into the fields to behave as a beast. After that his reason returned, and he acknowledged that his power and kingdom had come from God, who has a sovereign right to give it to whom He will.

The Word of God also tells us that the throne is not to every generation, reminding us that every dynasty, however great it may become, crumbles in the end. Sadly there are very many signs that our nation is destroying itself through greed and rebellion against the King of kings.

There is, however, a kingdom which is for ever. Its King is the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. It is not of this world and its citizens are those to whom He has promised a crown of righteousness that fadeth not away. Such are those in whose heart the Lord Jesus has set up His own throne and desire to crown Him, King of kings and Lord of lords.

The Lord Jesus Christ, speaking of these citizens, speaks to them in this way: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Whilst rightly giving thanks to God for preserving our Queen for so many years, may we be seeking a place in Christ's kingdom as the well-known hymn says:

"In the kingdom of Thy grace
Give a little child a place."

*FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES***VICTORY OVER AI**

Ai was only a little city. The children of Israel thought they could easily take it. But they fled from the men of Ai because of Achan's sin. Without the help of God, they had no power against the enemy. How fearful they were! After Achan's sin was put away, the LORD spoke again to Joshua: "*Fear not,... I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people*" God told them what to do next.

Now Joshua took all the men of war against Ai. Some of them hid behind the city at night. When the king of Ai came out to fight, Israel ran away. They pretended to flee as before, and all the men of Ai came out after them. Then the LORD said to Joshua: "*Stretch out the spear that is in thy hand toward Ai.*" When Joshua stretched out his spear, those hiding behind the city quickly entered in and set the city on fire. The rest of the men of Israel turned back to fight the men of Ai.

The LORD gave a great victory to Israel: "*For Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.*"

QUESTIONS:

1. Who did Joshua take against Ai? (5 words)
2. Where did some of them hide? (3 words)
3. What did the LORD tell Joshua to stretch out? (2 words)

Please send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail (See page 122 for the address.) Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

Contributed

ANSWERS TO MAY QUESTIONS

1. Disobeyed God.
2. Trouble.
3. In secret.

“*... and
the LORD
wrought
a great
victory.*”
2 Samuel
23. 12.

BIBLE LESSONS**WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS**

When talking about His return or second coming, the Lord Jesus said: "... *of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only.*" He said that it would be at a time when men did not expect it: it would come like a thief in the night. That day would be like any other day. Some people might be travelling, others might be working; children may be attending school, and then – suddenly, the Lord will come to reign as King and to judge all people.

What a solemn day it will be! All those in the grave will be raised, and every eye shall see Him. To impress upon His disciples the great need to watch and be ready, Jesus spoke a parable. He told them that the kingdom of heaven was like a wedding, when the bridegroom would go to the bride's house to take her to himself. Of course, the Bridegroom of whom Jesus spoke was Himself, and the bride was His church or His chosen people.

In Bible times, young women who were virgins would go and sit by the roadside to meet the bridegroom. They were friends of the bride and would go with the bridegroom to the marriage. The Lord told the disciples that there were ten virgins, of whom five were wise and five were foolish. As the bridegroom came at night, the virgins needed lamps to see in the dark. What excitement they felt as they went out! How they would look down the dark street as they sat and waited for him!

When the bridegroom delayed coming: "*they all slumbered and slept.*" Both the wise and foolish virgins fell asleep. It was hard to tell who were wise and who were foolish.

At midnight they heard a cry: "*Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him.*" The ten virgins quickly rose up and began to trim their lamps to make them burn brighter. Then they would be ready to join the procession when it passed by.

Because the bridegroom had taken so long, the oil in their lamps had run out. Now, at the most important hour, the

difference between the five wise and five foolish was discovered. The Lord told the disciples that the five wise virgins had taken other vessels of oil along with their lamps. Soon their lamps were filled again and burning brightly. However, the five foolish virgins found to their dismay that their oil had run out. They were not ready. They could not join the bridegroom without oil in their lamps. Whatever could they do?

They called to the five wise virgins: *“Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.”* The wise answered: *“Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.”*

“And while they went to buy, the Bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut.”

After some time, the foolish virgins returned and came to the house. However, they found to their dismay that the door was shut.

They now began to pray: *“Lord, Lord, open to us.”* But the door remained shut; neither could they force it open! Instead, they heard a fearful declaration from the Lord: *“Verily I say unto you, I know you not.”*

When the Lord Jesus, the heavenly Bridegroom returns, the day of salvation will be past. The door to the kingdom of heaven will be forever shut. The foolish virgins represent many religious people who do not possess the oil (grace) of the Holy Spirit. They have never been born again. Thus, their religion dies out when most needed.

You can read about this in Matthew chapter 24 verses 36 to 44 and chapter 25 verses 1 to 13.

QUESTIONS:

1. What did the Lord say His return would come like? (5 words)
2. Who was the bridegroom of whom Jesus spoke?
3. What did all the virgins do when the bridegroom delayed coming?
4. What did the wise virgins take along with their lamps?
5. Who went in to the marriage with the bridegroom? (4 words)

Please send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail (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. Jerusalem.
2. Thy coming and of the end of the world.
3. His name's sake.
4. Watch and pray.
5. He that shall endure unto the end.

G. L. TenBroeke

A GOOD QUEEN

Whilst in Great Britain we remember the Diamond Jubilee of our Queen, it is good to remember that although in the Word of God, sadly there were bad queens such as Athaliah and Jezebel, there is one queen who stands out as an example of the fear of the Lord. That is Queen Esther, whose history can be read in the book that bears her name.

What was so special about Queen Esther?

Firstly, she was a very humble person. She made no extravagant requests of the palace officials when she was introduced to Ahasuerus, as a prospective queen, to succeed Vashti. How true is God's Word: "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble," and "before honour is humility." Even when she became queen, she respected and obeyed her uncle, Mordecai, whom it would appear had been her guardian as a child.

Secondly, although she was called to be queen in a foreign land, in a heathen court, she did not forget the God of Israel. In her hour of trial, when her very life was at stake, it was to the God of Israel she made request before she asked favour of the king.

Thirdly, though exalted to such a high position in the land, she did not despise the nation from which she had been called. When the very survival of the Jews was at stake she was willing to be identified with them, when she perhaps might have thought that the sword would not reach the palace where she dwelt. How many who have risen to high positions are disdainful of the humble roots from which they sprang. Many

years ago, whilst on a railway station in Bristol, one suddenly came face to face with a man who as a boy had worshipped at one of our chapels. He had risen to a good position in his chosen career. Sadly, when he saw me and recognized who I was, he turned his back on me. What a mercy if we know the truth concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, who is not ashamed to call His people brethren. Listen to Paul's words: "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." If we know that grace we will not despise others.

Fourthly, she feared the Lord greatly. Those who do so are very sensitive to His constraint and restraint in their path. A mysterious restraint was put upon Esther when first she went in to Ahasuerus to plead for her people. Recognising this, she did not on that occasion ask for the life of her nation. It was on that night the king could not sleep, and Mordecai's actions of loyalty to the king were recalled, whilst at the same time Haman was erecting the gallows as he thought for Mordecai's end, but in God's decree were for his own destruction. How God's children need to know when to go and when to stay!

Fifthly and finally, how true were Mordecai's words to her: "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Like Joseph in Genesis when he reached his throne, Esther's mysterious path was most clearly seen when Haman's plot was uncovered and the Jews delivered: the means being that a Jewess should sit upon a throne in ungodly Babylon. How true are God's words that His ways are past finding out, and that He hath done all things well.

May God yet overrule in our beloved land and give us such monarchs as Esther as our history unfolds.

Editor

EDITOR'S POSTBAG

First answers to the monthly questions have been received from **EMILY BUSS, ISAAC CLARK, ABIGAIL HAYDEN and JESSICA NORTHERN.**

THE NOISY SEVEN

The touching poem below should give encouragement to parents and Sunday school teachers who may be weary in well-doing as they seek to put the truth before their young, but as yet see no fruits!

I wonder if he remembers
(That good old man in heaven)
The class in the old red school-house
Known as: "The Noisy Seven"?

I wonder if he remembers
How restless we used to be,
Or thinks we forgot the lessons
Of Christ and Gethsemane?

I wish I could tell the story
As he used to tell it then;
I'm sure if God gave His blessing,
It would reach the hearts of men.

That voice so touchingly tender
Comes down to me through the years,
A pathos which seems to mingle
His own with the Saviour's tears.

I'd like to tell him how Harry,
The merriest one of all,
From the bloody field of battle
Went home at the Master's call.

I'd like to tell him how Stephen
So brimming with mirth and fun,
Now spreads the Word in China
The tale of the crucified One.

I'd like to tell him how Joseph
And Philip and Jack and Jay
Are honoured amongst the churches
The foremost men of the day.

I'd like – yes, I'd like – to tell him
What his lessons have done for me.
And how by God's grace I would follow
That Christ of Gethsemane.

Perhaps he knows it already,
For One has told him maybe,
That these seven by grace are all coming,
Through Christ of Gethsemane.

How many besides I know not,
Will gather at last in heaven.
The fruit of that faithful sowing,
But the sheaves are surely Seven!

I.G.

(Slightly adapted and abridged from The Little Gleaner)

BRILLIANT ENGINEERING: THE WEEVIL 'HIP'-AND-LEG JOINT

The invention of the threaded screw-and-nut mechanism was a great engineering breakthrough. But we now know that God thought of it first. That's because researchers have discovered that weevil legs attach to the insect's body by "screwing into" a part called the coxa – analogous to our hip.

This screw-and-nut mechanism serves the same purpose as ball-and-socket joints in vertebrates and hinge joints in other insects.

Muscles pull the legs in and out of the screw mechanism to make them twist – a handy feature for weevils needing to splay their legs to find footholds.

Evolutionists claim insects had a common ancestor, but then why do weevils have a screw-and-nut joint while other insects have hinges? It took *ingenuity* for us to design *both* of these mechanisms for our use – surely it makes more sense to acknowledge that the insect kinds were created separately, *ingeniously designed* with their respective features.

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“UNDER THE SHADOW OF HIS WINGS” (I)

I am going to tell you about the Covenanter, John Paterson of Penyenie, a godly man, who counted not his life dear to him for the cause of his God – who was willing to suffer bonds and imprisonments, or even death itself, rather than do that which his Father in heaven had forbidden him to do. I will tell you how he was driven from his home, from his wife and children, hunted like a wild beast by the troopers of the king, and had to find for himself a hiding-place, on the hillside, in the glen, in the forest, or whithersoever the Lord led him. And once, when fleeing from the face of his enemies, when he was almost in their hands, God directed his steps that he fell through a crevice in the rocks down into a large cavern, where he was for the time as safe as if the earth had opened her mouth and swallowed him up, and where he found for the future a far more secure and comfortable abiding place than he had before been able to devise. The cave was so large, dry, and airy, that he was able to make it quite a comfortable home, and the entrance to it was so small and so completely hidden among the confused blocks of granite that lay scattered around, that none of the inhabitants of the place had ever discovered its existence, not even those who had spent all their lives near the spot, and had supposed that no part of that crag of Benbeach was unknown to them.

Mrs. Paterson was a woman of the same spirit as her husband. Dearly as she loved him, she would rather, as she told him, see him beheaded on the scaffold – rather follow his bloody corpse to the grave – than know that he had in anything acted against his conscience; and sorely as she missed him from his hearth and his home, faint and sick as her heart often was with longing for his dear presence, yet rather would she have borne to know that they were never again to enjoy each other's company upon earth, than that he should buy a safe return to his family by denying, even in the smallest thing, the Lord who had bought him with His own most precious blood.

After that the Lord had shown them that sure hiding-place of

which I told you, the husband and wife, the father and children, were able to enjoy much more of each other's company. With the help of a little furniture brought from the farmhouse, the cave was made quite comfortable.

Mrs. Paterson and the children could visit the poor wanderer there without much danger of discovery; and sometimes, when the pursuit after him was less hot than at others, the whole family spent days together in this new home, as happy as ever they had been in the farmhouse of Penyvenie, and far happier, for did not God reward their fidelity to His cause by shining on them with the light of His countenance, blessing them with His presence, and with many sure and precious tokens of His love and favour? Then, besides being a happy home for themselves, this cave proved often a haven of refuge for many of their brethren persecuted like themselves for their faithfulness to their God. Many a happy meeting of God's saints took place under its wide roof; many hours were there spent in sweet communion with God, and in joyful converse together, telling each other of God's wonderful dealings towards them, of the marvellous deliverances He had wrought for them from the hands of their enemies.

Selected

IS GOD WATCHING?

From time to time, people tell me that people's behaviour is no worse than it was fifty years ago. The results of a recent study, undertaken by researchers at the University of Essex, suggest otherwise. Based on a survey of 2,000 adults, they concluded:

- Only 50% now believe that having an extra-marital affair is never justified, compared with 70% a decade ago:
- Only 20% now consider keeping money found in the street is never justified, compared with 40% a decade ago:
- Only one in three now condemn lying in their own interests.

According to Professor Paul Whitely: “Gradually people are tending to become more dishonest. They are more willing to tell lies, more willing to tolerate adultery. It is slow over time, and going on in the background – but pretty evidentially there.” Secularists, of course, will argue that all this has nothing to do with society’s sidelining of Christianity – but this is hard to believe.

In the past, British people were immersed in a predominantly Christian world-view and knew “the fear of God.” They were “God conscious.” They knew that God was there, and was watching them. They could say with the Psalmist: “Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways” (Psalm 139. 2,3). They were taught the ten commandments at school or at Sunday School and knew that God had said: “Thou shalt not commit adultery” and “Thou shalt not steal” (Exodus 20. 14,15). Many would have recited, week by week, the words of the Apostles’ Creed and understood that, one day, Christ will return to “judge the living and the dead.” Today, fewer and fewer have this fear of God and fewer still have a sense that God is watching. Recently, prominent British atheist, A.C. Grayling joked: “You can see that we no longer really believe in God, because of all the CCTV cameras keeping watch on us.”

Evolution means no accountability

What has happened to change all this? One major factor is surely the growing acceptance of the theory of evolution. Increasingly, people are being told that Darwin’s theory explains where life came from and the ‘big bang’ explains where the universe came from – and that no Creator was necessary. They look out of the window and think that they see a world that made itself. Not surprisingly, they are no longer ‘God-conscious.’

Many in the church believe that ‘origins’ is a side issue. If so, why does the Bible *begin* with the account of creation? And why did the church fathers do likewise? The first line of the Apostles’ Creed reads: “I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of

heaven and earth,” and the first line of the Nicene Creed: “We believe in one God ... Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.”

When constructing a house we must begin with the foundations and, if we neglect these, we risk losing the whole building. Similarly, without the foundation of Biblical creation, people will lack a base upon which to build a correct understanding of themselves and the world around them. If we're just the product of random mutations and natural selection, what's wrong with adultery or theft or lying? If the evolutionary process required millions to die to produce humanity, why shouldn't dictators like Hitler and Stalin sacrifice millions more to produce the utopian society?

Wandering from the truth

There is a serious warning here for the church, too. Jesus made clear that people made great mistakes because they had neglected the first few books of the Bible. He chided the Pharisees, for example, for their faulty understanding of marriage, and pointed them to the Book of Genesis as the final authority in this matter (Mark 10 2-9 and Genesis 2. 24). The Sadducees were a Jewish sect that denied the resurrection. In refuting them, Jesus referred them to the Book of Exodus (Mark 12. 18-27 and Exodus 3. 6) and told them that they were “badly mistaken.” Along with the Pharisees, they were seriously in error because they had failed to pay proper attention to the first few books of the Bible.

The Psalmist wrote: “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119. 105). In order to be fruitful, our thinking, in all areas, must be moulded by God's Word. Since the Bible begins with creation, so should we; and churches that sideline this issue are in grave danger of building upon a shaky foundation. Only by holding forth God's Word in all its completeness can the church hope with God's help to impact our secular society and effectively shine the light of Christ into the world.

Dominic Statham (Creation Ministries)

PAYING WATER RATES

Several years ago my husband owned a number of houses on a street in this place, which he rented out. In those days, we were not required to pay in advance for the water we used, and as we did not have the money, we had been unable to pay, the bill having run up to one hundred and twenty-five dollars, and we were notified that if it was not paid by the next Saturday, the water would be shut off from the houses on that street. We had several days in which to raise the money, and my husband tried in various ways, but in vain.

Friday I was very much distressed about it, for I knew it would distress our tenants, and do us much injury if the water was withdrawn. We had tried to borrow the money from different friends, but had not obtained a dollar.

We took it to the Lord in prayer, and begged Him to send us the money *that day*. In the evening a gentleman called to buy a house from my husband. He said he wanted it *immediately*, and should commence work on it the next Monday. He must have the papers *that night*, and though he could not pay for all of it then, he wanted to pay *something*. He then took out his wallet and counted out and handed to my husband one hundred and twenty-five dollars, exactly the amount needed to pay the water tax. We had a season of praise and thanksgiving that night, and the next morning my husband paid the bill.

We expected to see men at work on the house the next Monday, but did not. Why that man changed his plans we never knew, but during the six years that have passed since then, no one has done anything to that house, and last autumn it was sold for a mortgage.

A good many times since then, when I have been in a hard place, I have thought of that experience, and have taken courage; and have again proved the Lord to be a prayer-answering God, and a "very present help in trouble."

Selected

“ALWAYS ABOUNDING”

I knew a very wealthy man; a deacon: a *very* wealthy man. He was going about on his farm and he put his hand into his shirt pocket and found something hard and he thought: “Whatever is that?” He picked it out of his pocket and there was a piece of paper and something hard inside. What was it? It was an ‘old English’ penny – one penny! He had thousands of pennies, but what was written on that paper? “I love you, Grandad.” That dear man’s eyes filled with tears as he told me. There was love in it you see. It was ever so little. He did not really need that penny, but it was *real* love. So do not despair – “... always abounding ...” – it means “overflowing.” Not just, “I ought to do it. I will just give a minute or two.” Seek that your life be full for God. I mean that, friend. For His glory and for His honour in all that we do. “... always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” Because it is seen by Him, it is unto Him.

C.A. Wood

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

**JOHN 17 – THE PRAYER OF JESUS CHRIST
THE SON OF GOD (VI)**

Eternal Life only in Jesus Christ (Part 1)

In this sacred holy prayer of Jesus Christ, there is another fundamental doctrine of our most holy faith: “*And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent*” (John 17. 3). We can only know God in and through Jesus Christ. Consider the following Scripture and notice its context, (we must always be contextual in our interpretation of Holy Scripture). “*I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all*

men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1Timothy 2. 1-6).

There are some very important things to observe in this portion of Scripture especially in the light of these words of Jesus.

Firstly, he is exhorting them to pray for all men, great men, poor men, rich men, rulers, kings: as in all Scripture that means queens as well; indeed, Jews, Gentiles, heathen, ignorant men, learned men, that they might rule well, that the law of the land may promote the gospel, that laws which are unrighteous may be overturned.

Secondly, “*Who will have all men to be saved.*” We know even from the doctrine of this wonderful prayer of Jesus Christ that universal redemption is an erroneous doctrine. Also even in the previous verse we read: “*As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him*” (John 17. 2). He has universal power and He will use that power to give eternal life to all that the Father has given Him. So what does this mean: “*all men*”? It means the Lord has His chosen people among all nations, among all ranks of men rich and poor, kings and princes, therefore all men are to be included in our prayers, all men are to be addressed in preaching. We must not hide the truth from any. It is the same meaning in the precious words: “Who gave Himself a ransom for all.” That is, of course, all His chosen people from all nations.

We are often told today that the Muslim god, the Hindu gods, the Buddhist gods are the same as the Christian God. This Scripture teaches us that Jesus Christ only is the true God and He ransomed His chosen people from every nation, tongue, tribe and people. Please read Acts 17 v 22-31.

In this portion of Scripture he declares: “*And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent*” (Acts 17. 30). This “*all men*” is emphasising that all men of all nations are accountable to God

and the following verse instructs us that: *“And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem”* (Luke 24. 46-47). There is a vital necessity of preaching faith and repentance to all men, you cannot have one without the other.

The centre, sum and substance of preaching must be Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Look at the following Scripture: *“The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him”* (John 3. 35-36). The holy life of Jesus Christ by faith becomes the perfect righteousness of the believer; the holy sufferings and sacrifice of Jesus Christ by faith becomes the only hope of the believer: *“But He was wounded for our transgressions ...”* (Isaiah 53. 5-12). The resurrection of Jesus Christ, by faith becomes the believer’s resurrection. The ascension of Jesus Christ, by faith becomes the believer’s ascension. *“He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”* (Romans 8 32-35). What wonderful soul stirring words of grace.

These Scriptures quoted show us the vital need to compare Scripture with Scripture. If we take words in isolation we will misinterpret the doctrine of truth. Whereas some verses taken in isolation appear to favour universal redemption we know clearly from other Scriptures that God the Father chose a people from before the foundation of the world: *“Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you.*

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. I and My Father are one" (John 10. 25-30).

Oh the precious, sacred, eternal, security of the church of Jesus Christ. *"And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (John 17. 3).*

My dear beloved friends, the vital thing is: do you know Jesus Christ, have you been born again, is He your only hope of salvation?

(To be continued)

J. R. Rutt

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about WOMEN IN DISTRESS. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail (see page 122 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. A woman in trouble ran away from her mistress, but God spoke to her and she called Him: "Thou God seest me." What was her name? (Genesis 16. 6-13)
2. "Why weepst thou? and why eatest thou not?" Who was asked this question, and why was her "heart grieved"? (1 Samuel 1. 8)
3. Jesus once asked: "Who touched Me?" A woman had touched Him, but why was she in trouble? (Luke 8. 43-45)
4. A woman came to Jesus and "worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me." What was she distressed about? (Matthew 15. 22-28)
5. A woman was sad because her husband and two sons had died. What was her name, and what did she say people should call her? (Ruth 1. 20)

6. Why did Moses' mother hide him in an ark of bulrushes and put him in the river? (Exodus 1-2)
7. Mordecai asked Esther to go unto the king to plead for the Jews. Why did his request cause her so much distress? (Esther 4)
8. A woman came to a prophet and was asked, "Is it well?" She answered: "It is well"; yet she was very sad. Why? (2 Kings 4)
9. Who was asked by two angels: "Woman, why weepest thou"? Why was she so dejected? (John 20)
10. Two women were very sad; their brother had died; they had sent to Jesus for help, but He didn't come until it seemed to be too late. What were their names? Was Jesus too late?

ANSWERS TO MAY QUESTIONS

1. Little children.
2. The Scribes and Pharisees.
3. "The kingdom of God, and His righteousness."
4. They took no oil in their vessels with their lamps.
5. The good (fish) were put into vessels and the bad were thrown away.
6. The poor in spirit; they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake. (Matthew 5. 3, 10)
7. They that have riches, or those that trust in riches. (Mark 10. 23-24)
8. His disciples. (Luke 6. 20)
9. The New Birth; "Ye must be born again." (John 3. 3)
10. Matthew 13.

Contributed

QUESTION: *What blessings do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?*

ANSWER: They that are effectually called do, in this life, partake of justification, adoption, sanctification and the several blessings which do in this life accompany them.

Psalm 68. 18; Romans 5. 1-2 & 8. 30-32;

1 Corinthians 1. 30; Galatians 4. 6; Ephesians 1. 5

“ONE STEP MORE”

What though before me it is dark:
Too dark for me to see;
I'd ask but light for one step more,
'Tis quite enough for me.

Each little humble step I take,
The gloom clears from the next;
But though 'tis very dark beyond,
I need not be perplexed.

And if sometimes the mist hangs close,
So close I fear to stray;
Patient I wait a little while,
And soon it clears away.

I would not see my future path,
For mercy veils it so:
My present steps may harder be,
Did I the future know.

And so I do not wish to see
My journey or its length;
Assure me of my Father's love,
Each step will bring its strength.

Thus step-by-step I'd onward go,
Not looking far before;
Trusting that I shall always have
Light for "just one step more."

Selected

Fear God for His power, trust Him for His wisdom, love Him for His goodness, praise Him for His greatness, believe Him for His faithfulness, and adore Him for His holiness.

The Friendly Companion



“Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh
thine house, O LORD, for ever.” (Psalm 93. 5)

July 2012

Editor: Mr. G.D. Buss, "Bethany," 7 Laines Head, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 1PH.

Tel: 01249 656910. Email: gdbuss@tiscali.co.uk

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

Sometimes we read of a name only once in the Bible and then nothing more is said of it in God's Word. Examples such as Jabez in 1 Chronicles 4, or Jahaziel in 2 Chronicles 20 spring to mind.

In the New Testament there are several such people, one of whom is Chloe, in 1 Corinthians 1. 11. It seems that there had been a quarrel amongst the Corinthians. Someone from the house of Chloe had told the Apostle Paul about this. Paul acted very wisely. Was it right to act on a tale from someone else's lips? Yet it was clear the quarrel was causing great damage. So he told the Corinthians that Chloe's household had told him. This was dealing honestly. If Chloe's house felt strong enough to report to Paul, then it must be right for their names to be revealed as the bearer of the tidings. Too often we hear someone tell something and then add: "But don't tell them I told you."

How we need to be honest in our dealing one with another! The word in the Proverbs is very apposite: "The fear of man bringeth a snare, but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe." When we were at Sunday School we sang the verse below, which if grace is given to follow, will make our light shine before men as those who serve God fully:

"Perish, policy and cunning,
Perish all that fears the light!
Whether losing, whether winning
Trust in God and do the right."

Both Jacob and David suffered greatly in their lives for not walking according to this rule. They were both men of God, but God reproved them sharply for deviation from the path of honesty.

In this day when it seems that less and less people can be trusted, it is more and more important that those who profess the name of Jesus should be men and women of honour. Nothing brings more shame on the name of Christ, and more joy to the

ungodly, than if a Christian is found to have acted dishonestly.

In the days when ploughing was done by a man guiding the plough behind a team of horses, it was important that he ploughed a straight furrow. May God help us each to plough a straight furrow whatever the cost.

With best wishes from your sincere friend and Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

Most of our readers will be familiar with the picture on the cover this month. It is, of course, that of the cupola of St. Paul's Cathedral, London. The original St. Paul's, the first Protestant Cathedral to be built after the Reformation, was burnt down in the great Fire of London in 1666. The present magnificent building was built subsequent to that terrible fire. It has been the scene of many important events. Older readers will remember, for example, that the funeral of Sir Winston Churchill, the great war-leader, was held there, as well as our present Queen's Silver, Golden and Diamond Jubilee Thanksgiving Services.

To climb to the top of the cupola is not recommended for any who do not like great heights, although the view from the top is well-worth the effort of those who attempt it.

The inside is very ornate, and has to be repainted from time to time. Many years ago an artist was busy at work high up on scaffolding painting one of the murals. A visitor was watching him at his work, when to his horror he saw the artist step back to survey his work, forgetting that there was only a little protection to stop him falling down to the cathedral floor many feet down. With great presence of mind the visitor quickly picked up a pot of paint and threw it at the mural. The artist was so enraged he sprang forward towards the mural thus unconsciously saving himself from instant death. When the startled artist asked for an explanation, he could not be thankful enough that he had been saved from death even though his work had been marred. In the same way, God the Spirit shows

how marred, sinners' lives are, and in so doing saves from everlasting destruction those whom He teaches. No longer admiring their supposed goodness they are led to put their trust in the perfections of Jesus Christ, the sinner's Friend.

SEED THOUGHTS FROM HOSEA 14

(These written 'thoughts' were found in a letter written to a friend from Holland by our late dear friend Mr. C A Wood)

Dew: Comes at night, from heaven, still, silent, gentle, softens, abundant, reviving, beautifies.

Lily: After winter, grows speedily, fragrant: known as the lily of the valley.

Roots as Lebanon: Deep rooted, enduring, strong, useful. Growth in the root is hidden.

Branches that spread: Not broken off. Growth in grace, sap supplied from the root.

Olive Tree: Evergreen, very fruitful. Provides oil for heating, food, light, anointing. Grace.

Smell: Savour of Christ. John 12. 3

Shadow: Psalm 91. 1; Psalm 57.1-2; Song of Solomon 2. 3

Return: Restoration, revive, recover strength.

Corn: Root, blade, ear, full corn in the ear. Wheat gathered into the barn.

Vine: Fruit dependant upon the sap from the root.

Wine: Proverbs 31. 6

In the times of persecution in the reign of Charles II, a lady on her way to a secret service of worship, went round a corner and straight ahead of her she saw the Red Coat soldiers coming in towards her. She carried on and when they met up, the soldiers asked her where she was going that morning. She told them the Elder Brother had died, His will was going to be read that morning, and she wished to be present as she wanted to know if He had left her anything in His will. She was allowed to carry on to be present at the service.

*FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES***ISRAEL IS DECEIVED**

When the kings of Canaan heard what the children of Israel had done to Jericho and Ai, they were afraid. They joined together to fight against Israel. But the people of Gibeon tried to make peace with Israel by deceiving them.

They sent messengers to Joshua and told him they had come from a very far country because of: *“the name of the LORD thy God.”* Their clothes and shoes were old and worn. Their bread was dry and mouldy; yet they said it was hot and fresh when they left home. They said: *“We are your servants: therefore now make ye a league with us.”*

God had warned the children of Israel not to make peace with any nation of Canaan. They did not know that the people of Gibeon really lived in Canaan. They looked at their mouldy food and did not ask the LORD what they should do. They made a league with the men of Gibeon and promised to let them live.

After three days Israel came to the cities of Gibeon and found they had been deceived. How angry they were! However, they did not destroy them because of the promise they made. But the people of Gibeon became servants to Israel.

QUESTIONS:

1. Who tried to make peace with Israel? (4 words)
2. Where did they tell Joshua they had come from? (4 words)
3. What did they become? (1 word)

Please send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail (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. All the men of war.
 2. Behind the city.
 3. His sword.
- Contributed*

*“And the men
took of their
victuals, and
asked not
counsel at
the mouth
of the LORD.”
Joshua 9. 14.*

BIBLE LESSONS**TALENTS GIVEN AND THEIR REWARD**

In the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, the Lord taught His disciples of the need to be ready and watching for His return. But Jesus knew how long it would be before He returned and that His followers would quickly become weary in watching and waiting. He also told a parable to teach them how they were to behave during His absence.

Jesus told them that the Kingdom of Heaven was like a man who travelled to a far country. Before leaving, he called his servants and gave each of them a portion of his goods. To one servant he gave five talents, to another two talents, and to another one talent.

While they waited and watched for their master's return, they were to be diligent in using the talents given to them. The talents might represent many different things, such as the daily business that each is engaged in. More importantly, they represent certain things that the Lord gives to be used for His glory and His people's good.

One such talent is TIME. It may be short or long, but it is to be used in preparation for the Lord's return. What a wonderful thing when little children are taught to use this talent. A child who lives only five years (see *Friendly Companion* March – May 2012) may use this talent as well as Enoch who lived 365 years, and Methuselah who lived 969 years.

Another talent is the WORD OF GOD. By prayerful reading and searching of the Scriptures, knowledge may be gained of themselves and of the Lord Jesus.

Another talent the Lord gives is the THRONE OF GRACE. This talent can only be used through prayer. Earlier the Lord taught His disciples to pray continually. What encouragement the Bible gives to troubled souls to use this talent! *“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”*

Many other things might also be considered as talents, such as: worship in God's house, a healthy body, and even

afflictions or trials. All these things are like talents to be used for spiritual profit.

At the appointed time, the master returned to take account of his servants. The first, who received five talents, had gained five more. The master spoke to him: *“Well done, thou good and faithful servant:”* The second likewise gained two other talents with the two he had received. He was also commended with: *“Well done, good and faithful servant:”*

The third servant came and acknowledged that he had not used his talent for the master’s glory. He had lived for himself. He spent all his time and strength to serve his own carnal desires. What a solemn judgment was pronounced against him: *“Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

This parable teaches that you and I will also have to give an account before God of all that we have done in the body, whether it be good or evil. The Lord also taught that those who hear the words: *“Well done,”* will wonder how it could be said to them.

In the great Day of Judgment, He will *“... sit upon the throne of His glory,”* and all nations will be gathered before Him. He will then separate the sheep from the goats; those who are His, from those who are not. The sheep will be set on His right hand and the goats on the left. He will say to the sheep: *“Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you ... For I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: Naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me.”* The sheep will ask when they did these things unto Him. He will answer: *“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.”*

You can read about this in Matthew chapter 25 verses 14 to 46.

QUESTIONS:

1. What word of commendation did the master speak to the first two servants? (7 words)
2. What kind of servant did he call the third servant?

3. What will Jesus separate on the Judgment Day?
4. Who will be set on His right hand? His left hand?
5. What will those on His right hand inherit? (5 words)

Please send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail. (See page 146 for the address.) Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

ANSWERS TO JUNE QUESTIONS

1. A thief in the night. 2. Himself. 3. Slumbered and slept.
4. Vessels of oil. 5. They that were ready.

G. L. TenBroeke

WORKING ON THE BESETTING SIN

There is nothing more common, in an early life of faith, than for the enemy to watch the onset of besetting sin, and to work upon that, and if possible in some way or other to enforce the absolute necessity of being found in the full exercise of it, covered with the name of godly fear.

For instance, if I am naturally lazy, the enemy will soon impress me (but all in a wrong aspect) with such truths as these – I can do nothing; I cannot quicken my own soul; I must wait God's time: I must not be impatient. Thus the poor creature, before he well knows his right hand from his left, has these doubts put upon his conscience to hoodwink him in every way of life: and he is so bewildered as not to see nor to suspect the snare.

Waiting upon God is a very active principle, and so is waiting for Him; and he that waits in the Spirit will leave no stone unturned till he is fully satisfied the Lord is directing him. Would you know who is the man that is *not* actuated by godly fear, and makes not God his refuge? It is he who sits still, and vainly imagines that matters will come right, and makes no use of God's appointed means. Such an one not only meets with disappointment, but is surrounded with spiritual death, darkness, and confusion of mind: and is not aware of its being the consequence of that slothful inactive spirit which binds him down to the earth.

James Bourne

“WINDOWS IN HEAVEN”

Following The Monthly Message in May on windows, an older reader has very kindly sent the following thoughts regarding “windows in heaven.” These thoughts are much appreciated (Editor).

“Windows of heaven” are mentioned five times in the Old Testament.

Firstly, two references very close to Noah’s windows: “the windows of heaven were opened.” (Genesis 7. 11) Here they were opened in judgment on those whose thoughts were “only evil continually.”

Then “the windows of heaven were stopped.” (Genesis 8. 2) Here “God remembered Noah,” in grace and mercy, and the rain ceased.

Secondly, in Elisha’s house, the unbelieving lord on whose arm the king leaned who said, derisively, concerning God’s promise of plenty in Samaria: “Behold if the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be” (2 Kings 7. 2). Questioning the Word of God, he committed the same as the first sin mentioned in the Bible: “Yea, hath God said?” In verse 19 the words are again repeated as judgment fell on the man, and God’s words were vindicated in mercy to Samaria and judgment to the unbelieving lord.

Lastly, the best of them all: Malachi 3. 10: “Prove Me now herewith, saith the LORD of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”

So the first mention of windows in heaven are a solemn curse, but the last one an unspeakable blessing. We are told in Genesis 3. 15 that “the Seed of the woman, shall bruise the serpent’s head.”

A. P. Dawson

EDITOR’S POSTBAG

First answers to the monthly questions have been received from ELLA RAMSBOTTOM, CHLOE WILKINS and POLLY WOODHAMS.

“UNDER THE SHADOW OF HIS WINGS” (II)

As they sat round a fire kindled on the floor of the cave, John Paterson was particularly fond of relating to his children or his friends the following account of the Lord's deliverance. He said that the recollection of it was so sweet and precious to himself in reminding him of the Lord's tender, loving care of His people, and was always a strengthener of his faith to trust that same loving God for the future; that therefore he was glad to give all whom he loved the pleasure of knowing it also.

“I had gone,” he used to say, “to a preaching in the old black glen. While we were in the full enjoyment of the meeting, and our souls were being fed with the Word of our God from the mouth of His servant, the alarm was given that the troopers were coming down upon us. The meeting broke up at once, and we separated, each one taking the way that seemed to him safest and best. I was bent upon getting back to this cave; indeed, I knew of no other hiding place within my reach.

“At first I thought that all the soldiers had gone off in different directions after the other people, but as I crossed the ridge above Longstone-moss, I heard a shout behind, and, looking back, I saw a party in full career after me, who evidently had me in full sight. I took the road straight over the bog, knowing that ground that would bear me as I ran lightly over it, would give way under the horses of the heavily armed soldiers. It turned out in some measure as I had expected. All through the bog I kept my own with them, they gained nothing on me; but on the other hand, I gained nothing on them, and I knew that when the moss was once passed, the ground would allow them to get on more quickly than I could; so I looked about for some hole or corner into which I might creep, and, by the Lord's good hand upon me, hide myself from the face of mine enemies.

“As I sought and prayed to the Lord to hide me under the shadow of His wings, I came upon a deep mossy furrow running across the bog. I lay down in the rushes, and the bents closed over me, hiding me from view. And once again,

as often before, I was made to know the joy there is in feeling that we are in our Father's hands; that He is with us, and careth for us. But even while rejoicing in the safety I had found, I heard the sound that struck upon my heart like a death knell. It was the baying of dogs, hot and keen on the scent of their prey, and I knew that from them there was no escape; no hole, however dark, no furrow, however deep, could hide me from them. That sense of smell which God had given them was sure and unerring, and these men were now using it to hunt God's children to the death. 'O, Lord,' I cried, 'I am still in Thy hands, even yet canst Thou save me, if it so please Thee; but if it be Thy will that they should take my life, do Thou keep my soul fast, resting on Thee, and let me meet death without fear, and without sin.'

"Oh, my brethren, you know as well as I can tell you how sweet it is thus to cast oneself upon the Lord in the hour of danger; how near He then seems to us; how calmly and peacefully the soul lies still in His everlasting arms! I heard the bark of the dogs come nearer and nearer. I raised my head a little, and looked through the rushes, and could see them not very many yards off, their heads down, their noses scenting out my very footsteps, and they coming straight and sure to their prey.

Again, I cried to the Lord, 'Into Thy hands I commend my spirit,' and I was preparing to rise that I might save myself at least from being torn by the dogs, when suddenly there was a whirr among the long grass at my head, and close past my face, like a flash of lightning, dashed a fox, frightened from his lair by the near approach of the dogs. With a loud yelp, the hounds turned from my track to rush after him, and the soldiers, too, in the eagerness of this unexpected chase, forgot the poor Covenanter whom they had been hunting. Fox, dogs, horses, and men dashed over the moor in wild excitement, and I was left to give praise and thanks to the Lord, who had again spread over me the shadow of His wings, and had again

delivered me in safety from the hands of my enemies.

“When they were fairly out of sight, I rose to go home. I passed round about the hill, walked up the burn to throw the hounds off my scent, and reached this sweet resting-place in safety, to find my dear wife waiting for me in sore anxiety and fear, and ready to join with me in wondering praise to the Lord, who had watched over His unworthy servant, and kept him even ‘as the apple of His eye.’”

John Paterson and his wife lived through all the years of persecution, and when liberty of conscience was once again allowed to God’s children in this land, they returned to their farm, and lived many years in peace and happiness, and in favour with God and man.

Selected

THE OLYMPIC GAMES

Some important and forgotten facts about the Olympic Games which are to be held soon in Britain, gleaned from an excellent leaflet published in Holland and in Canada by the Reformed Churches of North America.

(a) The games were started in 776 BC in honour of the god Zeus in the Greek city of Olympia. Zeus was said to be the father of Greek gods, his throne being on Mount Olympus, whose top was said to reach heaven. The Greek capital Athens is named after his supposed wife, Athena. At the opening of the games, offerings were made to Zeus, and oaths made to him. Winners of the games worshipped Zeus in his large temple in Olympia, and laurel crowns were placed on their heads.

(b) Because of their pagan nature, in 394 AD the games were abolished by the Christian Emperor Theodosius of the Roman Empire.

(c) In 1896 the games were resurrected and were held in Athens. The spirit of the age was, and is now, that man has outgrown any supposed need of God, and hence He is to be dismissed from their lives. Man, according to this philosophy

is the centre of the universe, the very essence of the pernicious evil of humanism. Now it seems the whole world is expected to bow before this idol image of sport, as they were commanded to bow before the image on the Plain of Dura in the days of Nebuchadnezzar.

(d) The symbols of paganism are still very much in use. The Olympic Torch, which has been paraded through the towns of Great Britain, is lit in Olympia, and the oath is still sworn by the competitors. Billions of pounds are wasted on venues, many of which have little use after the games are over. Sport is now the prevailing religion of the day.

(e) The five intertwined rings which are the official Olympic symbol, are said to represent the five continents of the world, and purport to show the desire for unity amongst the people of the world. In reality, below the surface, deep hostility, suspicion and corruption lurk amongst some of the competitors and nations, which occasionally break out in violence. For example in 1972, twelve Israeli athletes were shot dead by Palestinian gunmen in Munchen. Even this atrocity did not cause the games to be abandoned. Money and politics meant they must go on at all costs.

(f) What does the Bible tell us? Hear the words of Paul to Timothy: "Bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." If men were to spiritually strive to enter in by the strait gate with equivalent determination that the flesh exerts to gain these earthly prizes, how much more profited they would be. "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" "They do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible."

(g) Knowing these things, may we be kept from being swept along with the idolatry of the day, and rather seek to know and be known of that great God who has an eternal crown to give to those who look for Him.

ANONYMOUS LETTERS

Sometimes it is the lot of an editor or some other person to receive anonymous hostile letters. By sending anonymously, the writer does not wish to be known. Mr J. H. Gosden once said that anything of that nature, whatever the contents, he put in the waste paper basket. Can the practice of writing in such a way ever be justified?

We have only Scripture to guide us in these matters.

Paul had some very critical and cutting things to say to the Corinthians but he fearlessly put his name to both epistles sent to that church. Even that wicked man Tobiah who opposed and ridiculed the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, put his name to the letters he sent to Nehemiah: "to put him in fear."

Surely honesty and courtesy demand that a writer should disclose his or her name. "Be courteous" and "Provide for honest things in the sight of God and man" are Scriptural exhortations.

Further, is it kind or fair to write thus? The contents may be true but if so surely the writer should have the courage to put their name to it. By not doing so, they deprive the receiver of such letters from having at least the opportunity to respond. If the receiver is in the wrong then he has the opportunity to acknowledge it. If he feels he is in the right he can at least explain why he feels it to be so. But to leave him in the dark, often with a smear against his name, is neither Christ-like nor becoming any who profess the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

My dear readers, if you have something to say, say it openly to the person whom it concerns. Matthew 18 is very clear on this point: "If thou hast ought against thy brother go and tell him," not "write an anonymous letter." Much more good might come from a course of honest dealings than underhand letters. Closely related to this is the terrible plague of tale-bearing. The late Mr L. S. B. Hyde had a woman come to him once to complain about another person. As she was about to start he said: "Let me get my notebook, so I can be sure that when I speak to this person I can accurately relay what you have told me." The conversation ended abruptly as the

talebearer did not want to be identified.

“Suffer the word of exhortation.”

Editor

SIGNS POINT PEOPLE THE WRONG WAY

Almost everywhere you travel today, you will find tourist signs to tell you about what you are looking at. I saw a sign recently at a panoramic lookout over the Glass House Mountains, north of Brisbane, Australia. Those who made the sign as well as those who read it probably would not realise that the sign presents a biased view that profoundly affects people's understanding of the world.

Consider this extract: *“The Glass House Mountains were once lava plugs within volcanic cones. The volcanic cones and surrounding Landsborough sandstone were eroded by wind and water over 25 million years to reveal the lava plugs which you can see today.”*

Let us separate fact from speculation. The mountains that tourists admire from the lookout are fact. Their shape and the rocks they are made of, make it plain they were once volcanoes. That they were eroded by wind and water over 25 million years was never observed. It is a philosophy or a belief that what we see happening now is what happened in the past. But it ignores recorded history. The true history of the Bible describes a global Flood in Noah's day, so the sign should read: *“The Glass House Mountains were once lava plugs within volcanic cones. These erupted about half-way through Noah's Flood about 4,500 years ago. The volcanic cones and surrounding Landsborough sandstone were eroded by the floodwaters as they receded into the ocean, revealing the lava plugs which you can see today. Relatively little erosion has happened since then.”*

Here we have made a few small changes to the wording on the sign, but what a big change it would make to the way people look at the landscape.

Creation

“RED SKY AT NIGHT, THE SHEPHERD’S DELIGHT”

The Lord Jesus Christ once referred to this saying when reproving the Pharisees for not reading the signs of the times. They could tell by the colour of the sunset what the weather was likely to be the next day, but they failed to recognise the Sun of Righteousness in His day as He stood among them and warned them of coming dangers and judgments. A recent article in the Daily Telegraph (slightly adapted) sheds some light on the natural reasons for such sunsets. We know that these natural causes are all in the hand of our Creator and that a beautiful sunset is His handiwork.

There would be no colour at all in the atmosphere if it were not for an effect known as “Rayleigh scattering,” after Lord Rayleigh who first described scattering mathematically in the 19th century. Without it, a white Sun would shine out of a black sky, just as it does on the Moon.

White light from the Sun is a combination of all the colours of the spectrum, as when rays of sunlight pass through raindrops to form a rainbow. Light travels in a wavelike pattern, and at one end of the spectrum red light has a longer wavelength (about 0.7 microns) than blue light (about 0.4 microns).

Just as waves in the ocean are disrupted by obstructions such as rocks or breakwaters, so light waves in the atmosphere are disrupted (that is, scattered) by particles in the air.

In clear air, the only scattering is caused by the air molecules which are very small indeed and mainly affect light at the blue end of the spectrum, while the yellow and red rays pass straight through. This scattering of blue light is the reason why the sky appears blue.

Most of the time, however, the air contains many sorts of particles, such as dust, sea salt, pollution and pollen. These are much larger than air molecules and cause scattering of light in all wavelengths, leaving the sky pale blue. The clearer the atmosphere the deeper blue the sky.

Because of the curvature of the Earth, the Sun's rays at sunrise and sunset travel a great distance through the atmosphere to reach the eyes of someone looking towards the horizon. During this journey the blue light is progressively removed by scattering, leaving only yellows and reds. Red sky at night therefore indicates clear skies and a dusty atmosphere to the west of us – that is the direction most of our weather comes from. If clouds were advancing from the west, the Sun's rays would be interrupted and the scattering much diminished.

A KICKER

Many years ago when I was staying with farmer friends in Wiltshire, as I was about to leave the following morning after preaching at Chippenham, they told me that one of their cows had to be killed. They had a pedigree herd, so I asked what was the reason. They told me that it was a kicker – that is, it would at times kick out at others, injuring them without any warning. A “kicker”: - it made me think.

If we hurt others by unkindness, disobedience, wrong words, hasty temper, and impatience, then we are just like the cow that I called “Kicker.” If somebody should do this to us, then how careful we should be not to kick back. We must seek grace to bear all unkindness and reproach with patience, for we should be “kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.” The prodigal in Luke 15, “kicked” and left his Father's house to go into a far country, wasting his substance with riotous living. He soon began to be in want – thought how he had rebelled (kicked) against his Father's kindness. He then came to himself, then came to his Father – oh what a loving welcome to an unworthy son! We, too, have kicked, by nature turned from God ... but oh the wonders of His grace. We have been saved with so great salvation!

Saul of Tarsus “kicked against the pricks” – Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked – oh that the Lord will preserve us from this, especially when we are prospered in life.

C. A. Wood (from a letter to Mr. J. M. Van Wyk of the Netherlands)

“SMITE WITH YOUR HAMMER”

A dear minister that was so cast down, felt there was no sign of blessing following his ministry. He had a dream and it was the Lord telling him to break this big rock. He gave him a hammer and he kept smiting. He said: “No, I cannot go on!” The Lord said: “It is not for you to look for success, it is for you to smite with your hammer.” In due time that rock broke. Shortly after, the Lord confirmed that dream, with blessings following his ministry. It was from heaven. We should be very careful when speaking about dreams, but this man lived to see a spiritual revival.

C.A. Wood

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

JOHN 17 – THE PRAYER OF JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD (VII)

Eternal life only in Jesus Christ (Part 2)

In the last issue we looked at the extent of the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ and the fact that whether we live north, south, east or west in this world, there is only one Saviour, Jesus Christ, and the only true God has anointed and appointed Him alone to be the Saviour of the world. *“And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” (John 17. 3).*

We would like to look more closely now at *‘life eternal.’* There are numerous Scriptures which clearly and very emphatically teach us that this life is only in Jesus Christ. In the first five verses of the gospel according to John the Lord Jesus is called *“the Word.”* This term, of course, refers to His divine nature: He is the Son of God. This is brought out so clearly in v 14. *“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1. 14).* Notice the distinction between, *“Word”* and *“flesh.”* One refers to His divine nature, the other His human nature, in this one

Person, Jesus Christ. There are not two Persons in Jesus Christ, a divine Person and a human Person: that would be confusion. There is one Person, the Son of God, who assumed a human nature. The Athanasian Creed puts it very succinctly: *“Very God and very man.”*

The divinity of Christ is so clearly stated in these first five verses of John, hence the eternity of Christ. He did not begin when He was born a Man: He existed coequal and coeternal with the Father. Listen to these sublime words of truth: *“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).*

It is by faith in Jesus Christ that a poor sinner is brought from death into life, from darkness into light. Has this glorious light shone into our hearts? Has it brought life and liberty into our souls? Let us look at those wonderful words of grace spoken by Jesus Christ when He raised Lazarus from the dead and with it we have his sister Martha’s confession of faith. *“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto Him, Yea, Lord: I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world” (John 11. 25-27).*

In John 10 we are instructed not only that He gives His sheep eternal life, but also that they were given Him by the Father. In several places in Scripture this is said to have been done before the foundation of the world. The mark of being one of these sheep is to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd and, very importantly, to follow Him. *“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. I and My Father are one" (John 10. 27-30). Notice here the eternal safety and security of the children of God.

Lastly, but not least, let us look at the words of Jesus in John 3. These words again set before us that the love of the eternal Father is tasted, handled and felt in the Person of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. The term, Son of man, directs us to the reality of His human nature. *"And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3. 13-18).*

(To be continued)

J.R. Rutt

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about PUTTING TO THE TEST. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor either by post or e-mail (see page 146 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

The word "test" does not appear in the Bible, but often other words such as "prove," "try," "tempt" are used. The word "tempt," for example can be used in more than one way. We read in Genesis 22:1: "God did tempt Abraham," meaning that God put Abraham's faith to the test to prove it was real. Yet in another place we read: "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither

tempteth He any man" (James 1. 13). This is referring to the way Satan tempts, or "puts to the test," to try and make us commit wicked things. So there is a right way to "put God to the test" when by faith we trust Him to perform His own Word. And there is a wrong way to "put God to the test" when our actions spring only from unbelief and doubt. Try to bear in mind which kind of "putting to the test" the questions below refer to.

1. What question did the children of Israel ask when they tempted God at Massah? (Exodus 17. 7)
2. Of whom was it written: "The Word of the LORD tried him"? (Psalm 105. 19)
3. "The trial of your faith." What is it more precious than? (1 Peter 1. 7)
4. The Apostle Paul says: "Prove all things." What comes next? (1 Thessalonians 5. 21)
5. On one occasion Jesus said to the Pharisees: "Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites?" What question had the Pharisees asked? (Matthew 22. 17-18)
6. What did God say He would do to the Israelites, "that I may prove them, whether they will walk in My law, or no"? (Exodus 16)
7. What did Abraham do by faith "when he was tried"? (Hebrews 11)
8. Who had heard of his wisdom and "came to prove Solomon with hard questions at Jerusalem"? (2 Chronicles 9)
9. Jesus was tempted of the devil, who (mis)quoted Psalm 91. 11-12. Which Scripture did Jesus use in reply? (Luke 4)
10. Who, in the midst of trouble, said: "When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold"?

ANSWERS TO JUNE QUESTIONS

1. Hagar.
2. Hannah was grieved because she had no children.
3. She had an issue of blood for twelve years and had spent all that she had, was no better.
4. Her daughter was "grievously vexed with a devil."
5. Naomi, Mara (which means 'bitterness').
6. She was afraid because Pharaoh had commanded all baby boys to be killed and she could no longer hide him. (Exodus 1. 22; 2. 3)

7. Esther knew that anyone who came to the king uninvited could be put to death. (Esther 4. 11)
8. Her son had died. (2 Kings 4. 18-20)
9. Mary Magdalene. "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him". (John 20. 11-13)
10. Martha and Mary. Jesus was not too late; He raised their brother Lazarus from the dead. (John 11)

Contributed

AT THE END OF THE DAY

For all the blessings of the day,
 My thanks, O LORD, to Thee I pay;
 My sins to Thee I now confess
 And plead a Saviour's righteousness.

From all my sins may I be washed,
 Ere in my bed I soon am hushed,
 So if I ne'er again awake,
 Mine eyes may on the glory break.

In waking moments fill my mind,
 With pleasures of a heavenly kind;
 From evil dreams LORD keep me free,
 May Satan's power not conquer me.

If for another day I'm spared,
 May I at all times honour God.
 Help me to stay my mind on Thee
 And be from mine own counsels free.

So help me in my times and ways,
 Ever to live unto Thy praise,
 And when this earth shall be no more,
 May I in Heaven Thee adore.

R. Chaplin

The Friendly Companion



“While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest
... shall not cease.” Genesis 8. 22

August 2012

Editor: Mr. G.D. Buss, "Bethany", 7 Laines Head, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 1PH.

Tel: 01249 656910. Email: gdbuss@tiscali.co.uk

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

When I was at school, sometimes in an English lesson, or for homework, we would have to write an essay. If it was on a subject I did not like or know much about, then I would sit looking at the paper, the pen in my hand, finding it a real task and not very pleasant at that! Of course, some people are more 'ready writers' than others.

I wonder if you know where, in the Bible, it says: "My tongue is the pen of a ready writer"? It is of course in Psalm 45 where the psalmist, whose name is not given, although it was probably David, was so full of thoughts that he could not write them down as fast as they came. The wonderful subject he was writing about was King Jesus, and he was so full of thoughts because he was "moved by the Holy Ghost," who gave him a deep love for the subject he was writing about. It was not a drudge for him to write because these thoughts came from his heart. This was what we call inspiration. All of the Scriptures have been inspired by the Holy Ghost and so are pure and right.

We read of another man, Ezra, who was said to be a ready scribe. He obviously liked writing too! If you did not like writing you would not be a scribe in Bible days! They were the men who wrote out the Law for the people to read in the synagogues and temple. They had to be so careful with what they copied, that if they made one mistake, they had to tear up that whole page and start again! Also if the reed which they were using as a pen became bent or bruised, they had to throw it away and start that page again. How frustrating and annoying it must have been! The scribes had to be very patient and meticulous people. How kind is the Lord in Isaiah 42 where He promises not to "break the bruised reed." A bruised reed in God's sight may be one who has made many mistakes yet says like another unknown psalmist: "I have gone astray like a lost sheep, ... for I do not forget Thy commandments." That verse is at the end of the longest chapter in the Bible.

You will know where that is!

Also, when a king was anointed it was his duty to write out the Book of Deuteronomy and to read it every day so that he was well acquainted with all it required of him and his people. God promised Joshua that by doing this in the fear of the Lord he would 'make his way prosperous, and give him good success.'

Paul was evidently a ready writer too, for on one occasion it seems he had left some writings which he wanted Timothy to bring from Troas. Perhaps he, like some of us, had left something behind! But he did not want to lose God's Word!

The same psalmist who wrote Psalm 119, said: "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." If God's Word is written in our hearts we will not lose it. He said of the Corinthians that the Spirit of the living God had written the truth in their hearts. What God writes in our hearts is written for ever! Then we are not like those forgetful hearers that James speaks of, who like a man seeing his face in a glass (or mirror) goes away and straightway forgets what he has seen, but rather become doers of the Word which has been written in our hearts. These are the good-ground hearers Christ speaks of in the parable of the sower.

"How precious is the Book divine,
By inspiration given!
Bright as a lamp its doctrines shine,
To guide our souls to heaven.

When once it penetrates the mind
To conquer every sin,
The enlightened soul begins to find
The path of peace divine."

May each of us know God's Word in this way,
With best wishes from your sincere friend and Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

How strange would be the sight of the combine harvester on our front cover this month, to the harvesters of Bible days! Even the grandparents of our older readers would hardly credit this labour-saving device! It cuts, separates the chaff from the wheat, and discharges the chaff, retaining the wheat in its large tank ready to be emptied mechanically into a silo. The instruments in the cab would completely baffle farmers of one hundred years ago!

In Bible lands the harvest was both sown and gathered by hand. It was heavy and often wearisome labour. When the wheat or barley was ready for harvesting then the reapers would go out with scythes and cut the corn down and bind it into sheaves, which were then carried to a threshing floor where the corn was beaten to separate the chaff from the wheat. Then the wheat was gathered finally into the barn. Sometimes ears or stalks of corn would be left behind as the sheaves were gathered in the field, or fall to the ground. The Law of Moses commanded that these were to be left to the gleaners, those poor people who were looking for sustenance. Indeed sometimes the owner of the field would tell his reapers to deliberately let fall some handfuls of corn on purpose, especially if he saw someone in particular need. This is what happened to Ruth in Boaz's field. Gleaning must have been a back-aching occupation, as the gleaner had to stoop right to the ground to gather the precious corn.

Sometimes you may hear ministers speak of God "letting fall some handfuls of purpose" and may wonder what is meant by it. It is a way of asking God to especially remember those who come to His house to glean among the sheaves of His Word and truth. Just as Boaz's command had a deep significance in that it was the beginning of the unfolding of God's purposes in both his life and Ruth's, so when God causes the truth to fall into the heart then there is a purpose of God being fulfilled, which comes fully to light in due season. Sometimes these gleaners find the exercise of gleaning to be a heavy burden.

But God has promised that: "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." The Lord Jesus Christ is the Perfect Sower and Reaper, and He will doubtless see the fruit of His life, sufferings and death, when He returns in the day of His Second Coming, bringing all His people with Him. He also causes His people to sow and reap and glean in the way of faith, and has promised that doubtless there will be a harvest time, when what God has taught them to pray and wait for, will surely come to pass.

"HOLINESS BECOMETH THY HOUSE O LORD"

One of the things which has been true in all generations is the changing fashions of dress of both male and female. Sadly in this generation there is a deliberate attempt to obliterate the Scriptural distinction between the male and the female, the ultimate fruits of which are clearly seen in the low morals of the day.

It is, however, our dress and deportment in the House of God which increasingly concerns us. The Lord instructed that in the Tabernacle, and later the Temple, the priests and congregation were not to unduly expose their bodies, especially in worship. To do otherwise was to draw unseemly attention to the body, a principle which should appertain in the worship of God as much in our day as then. The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians warned that women's heads should be covered, as their hair is their glory. No other glory should be visible in the House of God other than the Lord's. The same principle must apply to our bodies, whether male or female.

May we take heed to God's own exhortation for our bodies as well as our hearts: "Be ye holy for I am holy."

Editor

“MY LIFE’S MINUTEST CIRCUMSTANCE”

One of our older readers has kindly sent the following account of how she first realized that God bears and answers prayer.

My family lived in the country at a hamlet called Beltring. The nearest village was Paddock Wood, and the nearest town was Tunbridge Wells, almost eight miles further on. We were a family of eight: five boys and three girls, of which I was the youngest.

There was a little old gentleman who gave piano lessons, so as was the custom in those days, we all made a start with him. Me, being the only one who showed any promise, my parents thought I ought to have more advanced tuition, and thus took steps to make contact with a Doctor of Music who came to Tunbridge Wells from London once a week. So I became one of his pupils. This meant a bus journey into Tunbridge Wells.

As it was a new experience, my dear Mother came with me for my first lesson which seemed to have been satisfactory. So now we went back to the bus stop for the return journey home. Eventually the bus came and on we stepped, thinking all had gone well *until* I realized that I had left my brand new music-case behind at the bus stop, which incidentally contained my tutor’s music, which made things all the more worrying!

The conductor of the bus, kindly let us alight and as fast as we could run, we retraced our steps. I am quite sure my mother would have prayed our way along.

Now comes the wonderful part of the account. Much to our wonderment and joy, the music case was exactly where I had left it.

Was not this the Almighty’s watchful care over it? There were quite a few people no doubt waiting for their bus, but without question the Lord prevented them either from seeing it or touching it.

M.G.

*FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES***“THE SUN STOOD STILL”**

The people of Canaan were afraid when they heard that Gibeon had made peace with Israel. They were also angry with Gibeon for doing this. Five kings joined their armies to make war with them. The men of Gibeon sent a message to the camp of Israel. They asked them to come quickly and help them fight. The LORD told Joshua: *“Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand.”*

Joshua and all the mighty men of Israel went in the night and came suddenly upon the enemy. They fled from Israel, and the LORD cast down great hailstones upon them. The battle went on all day but was not finished. Joshua asked God to let the daylight last until they had defeated these mighty kings and their armies. God heard the request of Joshua and performed a great miracle. *“And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies.”*

“And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel.”

QUESTIONS:

1. How many kings joined to make war with Gibeon?
2. What did the LORD cast down upon their enemies?
3. What stood still at Joshua’s request?

Please send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail (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. The men of Gibeon.
2. A very far country.
3. Servants.

Contributed

*“So the sun
stood still in
the midst of
heaven, and
hasted not
to go down
about a
whole day.”*

Joshua 10. 13

BIBLE LESSONS**THE LAST PASSOVER FEAST**

At the palace of Caiaphas the high priest, a great number of powerful and influential men gathered. The chief priests, scribes, and elders of the people came together to discuss how they could take Jesus secretly and put Him to death. No doubt, there were many different suggestions, but their great concern was to keep it from happening on the Passover feast day. As they debated, a stranger came, asking what they would pay him if he delivered Jesus to them. How happy they were! Who was this stranger? Sadly, it was one of Jesus' own disciples, Judas Iscariot.

The chief priests agreed to pay him thirty pieces of silver. The Bible tells us: "... *from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him (Jesus).*" Hundreds of years before, a prophet of God named Zechariah wrote: "*So they weighed for My price thirty pieces of silver.*" How was it possible that the learned scribes (teachers of the people) did not understand what they were doing? They were fulfilling that prophecy to the very letter and yet remained blind to it. Perhaps they even thought that Judas coming to them was a token from God that they were just in their cause.

While Judas was plotting to betray the Lord Jesus, the other disciples were anxious about keeping the Passover. They asked the Lord where He would have them prepare for it. Jesus sent Peter and John to Jerusalem and told them that when they entered the city, they would see a man bearing a pitcher of water. They should follow him into the house and say to the owner: "*The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at thy house with My disciples.*"

When Peter and John arrived in Jerusalem, they saw a man bearing a pitcher of water, just as the Lord had said. How they must have marvelled at this clear evidence that Jesus is truly God! They did as Jesus told them and were shown a large upper room where they prepared the bread and the lamb for the Passover supper. Soon Jesus arrived with the other disciples, and they began to eat the Passover feast. Although

the disciples, along with the other Jews, delighted to keep this feast, they little thought that what would soon follow would be the fulfilment of all that the Passover pictured.

While they were eating, Jesus told them something which greatly disturbed them. He said: *“Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me.”* The disciples were filled with sorrow at the thought, and one by one they asked: *“Lord, is it I?”* Jesus continued, saying: *“The Son of man goeth as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.”* Then, at last, Judas Iscariot said: *“Master, is it I?”*

After the supper, Jesus rose up and girded Himself with a towel and poured water into a bowl. How the disciples must have stared in wonder as He knelt down and began to wash their feet! In Bible times, whenever they were invited to a supper, a servant would wash the feet of the guests. This was a common act of kindness, for the feet of the guests would be covered with dust from the dirt roads.

What an example Jesus set for His disciples! Although He was their Master, yet He humbled Himself to perform this lowly task. When Jesus came to Peter, Peter asked: *“Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?”* Jesus answered him: *“What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.”* Peter protested by saying: *“Thou shalt never wash my feet.”* Peter felt so unworthy! How tenderly Jesus spoke: *“If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me.”*

You can read about this in Matthew chapter 26 verses 3 to 25, Mark chapter 14 verses 1 to 21, Luke chapter 22 verses 1 to 16, and John chapter 13 verses 1 to 26.

QUESTIONS:

1. Who offered to deliver Jesus to the chief priests and scribes?
2. What did they agree to pay him for delivering Jesus? (4 words)
3. Which prophet wrote of this long before?
4. What did the disciples ask Jesus after He said one of them would betray Him? (4 words)
5. What did Jesus do with the bowl of water? (3 words)

Please send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail. (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. Well done thou good and faithful servant.
2. Unprofitable.
3. The sheep from the goats.
4. The sheep. The goats.
5. The kingdom prepared for you.

G. L. TenBroeke

“DO YOU LOVE ME?”

The service had already begun. The old minister was now preaching to his people in his church in Virginia, USA. He saw a man walk into the church and sit down. The man was well dressed but he looked very sad. He listened seriously to the sermon and sometimes a tear slid down his cheek. Afterwards the two men spoke. The minister asked: “How is it that I meet a Jew in a Christian church?”

The man went on to say something about his life. He had a good education, he told the minister. Later he left London with his books and his wealth and settled down by the Ohio River with his lovely daughter, who was just seventeen. His wife had already died before he crossed the Atlantic and he poured out all his love on this one daughter. She was a very pleasant young lady who could speak several languages. As a strict Jew, he had brought her up to follow his religion carefully.

Tragically, the daughter became pale and weak; she was seriously ill. It was clear that death could not be far away. The father often tried to talk to her, but mostly all he could do was to cry. He called in doctors; it did not matter to him how much their visits cost; but they could do nothing to reverse the progress of the disease.

One day he was taking a walk in a wood near his home, when a message came to him from his daughter. He entered her bedroom with a heavy heart, fully expecting that the time had come when they would have to say their final farewells to each other. She stretched out her cold hand to grasp his. “My father,”

she asked, "do you love me?" He told her: "You know that I love you, that you are more dear to me than all the world beside."

Then she asked again: "But, my father, do you love me?"

"Why, my child, will you give me pain? Have I never given you any proof of my love?" "But, my dearest father," she asked once more, "do you love me?"

Her father was too moved to answer, so she went on: "I know you have always loved me; you have been the kindest of parents and I tenderly love you. Will you grant me one request? It is the dying request of your daughter."

"My dearest child, ask what you will, though it will take every penny of my property. Whatever it may be, it shall be granted. I will grant it." The time had come for her to tell him what she wanted. "My dear father," she pleaded, "I beg you never again to speak against Jesus of Nazareth."

The father was too shocked to speak. But his daughter went on: "I know very little about this Jesus, but I was never taught. But I know that He is a Saviour, for He has made Himself known to me since I have been sick, even for the salvation of my soul. I believe He will save me, though I have never before loved Him. I feel that I am going to Him, that I shall ever be with Him. And now, my dear father, do not deny me; I beg that you will never again speak against this Jesus of Nazareth. I plead with you to obtain a Testament that tells of Him, and I pray that you may know Him, and that, when I am no more, you may give Him the love that used to be mine."

The effort of speaking was too much for her. She had to stop. And it was impossible for her father to say anything at all. He left the room, very much disturbed. Soon someone came to tell him that his daughter had died.

The first thing he did after the funeral was to buy a New Testament. He read it. And he, we are told, "taught by the Spirit from above, is now numbered among the meek and happy followers of Christ."

A FAMILY AT PRAYER

Cathie was fidgeting. It was half past eight: time to go off to school and there she was kneeling down as her father prayed on and on. It always seemed as if he was extra long when she was in a hurry and she disliked the embarrassment of still being in the middle of family prayers when her school friends called for her. Sure enough, the bell rang and she had to wait till the prayer was finished before opening the door. She jumped up, gathered her school bag and coat and went out quickly to join her friends. They knew the family pattern and were patiently waiting outside for her. It was all a little awkward. None of Cathie's friends had Bible reading every morning and it made her feel different.

Family worship, or 'the worship,' as the family called it, took precedence over everything else. There was no skipping it to dash out to school and it had a very regular pattern. Her father took up the family Bible, already well thumb-marked and worn; prayed, read a few verses of a Scottish metrical psalm; and Cathie and her mother joined in to sing them. On weekdays the singing was in sequence from one psalm to the next and the Bible itself was read "in course," a chapter or part of a chapter from Genesis to Revelation. Then the family knelt for a concluding prayer by Cathie's father. He would carefully mark the last verse in pencil ready to pick up next day where he had left off.

The only day that was different was Sunday, the Lord's Day, which followed a different pattern. They read Mark chapter 16, the story of Christ's resurrection, in the morning, and Isaiah chapter 53, in the evening. The psalm was always Psalm 68. 18-20, sung to the tune "Sheffield."

As far as possible, in Cathie's family nothing was allowed to interrupt time given morning and night to worshipping God. Whoever was staying in the home or visiting at mealtime was expected to join in: the telephone went unanswered and callers, such as school girls, had to wait. As she grew older, Cathie came downstairs after doing her homework, to join in

the evening worship before going to bed. And as time went on she grew less impatient when in a hurry and was no longer embarrassed by the family pattern.

In the past, most families had a large family Bible: it was often given as a wedding present to the newly married couple by the minister who had performed the marriage ceremony. Traditionally the first few pages contained space for a record of family births, dates and marriages. Indeed when Cathie grew up she discovered torn pages from an old Bible tracing her mother's family records back to 1800. But already, even in the 1940s it was not so usual to see a family gathered around God's Word. In Victorian times larger households gathered all the staff with the family for household prayers. But many families, even of believers, by the mid-twentieth century had dropped the practice of meeting to pray as a family.

One day, when Cathie herself was a Granny, she found the old Bible that her father used to read for the 'worship' every day. She could remember how his finger stroked the fine rice paper pages and saw the faint pencil marks he had made. But above all, she could see the yellowing stains made where his fingers had turned the pages year after year and it brought a warm feeling of thankfulness for a godly upbringing and constant teaching from God's Word. Granny thought about the lessons we can all learn from a faithful pattern of family worship, whether we belong to a family that reads the Bible together, or need to make sure that we read it on our own. And apart from being the right thing to do, there are great advantages in daily Bible reading and prayer.

Firstly each day is set out in a right context. We are reminded that all we have and all we are, come from God the Creator. Whatever worries or interests we may have we can set them before God in prayer and we can commit everything in the day ahead, or the night when we are asleep, to Him in the knowledge that He is sovereign and we can rest believing that He maintains the world we live in. Jesus urged His disciples

not to worry about what they should eat, drink or wear, but to seek first God's kingdom because their Heavenly Father knew that they needed those things (Matthew 6. 25-34).

Secondly, we need to learn daily about Christ and examine our relationship to Him. It is so very easy to get so taken up with all the exciting things that are happening at home and at school that we forget about eternal realities and push them aside from day to day. But a daily prayer time encourages us to think about the need of being born again by the Holy Spirit. Ecclesiastes 12. 1 reads: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not."

Thirdly, there are Bible verses which commend this pattern. In the Old Testament there were evening and morning prayers in the Tabernacle. The story of Daniel tells us of the importance of daily prayer. Look up Daniel chapter 6 to find out exactly why Daniel ended up spending a night among the lions. The New Testament tells us how our Lord Jesus frequently went alone early to pray. If Jesus needed to spend time in prayer how much more do we!

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, by praying regularly we ensure that God is given the most important place in our lives. We live in a culture where God is mocked, not recognised and respected. To begin and end the day with prayer, be it family or private, whatever the pattern of the prayers may be, ensures that we place the living and true God at the heart of all our days.

So, if you live in a home where the Bible is read daily, do not be embarrassed about it but thank God that this is the example you are being set. Perhaps it will even give you a chance to explain to your friends the comfort of knowing that God is in control, and the importance of committing their lives to Him through Jesus' sacrifice. And whether your family meets for prayer or not, be sure to read the Bible and pray regularly putting yourself each day into God's loving care.

The Explorer (Slightly Adapted)

PUTTING GOD TO THE TEST

"When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will bear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them" (Isaiah 41. 17).

Thus spake our compassionate, gracious God, by His servant Isaiah, and innumerable instances, in all ages of the world, prove that He has abundantly fulfilled this promise to the very letter. Let the following facts strengthen our faith in Him, who is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

The late Rev. Edward Parsons of Leeds, frequently supplied the pulpit of the "Tabernacle," Tottenham Court Road. One Monday morning, after the fatigues of the previous Sabbath services, he took a sauntering walk with the view of refreshing his mind, when a gentleman accosted him. "You appear to be taking a walk, Sir; have you any objection if I walk with you?" "Not the least," was the reply.

They therefore walked on together. The stranger freely conversed with him on various topics until they came to a certain house, when he said to Mr. Parsons: "This is my house, Sir; would you like to walk in and rest yourself?" He made no objection. They therefore entered and continued for a while their pleasant conversation. The gentleman courteously offered Mr. Parsons some refreshment which he accepted, and then asked him if he would like to see over his house. To this unaccountable request Mr. Parsons consented, and was shown over a large and well-furnished residence. When they returned to the drawing room, the gentleman asked Mr. Parsons if he did not think his conduct rather strange. "To tell you the truth, I do," said he. The reply was, that he had a *design* in thus treating him. He then related the following remarkable facts:

Many years before, he and his wife had come from Scotland to London, where, as a mechanic he had for a time full employment. But when his work became slack, having made no provision for such an emergency, he was obliged to part with some of his furniture and take a smaller house. Still his

financial circumstances grew worse and worse. His health also failed, and it became necessary for him to part with more and more of his furniture, until he found himself, his wife, and family driven to reside in a wretched cellar in St. Giles. One day, after having parted with every article of furniture he could possibly spare, and being without food or the means of obtaining any, he resolved that the next morning he would drown himself in the New River, and accordingly started very early to carry out his dire resolve. It was the Sabbath morning, and as he passed through Tottenham Court Road on his way to the New River, a little before seven o'clock, he found himself moving on with a throng of persons who were entering the Tabernacle. In a sullen mood, he entered with the stream of early worshippers, still resolving to carry out his terrible design to commit suicide. Rev. Edward Parsons was in the pulpit. The hymn, the reading of the Scriptures, and the prayer struck the miserable one and made him say to himself: "This man seems to feel what he says." But when Mr. Parsons gave out his text, which was, "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them; I the God of Israel will not forsake them" (Isaiah 41. 17), it seemed so truly for him, that the poor starving man could not help stopping to hear all the sermon.

At its close, Mr. Parsons asked: "*Have you put the God of Israel to the test?*" and then taking it for granted that there were those in the congregation who, in deep poverty, were thirsting for temporal supplies, and others whose needy souls were panting for spiritual supplies, he addressed the congregation after this manner: "Put Him to the test, and He will make you to drink of the streams of bodily comforts. Put Him to the test, and He will make you to drink of the streams of spiritual comforts. Put Him to the test, and He will lead you to living fountains of water in glory, and wipe away all tears from your eyes."

The poor man at once said to himself: "I have not put the

God of Israel to the test," and consequently, with half a resolution to do so, he returned to the miserable cellar. There sat his wretched wife on a low stool, and there were his starving children crying for the food which he could not supply. After a short period of pensive sadness he said to his wife: "I think we might read a chapter." Poor woman! The remark opened up the wellspring; she burst into tears; the thought of her early religious training at once rushed on her mind. She looked for their Bible, but it had been pawned. She, however, found a part of an old copy, out of which her husband read a chapter. "We have not put the God of Israel to the test – shall we pray?" said he. This more surprised the poor wife; but at once they knelt down, and *did put the God of Israel to the test*. Still, the whole day passed without their being supplied with food.

The next morning, however, the postman, who very seldom entered that poverty-stricken street, brought the man a letter, post-paid, from a former fellow-workman, who had heard of his ill-health and loss of work. The letter contained information concerning a large firm in London, which had an extensive contract and was requiring a number of hands, and advised that he should apply to it for employment. It also contained a one-pound note, as a loan, which he immediately used in obtaining food for his family, and in reclaiming his best coat from the pawnbrokers. He then applied to the firm named, and obtained employment; and being a clever workman, his services were permanently secured. At length he was appointed foreman, and as the business extended, had a small interest given him in the concern, which was in the hands of two brothers. When one of them died, he was made a regular partner; and as, in course of years, an ample fortune had been realized by the remaining brother, he gave up the business to him.

With grateful acknowledgments to the Lord, he then told Mr. Parsons that the style of his house fairly represented his

financial circumstances; and that he had also been enabled to *put the God of Israel to the test* with reference to the wants of his soul. He had sought and found salvation, and “*streams of spiritual comfort*,” so that he could set to his seal that God was true, and that: “When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them; I the God of Israel will not forsake them.”

Before Mr. Parsons left, he pressed him to accept a *handsome* present as a token of his gratitude, and the Lord’s faithfulness; but he declined to do so. He, however, received from him a small tea-caddy, which was passed to his son, Rev. James Parsons, of York, who verified the main facts of this case; some of the other details are given on the authority of the late Rev. Edward Parsons himself, as communicated by him to a fellow-passenger in a stage coach.

From “Remarkable Answers to Prayer,” by John Richardson Philips, 1860.

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

JOHN 17 – THE PRAYER OF JESUS CHRIST THE SON OF GOD (VIII)

Eternal life only in Jesus Christ (Part 3)

In our last two issues we have been looking at those precious words of grace in this beautiful prayer of Jesus Christ. “*And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent*” (John 17. 3). I have been thinking of those precious words of the prophet. “*The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee*” (Jeremiah 31. 3). This everlasting love of God is seen, known, tasted, handled and felt in Jesus Christ. Let us look at the introduction to John’s first epistle: “*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of*

life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us)" (1 John 1. 1-2).

He was with the Father from all eternity and now the eternal Word becomes flesh and dwells among us as Man. The Son of God is speaking through Isaiah the prophet of His incarnation in the following words: *"Come ye near unto Me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord GOD, and His Spirit, hath sent Me" (Isaiah 48. 16).* The Holy Father sent His Holy Son and anointed His holy human nature with the Holy Spirit, without measure.

This is confirmed in the following Scripture: *"For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3. 34-36).*

The great and fundamental thing is: do you and I have the spirit of faith, which is the gift of God? (Ephesians 2. 8). It is by faith that we believe in the glorious Person of Jesus Christ and through Him we have eternal life. We are clearly instructed in the Hebrews: *"But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11. 6).* It is this spirit of faith in the believer that unites them to Jesus Christ and He becomes their life. John clearly defines this life of faith: *"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5. 10-12).* This spirit of faith is from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit: He and He only can make a true believer.

In Romans chapter 10 the apostle opens up how faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God; how shall they preach except they be sent? Read this chapter and the economy of the New Testament is laid out, the divine order of preaching the Word. This is the principle means under the New Testament order for the gathering of precious souls unto Jesus Christ. We firmly believe in the primacy of preaching for the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the edifying of the church of Jesus Christ.

This life in Jesus Christ is a full life, an abundant life: a life that will never fail. It will never fail because it is in Jesus Christ: *“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory”* (Colossians 3. 3-4). Think on those sacred words of Jesus Christ: *“ I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly”* (John 10. 10).

“And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” (John 17. 3).

J.R. Rutt

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about events in THE LAST WEEKS OF JESUS' LIFE HERE ON EARTH. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail (see page 170 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. A woman was found fault with because she anointed the Lord Jesus with ointment of spikenard. What was her name? (John 12. 3)
2. Which disciple said to Jesus: “Thou shalt never wash my feet”? (John 13. 8)
3. Which one of the disciples betrayed the Lord Jesus with a kiss? (Matthew 26. 47-49)
4. What did Jesus pray in the garden of Gethsemane, the substance of which He repeated three times? (Matthew 26. 39)

5. Jesus cursed a tree, and it soon withered away. What did Jesus look for on the tree, and not find? (Mark 11. 13)
6. The chief priests and scribes objected when the children in the temple cried: "Hosanna to the Son of David." What did Jesus reply? (Matthew 21)
7. When Jesus confounded the Sadducees who denied the resurrection of the dead, which text in Exodus did He refer to? (Luke 20. 37, Exodus 3)
8. Jesus asked the Pharisees a question: "The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?" What was the answer and why would the Pharisees not give an answer? (Mark 11)
9. "Loose him, and let him go." "Loose him, and bring him." What or who was Jesus referring to in each case? (John 11; Mark 11)
10. Three of the Gospels mention the women who gathered around the cross of the Lord Jesus. By comparing them, make a list of the names of all whom we are told about. (Matthew 13. 55 and Mark 6. 3 give additional information.)

ANSWERS TO JULY QUESTIONS

1. "Is the Lord among us, or not?"
2. Joseph.
3. Gold.
4. "Hold fast that which is good."
5. "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?"
6. He said that He would "rain bread from heaven" for them. (Exodus 16. 4)
7. He "offered up Isaac." (Hebrews 11. 17)
8. The Queen of Sheba. (2 Chronicles 9. 1)
9. "Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God." (Deuteronomy 6. 16)
10. Job. (Job 23. 10)

Contributed

"For bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation." (1 Timothy 4. 8-9)

“A CROWN THAT FADETH NOT AWAY”

These verses are very apposite when we compare all the striving for natural glory in the Olympic Games, with that glory which will never fade away. The word ‘amaranth’ is an ancient Greek word for something that never dies.

Editor

The warrior round his temples
 May bind the laurel wreath,
 A curse is on its greenness,
 The curse of blood and death:
 This blight will quickly wither
 The fairest wreath of bay,
 The Christian’s crown of amaranth
 Will never fade away.

On brows of mighty monarchs
 May sparkle many a gem,
 And gold, and pearls, and jewels,
 May deck the diadem;
 It shines with earthly lustre,
 ‘Twill tarnish and decay,
 The Christian’s crown of amaranth
 Will never fade away.

Proud were the mighty conquerors
 Crowned in Olympic games,
 They deem’d they’d deathless honours
 Entwined around their names;
 But sere was soon the laurel,
 The olive, and the bay;
 The Christian’s crown of amaranth,
 Will never fade away.

A harp of glory sweeping,
 A palm branch in his hand,
 The saint ‘mid circling spirits,
 Around the throne shall stand;
 His song shall be enduring
 As heaven’s eternal day,
 His victor crown of amaranth
 Shall never fade away.

Clifton Hymnal

The

Friendly Companion



“The Twelve Apostles”, a collection of limestone stacks off the shore of the Port Campbell National Park, by the Great Ocean Road in Victoria, Australia.

**“Heaven and earth shall pass away,
but My words shall not pass away.”**

Matthew 24. 35.

September 2012

Editor: Mr. G.D. Buss, "Bethany," 7 Laines Head, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 1PH.

Tel: 01249 656910. Email: gdbuss@tiscali.co.uk

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

Because God is who He is, there are many things about His Person and works which we cannot explain or fathom. Sadly because of this the reaction of man, by nature, is to discount anything that cannot be explained by the human mind, and thus God is excluded from their thoughts and ways. However, although no man by searching can find out God, God is pleased to reveal Himself to His children, and has promised: "They shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them." May it be our desire to be taught of God in this way.

The use of the word Trinity, with regard to the Being of God is one of these great mysteries of God. No man can truly explain it. One young minister in the Highlands of Scotland once told his congregation that at the next service he was going to explain the Trinity. Before the next service he met his elder on the shoreline. To his amazement he was scooping sea water with a bucket and emptying its contents on the rocks behind him. "Whatever are you doing?" asked the astonished minister, wondering whether his elder was losing his reason. "I am emptying the sea," was the unexpected reply. Now the minister really did wonder about his elder's mind! "You can never do that," he said, "not if you lived one hundred years or more doing it!" "No more can you explain to us the Trinity next Sabbath," was the rejoinder from his elder.

Some illustrations, however, do give us some thoughts about this mystery. The sun is one great created mass, yet it emits at the same time heat and light, which are distinct attributes. Water exists, not only as water but also as ice and snow. As one Indian convert put it: "Water is one, the ice is another, and the snow is another, and yet they are all one water." Some have thought of the cloverleaf as being one clover yet with three equal leaves. One life within three leaves. However, although we cannot explain this great mystery, to be saved, sinners need all three Persons of the Sacred Trinity. That is why at the end of every service we pray: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and

the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." May this be the prayer of each of our readers, too.

With best wishes from your sincere friend and Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

Some of our readers in Australia may well be aware of this outstanding picture on our front cover this month. It is of a group of cliffs, known as "The Twelve Apostles," no doubt so named because of the number of separate cliff formations. Evolutionists would tell us that these cliffs took billions of years to become what we see today, but we know that the Bible tells us that these cliffs, and all created things, were created by the breath of God's mouth. They did not need the billions of years falsely claimed by those who do not believe in God or His Word.

On at least three occasions in the Bible we have significant mention of cliffs. They are when the Jews were so angry with Christ at Nazareth, they took Him out to a cliff thinking to cast Him down, "but He passing through the midst of them, went His way." His hour, to lay down His life, had not come and neither was a cliff at Nazareth the appointed place. Then we have the herd of swine which ran down a steep place into the sea, with Christ's permission, after the healing of the Mad Gadarene, named Legion. Then, earlier in God's Word we have mention of the cliff of Ziz, where Jehoshaphat's enemies were gathered, and where God put them all to confusion. You may be able to tell me of other cliffs.

During the "Killing Times" in southwest Scotland, when the Covenanters were so cruelly persecuted as they sought for religious freedom, there were many acts of great bravery passed down by historians. One of the most courageous of the Covenanters was a young lad called James. He had been taught by the Holy Spirit to value God's Word above all things, even more than his natural life. One day out in the wild moors he was found by the dreaded dragoons, reading his Bible near the top of a cliff. One of the soldiers picked him up and held him over the edge of this dreadful abyss, saying: "Hand over

the Bible, and promise never to read such things again, or else I will drop you over this cliff." Fearlessly, the young lad answered: "If I do as you demand I will end my days in eternal abyss, and so will you if you live and die fighting against it. No, I will not promise." With that the soldier let him drop over the edge, and the lad fell to his death, but without a doubt was taken straight to heaven, where he received a martyr's crown from God. I wonder whether any of us would have stood this fiery trial for the love of God and His Word? Only by God's grace could we have stood. This lad would have said with Paul: "By the grace of God I am what I am." May we each be seeking such grace for the challenges of our own day.

"WHO IS THIS KING OF GLORY?"

(The following notes on this lovely subject were contained in a letter to a Dutch friend from the late Mr C. A Wood.)

Psalm 22 is the Psalm of the cross.

Psalm 24 is the Psalm of the crown.

Psalm 23 contains the blessings that flow from the cross and the crown.

"Who is this King of glory?"

The eternal Son of God.

The Babe born at Bethlehem; God and yet Man.

Crowned with thorns (an emblem of the curse of God for sin as stated in Genesis 3).

The death of the cross: "It is finished."

The resurrection: Victory over death and the grave.

The ascension: "The Lamb in the midst of the throne."

(In ancient times when a victorious army returned to its city, it would sound the note of victory and the gates of the city would be opened to let it in.)

He is "King of kings and Lord of lords." (Revelation 19. 16)

"The Lord God omnipotent reigneth." (Revelation 19. 6)

He will come again to take His people to glory. (John 17. 24)

"And on His head were many crowns." (Revelation 19. 12)

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**GOD FIGHTS FOR ISRAEL**

A large part of Canaan was taken by the children of Israel when they won the battle with the five kings. Now, other mighty kings in the north joined together to fight against Israel. They camped at the waters of Merom. Their armies were so large: *“even as the sand that is upon the sea shore in multitude.”* These enemies also had horses and chariots to help them.

Israel did not have horses or chariots, but they relied upon the power of God against the nations of Canaan. The LORD said to Joshua: *“Be not afraid because of them: for tomorrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel.”* Joshua and his men of war came suddenly upon the great armies by the waters of Merom. The LORD delivered them into the hand of Israel, and they smote them until there was not any left.

God caused the nations of Canaan to come against Israel to battle, that He might destroy them. *“So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD said unto Moses.”* Thus the land of Canaan was given to Israel to inherit, as the LORD had promised.

QUESTIONS:

1. Where did the armies camp to fight against Israel? (4 words)
2. What did the enemies have to help them? (3 words)
3. What did Israel rely upon? (4 words)

Please send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail (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. Five.
2. Great hailstones.
3. The sun.
Contributed

“... for the
LORD your
God is He
that hath
fought
for you.”

Joshua 23. 3.

BIBLE LESSONS

THE LORD'S SUPPER INSTITUTED

When Jesus had finished washing the feet of His disciples, He sat down at the table and asked if they really understood what He had done to them. It was more than just cleaning their dusty feet. He had given them an example to follow. If He, being their Lord and Master, would stoop so low as to take the place of a servant, they also ought to take the very lowest place.

No doubt, this was another reproof against the proud thoughts that swelled their hearts as to who would be the greatest among them. They should never quarrel over such things. They must learn to be the least, to esteem others greater than themselves. How they must have hung their heads in shame, hardly daring to look up! Each one likely felt that the Lord was looking directly at him as He spoke; all but one, that is. Judas Iscariot had become so hardened in his heart, that everything Jesus said stirred up anger and malice against Him.

All the while, Peter was curious to know who it was that should betray the Master. He looked at John, who was leaning on Jesus' breast, and motioned him to ask Jesus who it was. John also was very anxious to know. He said to Jesus: "*Lord, who is it?*" Jesus answered John: "*He it is, to whom I shall give a sop (piece of bread), when I have dipped it.*" He then took a piece of bread and gave it to Judas and said to him: "*That thou doest, do quickly.*" Satan then entered into Judas, and he rose up quickly and went out. The Bible tells us that: "*it was night.*" Yes, outside it was dark, but it was even darker in the soul of Judas.

With Judas gone, the room became silent again. The eyes of the disciples were fixed on the Lord Jesus, as He had taken a loaf of bread. After He gave thanks, He brake it and said: "*Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me.*" What wondrous words! What a sacred picture they present! They tell of the bruising – sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus. Next, He took a cup filled with wine. After giving thanks, He gave it to the eleven and told them all

to drink of it. This, too, represented an exceeding precious truth. He said: "*For this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*" The cup was also to be a remembrance of Jesus in all His sorrows and death. We must remember that the bread was not His actual body nor the wine His actual blood. They were only signs or emblems given as a representation of His body and blood.

This feast of remembrance instituted by the Lord Jesus is called the Lord's Supper. It is to be continued by His people until He comes again. The Lord's people often approach the Lord's Supper with burdened hearts, feeling their unworthiness to partake of it and yet feeling such a love to the Saviour for what He has done for them.

Although the disciples could not yet understand all that was signified by this feast, they knew what a holy awe they felt. What sacredness, what holiness, what solemn joy they felt! They were probably reluctant for the night to end.

While they were in this frame of mind, Jesus gave them a new commandment. You will remember the commandments that God gave to Israel on Mount Sinai. They are called the LAW of GOD. But this new commandment is a GOSPEL COMMANDMENT. It is a commandment binding upon all those who truly fear God. Oh how it must grieve the Lord Jesus when the commandment is not obeyed! What is this new commandment? "*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.*"

You can read about this in Matthew chapter 26 verses 26 to 29; Mark chapter 14 verses 22 to 25; Luke chapter 22 verses 17 to 27; and John chapter 13 verses 12 to 35.

QUESTIONS:

1. Who was leaning on Jesus' breast?
2. What does the bread represent?
3. What does the wine represent?
4. What is the feast of remembrance called?
5. What is the new commandment? (10 words)

Please send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail (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. Judas Iscariot. | 2. Thirty pieces of silver. |
| 3. Zechariah. | 4. "Lord, is it I?" |
| 5. Washed their feet. | |

G. L. TenBroeke

THE HIGHLAND KITCHEN MAID

Rev. McPhail travelled far and wide on church business. No aeroplanes carried him swiftly from one place to another; no paved highways carried his car comfortably and safely through the mountains and moors of Scotland. There were only goat paths, twisting and turning among the rocks of the desolate mountains and through the endless moors of the Highlands.

All day his little white horse had carried him onward toward the Synod meeting in Edinburgh. Now he was weary and looking for a place to stay. Would there be an inn, an hotel, some place to lodge anywhere in that barren landscape?

Then, as the path came around a hill, he saw a weather-beaten old inn. No, not a comfortable motel with a restaurant, swimming pool, warm showers, and comfortable beds, but a ramshackle inn. But it would give shelter for the rapidly encroaching night.

His horse turned into the yard and was soon stabled in the barn behind the inn. The minister picked up his bag and went in. Supper was cooking on the peat fire in the fireplace. There was no separate dining room: he would join the innkeeper and his family for their simple but nourishing meal. The lady of the house got out an extra place setting and invited him to take the chair at the head of the table.

But the meal would have to wait. Rev. McPhail reached into his coat pocket, took out his Bible and laid it on the table.

“Friends, before we partake of the food the Lord has given us, I want all in the family to join me in devotions. So Mrs., please call everyone.”

Soon the innkeeper and his wife and their children were seated at the table. Rev. McPhail looked around. “Is everyone here?” he asked. “Yes, we’re all here,” replied the man of the house.

“Everyone who lives in this house is here?” “Well, no. There’s a girl in the kitchen. She always scrubs the dishes. But she’s such a dirty, unkempt thing that she’s not fit to be seen.”

“Call her.”

“But, Rev. McPhail, she’s not fit to come into this room, to eat at the table with our family. She’s a servant: she never eats with us but always stays in the kitchen and keeps herself separate from the family. She’s not fit company for us. And furthermore, she’d just be uncomfortable here anyway.”

The minister spoke firmly. “Your kitchen maid is a human being. She has a soul created for eternity. If she never joins you for family worship then it is even more important that she joins us today. We will not begin until you call her and bring her to the table.”

With a sigh, the innkeeper pushed back his chair and went to the kitchen at the back of the house. A few moments later he returned with the maid. She was, indeed, a picture of misery and neglect. Hair uncombed, face unwashed, clothes both torn and dirty: a very sad picture.

The minister welcomed her. He opened his Bible, read; then he prayed. Soon all joined eating the meal. But after the meal was over, he spoke to the whole family on the basis of the Bible passage. Then, moved with compassion for this picture of abject misery, he took the kitchen maid aside and started a conversation with her. He asked her the usual question often put to children: “Who made you?”

“I don’t know,” she replied.

“Do you know that you have a soul?”

“A soul? What is a soul?”

“Do you ever pray?”

“What is that, praying?”

What could he do with a girl so ignorant in things spiritual? How can he reach someone who knows nothing of God? No use giving her a TBS Bible or a catechism: she cannot read. No use telling the people of the inn, her employers, to teach her: they obviously despise her and neglect her. What shall he do?

“Well,” he says, “I’m going to Edinburgh. When I come back I will bring you a pretty neckerchief, a pretty little shawl, if you promise to say this little prayer every morning and every night. It’s very short; it only has four words: *“Lord, show me myself.”* If you promise to say that every morning and every night, then I promise to bring you that present.”

The girl was delighted. Presents! When did she ever get a present? Her clothes were threadbare, hand-me-downs no one else wanted anymore. Owning a kerchief, a brand-new, beautiful thing of luxury, that thought had never entered her mind. She readily promised to say the little prayer twice each day.

After addressing a few more words to her, Rev. McPhail went to his bedroom. Early the next morning, he resumed his journey.

A good two weeks later we find him approaching the inn again, this time from the other side. He has finished his church business in Edinburgh and is now homeward bound. Again, he will spend the night in the inn.

Once again, the innkeeper and his family gather by the fireside to listen to his words of counsel and to join in evening prayer. Again he looks around the group.

“Where is your kitchen maid? Have you left her in the kitchen again?”

“Oh sir, ever since your last visit, she has not been herself. She has been totally useless to us: all she does is sit and cry, night and day. She does not eat: she cannot do her work. She will not tell us what is the matter, and now she is so weak she cannot get out of bed anymore.”

“Take me to her.” The hostess led him to a dark hole underneath the stairs. There, on a pile of straw, covered with tattered old blankets, lay the kitchen maid, a picture of mental agony and distress.

“Well, my child,” said the minister. “Here I am, back from the city, and I have brought you the kerchief I promised. Look, here it is. I hope you have kept your side of the promise and said your prayer every day?”

“Oh, sir, put your present away, put it away. I cannot take it. You taught me a prayer, and God has answered it most fearfully. He has shown me myself, and oh, what a dreadful sight that is. I am a sinner. I have broken His laws, I have not lived as I ought to live, and soon I shall fall into the hands of an angry God: a God whom I have angered. And He shall cast me away behind Him into the everlasting punishment that I deserve. Oh, minister, minister, what shall I do? What shall I do?”

Although he felt joy stirring in his heart, Rev. McPhail took care not to show it but asked her several questions about the way in which the Lord had shown this kitchen maid herself.

After exploring her situation with her, Rev. McPhail received the liberty to speak to her of the Lord Jesus who came into the world to receive and save sinners, even the greatest of sinners. He prayed with her, for her. Then, he taught her another short little prayer, another four little words: “*Lord, show me Thyself.*” He told her: “If you pray that, it may please the Lord to reveal His mercy just as He revealed His anger against sin.”

The next morning he resumed his journey. Years went by, and he never travelled that way again. He had cast his bread upon the waters. Would he find it after many days?

Years later, when he was old and tired and spent in the service of His Lord, his housekeeper announced a visitor. A lady of middle age was shown into the room. He did not know her.

“Mr. McPhail, I can see in your eyes that you do not recognize me. Perhaps you remember a kitchen maid in an inn

on the Highland road to Edinburgh?”

He remembered.

“You taught me a prayer and promised me a kerchief. God heard that prayer and showed me myself. He showed me my dreadful state and my need of a Saviour for my soul. That second prayer was just as short but just as expressive and God blessed it to my soul and I was reconciled to my God and Father through the blood of His dear Son. I am married now and have a large family but have always remembered you. When I heard that you lived in this town, I had to come and tell you with my own lips the glorious things which by your means the Lord has been pleased to do for my soul.”

We can all imagine the joy of the minister when she related this to him. I think the two of them magnified the Lord for the wonders of His free and sovereign grace.

Mr. Adrian Stoutjesdyk

WHALE GRAVEYARD MYSTERY IN CHILE

An international team announced in October 2011 that they had found fossils of eighty baleen whales buried in the desert in Chile.

Scientists raced against time to document and excavate the bus-sized fossils before local road construction destroyed the site. The remarkably preserved fossils stunned the researchers, who were asking why so many died at once, what buried them so quickly, and why they were so far inland?

But if they believed the Bible they would not be so puzzled. The whales perished late in Noah's Flood and were buried in sediment as the waters were retreating from the land.

Creation Magazine

EDITOR'S POSTBAG

First answers to the monthly questions have been received from HEIDI and MARIAH MUIS; THOMAS PLAYFOOT.

“THERE IS NONE LIKE THAT; GIVE IT ME”

During the Second World War, an airman from the Royal Air Force was stationed in the Far East. One morning his Commander called him into his office and gave him a very dangerous but important mission, to fly over the Burmese jungle and reconnoitre on behalf of the Allies.

It seems that the Commanding Officer was not without God's fear, for, as the airman was leaving his office, he gave him his Bible, saying, I have a feeling this may come in useful to you. The airman, himself not altogether without the fear of God, took the gift and after having checked his aircraft thoroughly took off over the forbidding jungle of Burma. Whilst he was over the jungle the engine developed a fault and the pilot had to make an emergency landing, thankfully without harm to himself.

However, now he was in the midst of the forbidding jungle with all its unseen dangers. Finding a track he decided to follow it and see where it would lead him. After following this path for some while, he eventually came into a clearing. Remembering that he had a Bible on him, he took it out and began to read it. Suddenly something whistled past his ear! Turning round he saw a group of five Burmese soldiers, one of whom had sent the warning shot. They told him to hold up his hands. Expecting imminent death he held up both hands, holding the Bible aloft. One of the soldiers immediately asked him. “What Book are you reading?” “The Bible,” was the unashamed answer. “Are you a Jesus man then?” (The native term for a Christian) “Yes, I hope I am,” said the airman. Immediately all hostilities ceased and the group of soldiers kindly led him to a mission station, where he was looked after for several days until he could make a safe return to his base.

How precious must the possession of the Bible have been to this man! Had it been any other book he was reading he might well have been killed on the spot! As David said of Goliath's sword, so might it be even more said of the Holy Word of God. “There is none like that; give it me.”

Editor

ANGST OVER ARCHAEOLOGY

Archaeology can sure raise passions. It seems that the hottest debates are to be had when archaeology is in line with the Bible's account of history.

For example: "There is no evidence that a town or village called 'Nazareth' existed before the 4th century AD," say the sceptics. Wrong, say archaeologists, who in late 2009 announced that they had unearthed a dwelling in Nazareth they say dates back to the time of Jesus.

Archaeologist Yardena Alexandre, Excavations Director at the Israel Antiquities Authority, said that the dwelling, along with older discoveries of nearby tombs in burial caves, suggests that Nazareth was an out-of-the-way hamlet. There were around fifty houses on a patch of about 1.6 hectares (4 acres).

Now we would caution against relying absolutely upon any 'dating' assessments made by people in the present about remnants from the past (whether they be fossils or archaeological artefacts). But it is perfectly legitimate to seek evidence of places the Bible talks about. And it should not be a surprise to anyone when such evidence is found.

However, such is the hostility against the Bible, that even theologians who should know better, have fallen for the notion that the biblical texts are merely stories cleverly told as uplifting literature. So when archaeologists make discoveries endorsing the Bible's history, the astonishment, angst and even anger from some quarters can be very great indeed.

For example, when the actual pool of Siloam (John 9. 7, fed by Hezekiah's tunnel – 2 Chronicles 32. 30) was unearthed in the Old City of Jerusalem a few years ago, it was a huge surprise to some. "Scholars have said that there wasn't a pool of Siloam and that John was using a religious conceit," (to illustrate a point) said James H. Charlesworth of Princetown Theological Seminary. "Now we have found the pool of Siloam ... exactly where John said it was." A gospel that was thought to be "pure theology is now shown to be grounded in history."

Genesis, too, is grounded in history – it is not a metaphor, or poetry, nor “religious conceit,” but actual history. This history sets the scene for Jesus’ redemptive death on the cross: a history that cannot be undone, no matter how much angst it arouses.

Creation Magazine 2012

THE WORD OF GOD AND THE NEW BIRTH

There lived in a village an old, grey-headed man of about eighty years of age. There were two God-fearing men in the village, who felt for the old man; and one of them said to him: “Our minister is going to preach at a friend’s house on such a night. I will call for you. Will you go with me?”

“No,” he said, “I will not. I am a churchman. All my ancestors were church people. I was christened, and confirmed, and married at church, and I intend to be buried there, and that is enough for me.”

“Well,” said the other, “you and I have been good friends. I have several times done you a kindness, and I shall take it for a kindness if you would come with me and hear our minister preach the Word of eternal life.”

“Well,” said the old man, “you certainly have been a good neighbour, and have done me many kindnesses, and if it will please you, I will go.”

The time came, and the God-fearing man called for the old neighbour, and poured out his heart in prayer that the Holy Ghost would wound the conscience of the old man. The minister drew the bow at a venture; the Holy Ghost directed the arrow, and the old man felt a wounded conscience. He went home, and, sitting by the fire, he reflected, and looked into the grate, but he said not a word for a considerable time.

His old wife said to him: “What is the matter?”

“I cannot tell,” said the old man, “but that minister said words that sank deeper into my soul than any that ever dropped from the lips of man in all my life.”

“Ah!” she said, “I thought that was how it would be. They

will make us as bad as themselves. We will not desert our religion. You will not go any more."

So much for her ignorance. But when the Word of the Lord is riveted in the conscience like a nail in a sure place, it cannot be erased. The next time the old man did not want to be called for. He longed for the time to come, and he went again, and the Lord wrought more powerfully and effectually than before.

He returned with greater exercises and soul-concern about eternal realities than ever he felt before. He sat in the same position before the fire as he did on the previous occasion, and, as a newborn babe, this man of eighty "desired the sincere milk of the Word."

"I wish," he said to his wife, "you would find me our old Bible."

It needed to be found, for it had not been used for months, or perhaps for years. The Bible was found. The wife takes off her apron and rubs off the dust, and gives the Book to her husband. He reads a little here and there, and ponders it over in his mind, and then he says:

"I say, Wife, is this our right old Bible, that we had ever since we were married?"

"Yes, she said: "you know we never had any other."

Then he reads again, and, after thinking with great earnestness, he says: "I say, is this our right old Bible?" "Yes," she says, "why cannot you believe me? We never had another."

"Well, then," says he, "if it is our right old Bible, I have new eyes." Yes, the eyes of his understanding were opened; the veil of ignorance was rent off; he had a new heart, new desires, and he began to see the wonders recorded in the sacred Scriptures.

As sure, my friends, as a soul is born of God, so sure will that soul have a desire for the Word of God; and though it condemns and reproves him, he must come to the light.

"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).

The Sower 1889

*BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES***JOHN 17 – THE PRAYER OF JESUS CHRIST
THE SON OF GOD (IX)****Kept by the power of God**

In this sacred prayer of Jesus Christ, another precious doctrine is the final perseverance of the saints. In the following words of the Lord Jesus He reveals to us this precious doctrine. *“While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy name: those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled”* (John 17.12). The son of perdition of course is Judas Iscariot, a man who never was a true disciple of Jesus, but what is called elsewhere “false brethren crept in unawares.” The Lord Jesus knew who he was and said to His disciples: *“I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me. Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am He”* (John 13. 18-19). To those of us who are followers of Jesus, may it raise in our hearts the prayer of the Psalmist: *“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).

This sacred doctrine is revealed in John 10 in these precious words of Jesus Christ: *“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). What a comfort to the tried, tempted followers of Christ, surrounded with the world, a sinful corrupt heart, and a tempting devil, yet none can take away the life given: it is eternal.

This doctrine is clearly seen in the life and experience of Peter when he denied his Lord and Master with oaths and curses during His darkest and deepest sufferings. Peter was full

of self-confidence: only hours before he cut off the right ear of the servant of the high priest: "*Peter said unto Him, Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee*"(Matthew 26. 35). The only difference between Judas Iscariot and Simon Peter was the grace of God. Listen to the words of warning and gracious comfort that Jesus speaks to Peter in his self-confidence: "*And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto Him, Lord, I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison, and to death. And He said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest Me*" (Luke 22. 34). *Tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you.*" (Mark 16. 7). What precious grace: "**and Peter,**" the Peter that denied Me.

Peter speaks from a very feeling heart in his first epistle, of those that are in Christ Jesus. "*Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ* (1 Peter 1. 5-7).

Then we have those lovely words of grace in the concluding words of Jude's epistle, may they sink deep into our hearts: "*Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen*" (Jude 1. 24-25).

(To be continued)

J. R. Rutt

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about MUSIC AND SINGING. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail (see page 194 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. What was the name of the first musician mentioned in the Bible, and what instruments did he play? (Genesis 4. 21)
2. What is it “better to hear” than the song of fools? (Ecclesiastes 7. 5)
3. Which king appointed singers to praise God, going before his army to battle? He gained a great victory. (2 Chronicles 20. 21)
4. Which three people heard the “sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music,” but ignored what the king said about it? (Daniel 3. 10-12)
5. David was first brought to Saul’s notice because he could play well – on which musical instrument? (1 Samuel 16. 14-23)
6. The first recorded song in Scripture begins: “I will sing unto the LORD, for He hath triumphed gloriously.” What deliverance had God wrought? (Exodus 15)
7. When David returned from the killing of Goliath, what song did the women of the country sing? (1 Samuel 18)
8. In the Book of the Revelation we read of a “new song” being sung in heaven. Who could learn it? (Revelation 14)
9. “Thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument.” Of whom was this spoken? What immediately follows these words?
10. Unity of time in singing does not always happen, but there was one time when “the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD.” What occasion was it?

ANSWERS TO AUGUST QUESTIONS

1. Mary (of Bethany).
2. Peter.
3. Judas Iscariot.
4. “O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.”

5. Figs (or fruit).
6. "Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" (Matthew 21. 16)
7. "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." (Exodus 3. 6)
8. The baptism of John was from heaven, but the Pharisees would have condemned themselves if they had given this answer, and they feared the people if they had said the opposite. (Mark 11. 30)
9. Lazarus. The ass's colt on which Jesus rode into Jerusalem. (John 11. 44; Mark 11. 2)
10. Mary Magdalene; Mary the mother of Jesus, also called "Mary the mother of James and Joses" (Matthew 13. 55); Salome, who would seem to be the same person called the "mother of Zebedee's children" (i.e. the mother of James and John). The Apostle John also mentions Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary the mother of Jesus' sister.

Contributed

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN TWO BROTHERS

I have a little voice within,
 That always tells me when I sin:
 I'm sure I know not whence it came,
 Pray, brother, tell me what's its name?
 There is no one, however near,
 Whispers so sternly in my ear;
 And often when I'm out at play,
 If anything I do or say
 That's wrong or wicked, then I hear
 This gentle something in my ear.

Think you 'tis mother's voice you hear
 Thus gently falling on your ear?

I know 'tis not my mother's tone,
 Nor father's tone, for when the're gone,
 It keeps on talking just the same,
 If aught I do that they would blame.

And, brother, does it always tell,
In kindly notes, when you've done well?

Yes, brother, that indeed is true,
I'm happy when those things I do.
What is it, brother, can you say?
For 'tis awake by night and day.

Yes. Its name is Conscience, and 'twill be
A voice from which you cannot flee.
It keeps a registry within,
Rebuking those who live in sin,
And utters words of softest tone
To those who will its dictates own.

So always heed its gentle voice,
'Twill never lead you into vice,
But like a sentinel within,
Will warn you of approaching sin;
Yet still remember, guilty stains
Are only cleansed from Jesus' veins.

Selected

LIST OF NAMES

The following young people have answered questions during the months January – June 2012. The total number is 266, for which we would thank God.

Daryl Aldridge; Harry and Maia Aldridge; Jessica, Megan and Tom Aldridge.

Tommy Baker; Josiah, Lily and Noah Barker; William Bos; Abigail, Daniel, Joanna and Samuel Broome; Jemima and Phebe Burden; Kezia and Olivia Burgess; Jonathan and Nicolas Burton; Emily Buss; Jennifer and Sophie Buss.

Bethany, Daniel, Elizabeth and Victoria Chapman; Christopher Christie; Anna-Louise and Isaac Clark; Ruth and Samuel Cooper; Alice, Beth, Charlotte, Katy and William Cottingham; Annie and Lucy Cottingham; Freddie and Isobel Cottingham; Alicia, Emma and Jessica Cottingham; Grace, Jacob and Zach Cottingham; Abigail, James, Rebecca and Thomas Crowter; Annabel, Elsie, Esther and Kate Crowter.

Edward Dadswell; Louise Dadswell; Joanna, Jonathan, Nicholas and Peter De Vogel.

Bethan Field; Esther and Rebekah Field; Daisy and Oliver Funnell.

Adam Green; Edward and Ella Green; William Green; Archie Gudgeon.

James Hanks; Eleanor, George and Jonathan Hare; Abigail, Cornelia, Joseph, Luke and Nathanael Hayden; Ben, Kezia, Susie and Tom Hayden; Benjamin, Heidi, Rosalie, Susanna and Thomas Hickman; George Hickman; Marcus and Susanna Hickman; Katharine Hills; Eleanor Hope; Joseph Hydon.

Abigail and Joshua Izzard.

Emily Janes; Edward and Thomas Jarman; David and George Jempson.

Helen Kerley; Thomas Kerley; Matthew, and Naomi Kingham.

Joel and Megan Lucas; Chloe and James de Lullington.

Alex and Benjamin Main; Jack Main; Harriet and Lewis Macpherson; Claudia Mercer; James Mercer; David, John and Sarah Munns.

Amy, Emily and Jethro Northern; Freya and Jessica Northern.

Rebecca Outten.

Anna, Jonathan, Rebekah and Simeon Pack; Nathan, Rachel and Susanna Pack; Elysia, Harvey and Sophia Parish; Joseph, Matthew, Priscilla and Robert Parish; Elisabeth and John Pickles; Heidi, James, Joseph and Katie Playfoot; Millie and Thomas Playfoot.

Ella and Lily Ramsbottom; Emily Ramsbottom; Jessica and Oliver Raymond; Alexander Rayner; James Rice; Tom Riche; Susanna Risbridger; Daniel and Joseph Rosier; Isabella and John Rosier.

Chloe, Grace, John and Karen Sadler; Jessica, Rosanna and Timothy Salkeld; Emily, George and Harry Saunders; Ethan and Samuel Saunders; Jasmine Saunders; Joseph and Stephanie Saunders; Clementine, Maria and Nicholas Sayers; Matthew and Rachel Scott; Chloe and Jessica Seymour; Eloise and Ethan Starkey; Kate and Matthew Stearn; Alexander and Jessica Stevens; Ellen Suckling.

Harry, James and Jemima Tarbin; Elisabeth, James and Paul Topping; Andrew Tugwell.

Natalie Warboys; Alec, Emma and Joshua Wigley; Beth Wigley; Chloe Wilkins; Bethany, Caleb, Cordelia, Francesca, Jemima and Nathanael Wiltshire; Abigail, Edwin, Hannah, Joseph, Kate, Lucy, Matthias and Polly Woodhams; Benjamin, Ellen, Jessica, Thomas and Timothy Woodhams; Sophie Woodhams; Chloe and Lucy Woods.

Overseas Names:

Calvin, Dennis and Kira Glass; Aaron and Phebe King; Caleb and Isaac Knol; Jessica, Kelly, Matthew and Thomas Mills; Derek, Luke, Rachel and Shelley Mol; Heidi and Mariah Muis; Paul Nowlan; Caleb; Danielle and Megan Oudshorn; Emily and Jonathan Quist; John, Luke and Sandra Seymour; Natalie and Zachary Sporte; Abigail, Bethany, Kaitlyn and Michaela Teunissen; Danielle Van Vugt; Jonathan and Laura Wesdyk; Cody, Dylan and Tyler White.

The Friendly Companion



The Luther Memorial, Worms, Germany

“... ye should earnestly contend for the faith
which was once delivered unto the saints.”

Jude 3

October 2012

Editor: Mr. G.D. Buss, "Bethany," 7 Laines Head, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 1PH.

Tel: 01249 656910. Email: gdbuss@tiscali.co.uk

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

If you know your Bible well, you will know that there are four books in the New Testament with only one chapter. These are Philemon, 2 John, 3 John and Jude. In the Old Testament there is just one, Obadiah. Although these are very short books compared with such long ones as the Psalms or Isaiah for example, we must not think they are of lesser importance. The Holy Spirit guided the writers of these short books with the same skill as He did the longer books. Of these four books, three of them bear the name of the writer, and one bears the name of the person to whom it was written. This one is Philemon.

The Epistle (or letter) of Paul to Philemon, has some very important lessons for us. Particularly it shows how the gospel will affect our lives when it comes with the power of God. In fact, if the gospel has not made any changes in our lives we can be sure we have not yet heard it savingly and that our hearts are unchanged. May it be the prayer of each of us that we live as the hymn writer who said:

“So may our lives and acts express
The holy gospel we profess.”

There are three important lessons among many others in this short book, which tells of a runaway slave called Onesimus, who was converted in Rome under Paul's ministry, and who was to convey this letter back to his master Philemon, from whom he had absconded, apparently stealing some of his money also.

The first lesson is one of *contentment*.

The Apostle Paul was in prison in Rome because He preached Christ, and the emperor Nero was determined to do something he could never do: that is stamp out true Christianity from this world. But was Paul grumbling and murmuring in his prison cell? No! Realising that it was the Lord's will that he should be there for the present, he sought grace to do God's bidding as willingly in a prison cell as when

he had the freedom to be a missionary to the four quarters of the Roman empire. How easy it is to grumble about things that are not as we planned! Paul said that he had 'learned in whatsoever state he was, therewith to be content.' This is a great grace indeed!

Remarkably the runaway, discontented Onesimus, came to hear him preach! Did he go out of curiosity we wonder, as Zacchæus may have done when he climbed the sycamore tree to see who Jesus was? Whatever brought him there, one thing is certain: the Lord met with him and Onesimus became a converted man. His heart was changed and now so must his life change!

So the second lesson is one of *repentance*.

Now Onesimus was a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, he must, by God's grace, bring forth fruits for repentance, just as Zacchæus did. So it was only right for him to return to Philemon and say sorry. Not only to say it, but to show by his conduct that he had turned his back upon the rebellious ways of his old nature and was willing to serve the Lord wherever the Lord would have him be, even though it might still be as a slave! How hard it is to say sorry! Because by nature we are so proud, there is an inbuilt resistance to humbling ourselves in this way. Somehow the word "sorry" seems to stick in the throat! But what a relief it is when truly said from the heart. How especially wonderful if we are led to be sorry for our sins in God's sight, and to confess them before the Lord Jesus Christ, who suffered so much for sinners. He is the one Person who has ever lived, who never needed to say sorry! And yet how He sorrowed over the sins of His people!

The third lesson is one of *forgiveness*.

Philemon, no doubt, had been very hurt by Onesimus's behaviour, especially as he was probably a kind master, as Christian masters ought to be. He might have been very angry, too, when he realized that Onesimus had also stolen some of his money. But now Onesimus was a believer, and was coming back a repenting sinner, rather like the Prodigal Son. Would

Philemon forgive him? The Lord Jesus had something to say about this when He said: 'If you forgive not others their trespasses who have offended you, neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses.' An unforgiving spirit is the very opposite of the gospel. If ever we get a glimpse of what our sins cost the Saviour, and how much we have been forgiven, then it will be easy for us to forgive others, as Paul said: "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Perhaps Paul had that verse in his mind when he wrote this letter to his friend Philemon and exhorted him to receive Onesimus as a brother, "for love's sake." May it also be in each of our minds.

With best wishes from your sincere friend and Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

Martin Luther spent just ten days in Worms, but these ten days fundamentally changed the world. The Augustinian monk from Wittenburg was summoned to the Imperial Diet (a deliberative assembly) which had already begun in January 1521, as he had already caused trouble for some time. With his demand for a return to the roots of the Christian faith, he struck a chord with many of his contemporaries. His opponents, however, saw his writings as a clear declaration of war on the church of Rome and also a rebellion against authority. Now he was supposed to disassociate himself from what he had written. Luther asked for time to consider, and then decided not to compromise. He said that unless he was convinced by the Holy Scriptures, which were his only point of reference, that he was in error, then he did not and could not recant "because to go against one's conscience is neither right nor safe."

The picture on the front cover is of the Luther Memorial.

This is the most important testimony to the Protestant record of Worms. It is the largest Reformation memorial in the world. It was designed and constructed by Ernst Rietschel and

his pupils Donndorf, Schilling and Kietz and inaugurated in 1868. Martin Luther with his Bible in his hand is in the centre. He is surrounded by the forerunners of the Reformation, John Wycliffe, Peter Waldo, Girolamo Savonarola and Jan Hus. Like a mighty fortress, Frederick the Wise of Saxony, who brought him to safety at Wartburg as Junker Jörg; his supporter Philipp, Landgrave of Hesse; and his friends and comrades Johannes Reuchlin and Philipp Melanchthon stand around him. Finally three ladies Speyer, Augsburg and Magdeburg symbolise the key points of the Reformation. Reliefs and medallions allude to important stages of the Reformation.

Details have been kindly supplied by Daniel Kinderman

“WHAT THE CROSS MEANS TO ME”

The following essay was written by a school lad, Denis Oliver, in the 1950's when it was proposed to put a cross in the Assembly Hall. This lad was tragically killed not long after. Ed.

The wooden cross, proposed, is meant to be a symbol to remind us of how Christ died upon the cross for us, and to take away our sins. It is also a sign to bring more reverence about the Assembly Hall.

Personally, I completely disagree with this idea. There are several reasons why. One reason is that the children will start worshipping the cross, rather than the real Christ, and I believe that nothing earthly is a suitable substitute for Christ. Failing this, after a few days the novelty will wear off and the children will forget that the cross exists.

The other big reason why I am against this idea is because for the last period on a Friday afternoon, we as a form have the Headmaster in to discuss various points. One day during the course of our conversation, a point was brought up about explaining the Holy Trinity. The Headmaster explained how he disapproved of the shamrock leaf, or the triangle being representations of the Trinity. He said that he could believe in the Trinity without any symbol. If this is so, is it not possible

to believe in Christ without a symbol? I believe we should get into the practice of worshipping Christ without the symbol of the cross. In fact, I think that we could quite easily do without this symbol. The place of worship that I attend each Sunday is in the village of Bethersden, which only has a small population, but the attendance is by far the greater than that of the Parish Church, or the other chapel in the village. We have very little in the way of decoration, in fact, all there is, are the pews, the pulpit, and the table pew. I think that we can quite well do without the symbol of the cross.

Slightly adapted

A STORY OF A BIBLE

There was a Christian man in central Brazil who subscribed for a gospel periodical, but the woman at the Post Office was very fanatical and would not deliver it. She destroyed each copy as it came to the town. Later, she became a bit careless, and would tear it in pieces and throw it over the fence. The woman who kept the shop next door found the pieces and used them to wrap cakes of soap.

Some eighteen miles away in the forest lived a terrorist, also a drunkard. He went to the town and bought a cake of soap. On the way home he began to read the paper in which it was wrapped and was filled with wonder at what he read.

So he went back to town and bought another cake of soap in order to get another piece of the periodical, and as he rode home through the forest, he held the paper aloft and cried to God to show him the truth. He continued to buy that same soap until he had a box of it, and he would patch the pieces of paper together to get more of the truth. At length, on one piece, he found an offer to send a Bible to anyone who would write for it. This he did and was soon graciously converted as a result of reading it. Later, when a missionary visited the area, he found some twenty-six believers who had found the Light through this man and his Bible.

Contributed

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**CALEB'S MOUNTAIN**

As Joshua was dividing the land of Canaan to the tribes of Israel, an old man named Caleb came to speak with him. He was one of the twelve men sent by Moses to spy the land many years before. Only Caleb and Joshua had given a good report. They believed that God would help them defeat their enemies. God promised that Caleb and Joshua would inherit land in Canaan, while the other ten spies would not enter in.

Caleb was now eighty-five years old, but he was still strong and brave. He said: *"I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me."* He asked Joshua for the mountain with great walled cities and tall giants. It was the mountain the other people had feared. Caleb said: *"If so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said."*

Joshua gave that mountain to Caleb. In his old age Caleb still had strong faith in God. He believed that God would help him drive out those giants.

QUESTIONS:

1. Who came to speak with Joshua?
2. How old was he?
3. What did he still have in his old age? (4 words)

Please send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail. (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. The waters of Merom.
2. Horses and chariots.
3. The power of God.

Contributed

*“Now therefore
give me this
mountain,
whereof the
LORD spake
in that day.”*

*Joshua
14. 12.*

BIBLE LESSONS**A LOVING WORD FROM THE SAVIOUR**

After instituting the Lord's Supper, Jesus told His disciples that He would be with them for yet a little while. This caused Peter to ask: *"Lord, whither goest Thou?"* Jesus answered him: *"Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards."* He also told them that they would all be offended at Him and forsake Him.

This was too much for Peter to bear. He strongly protested that although the other disciples might be offended, he would never be offended. He was sure that he loved the Lord more than anything and could never act in such a way. How tenderly Jesus told Peter what was in his heart: *"Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice."* Peter just could not believe that he would ever act so wickedly. He told Jesus that he would go to prison or even to death for Him.

Peter needed to learn some very important lessons: firstly, that Satan desired to take hold of him and sift (sorely tempt) him as wheat; secondly, that he could never stand in his own strength; thirdly, that he was only safe because His Lord was praying for him.

The Lord had so many things to tell His disciples before His death. He knew how sad they were when He told them that He would be leaving them. He spoke some of the most comforting words in the whole of Scripture: *"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: ... 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."* What comfort these words have given to His people in every age!

Further, He declared to them: *"I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE: NO MAN COMETH UNTO THE FATHER, BUT BY ME."* Although He was soon to depart from them, He would pray that the Father would send *"another Comforter, ... Even the Spirit."* He told them that the Spirit would abide with them forever.

Jesus further added to His instruction by saying: *"I AM the true vine, ... ye are the branches."* What a lovely picture Jesus presented of the union between Himself and them! The branches of the vine had but one purpose: TO BEAR FRUIT. Thus the Lord's people are called to bear fruit to the honour of God. Can they bear fruit of themselves? No, indeed not! They can only bear fruit as they abide in Him.

This was a very needful and humble lesson. The natural vine needs much pruning in order to bring forth more fruit. Likewise, the Lord's people need much pruning to bring forth fruit. They need to have their flesh crucified, their worldly affections broken off, their proud hearts humbled, their lusts subdued, and their religious self, abhorred.

How they fear this pruning process! Some of the ways the Lord prunes His people are: by great afflictions in body, or by taking away a loved one, or by giving them a view of their ruined state. He shows them their black nature and the vanity and vexation of the things of this world. He makes ETERNITY very real and awful to them.

The Lord also told them: *"In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."* No doubt the disciples could not rejoice in such words at that time, but they soon would learn the blessedness of them.

The Lord had spoken so many things to them, but He added: *"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."* He told them that the Spirit would guide them into many more truths concerning Himself.

You can read about this in Matthew chapter 26 verses 31 to 35, Mark chapter 14 verses 27 to 31, Luke chapter 22 verses 31 to 34, and John chapter 13 verses 36 to 38, chapters 14 and 15.

QUESTIONS:

1. Who told Jesus that he would never be offended in Him?
2. Who did Jesus say would deny Him thrice?
3. What did Jesus say were in His Father's house?
4. What would Jesus pray His Father to send?
5. What do the branches need in order to bring forth fruit?

Please send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail. (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. John.
2. Jesus' body.
3. Jesus' blood.
4. The Lord's Supper.
5. "That ye love one another; as I have loved you."

G. L. TenBroeke

'THE LORD IS MY BANKER'

There was a grocer, a godly man, upright and honest to the core, but through no fault of his own he became deeply in debt to his wholesaler. He was urged to take out a grocer's licence for bottled beer and tobacco, being told it would greatly add to his income. But he would not do this, as he believed these things to be harmful to man and abhorrent to God.

But he was in great debt and knew not how to get out. The debt-collector had been given instructions to call on him and collect the money, but he knew the grocer well and prayed much that a way would open for him so that further trouble would be saved.

Yet once again, and insisently, the collector had orders to go and get the money. So he was obliged to obey.

The night before he purposed to call on his friend the grocer, the collector stayed overnight at an hotel, and during the night he had a remarkable dream. In this dream he thought he called upon the grocer early in the morning just as the family was about to sit down to breakfast. He was warmly pressed to come in and share the meal, which he did. After breakfast the grocer reached for his Bible and turning to the visitor asked if he would join them at family prayers. The guest readily consented and the host then read Psalm 23, but it was in the strangest rendering!

'The Lord is my Banker, I shall not fail. He maketh me to lie

down in goldfields. He sheweth me the combination of his tills. He restoreth my credit. He sheweth me how to avoid lawsuits for His Name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of debt, I will fear no evil. For Thy gold and Thy silver will rescue me. Thou preparest a way for me before my collector. Thou fillest my barrel with oil, my measure runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life and I will do business in the name of the Lord.'

The collector awoke, and, greatly wondering at his strange dream, drove with a horse and trap early to the home of his friend, the grocer.

On arriving there, he was welcomed by his friend, who told him that breakfast was just ready and warmly pressed him to join them. The collector, marvelling that his dream was being carried out, went in to the meal. When the meal was ended, the grocer said (reaching for his Bible): "We are going to have our morning prayers now. Will you join us?" The collector readily assented. The grocer opened his Bible and read aloud Psalm 23, not as in the dream, but as it is in the Word of God. Then kneeling down he prayed in exactly the same words of love, trust and confidence, that the collector had heard in the dream.

As he rose from his knees, there was a ring from the shop bell. Going to see who was there, he found a young man standing by the counter. The young man presented him with a roll of notes and said: "My father has sent me to pay you a bill: one that only you and he know about, and he is sorry he has had to keep you waiting such a long time." The notes amounted to more than enough to pay the collector, who was now able to joyfully write the receipt. The grocer was enabled to go on again with renewed hope and courage and confidence in God.

A true story from a book "An Apostle of Healing" by H. Waylen

WOODPECKER – HEAD-BANGING WONDER

Woodpeckers hammer wood with their bills. They drill holes in trees when foraging, or to excavate storage holes or cavity nests.

The pecking impact-forces are huge. The woodpecker's head suddenly comes to an abrupt halt when the beak hits the wood, resulting in deceleration forces of the order of 1,200 g (i.e. 1,200 times the force of gravity). In stark contrast, just 300 g will leave a human concussed or with serious brain injury. Some woodpeckers might even be able to tolerate impact forces up to 6,000 g! And this is *repeated* head-bashing – around 18 to 22 times per second – yet with no sign of blackout or brain damage.

A major challenge confronting engineers has been the need for a new shock-absorbing system for protecting micro devices, i.e. improving *g*-force tolerance for use in high-*g* environments. Amazed at the woodpecker's head-banging resilience, a team of engineers investigated its “advanced shock-absorbing mechanism.”

With the help of x-ray computed tomography (CT) images of the woodpecker's skeletal structures, the engineers highlighted the shock-absorbing capacities of:

- The beak made of elastic material
- The hyoid (muscles and tendons supporting the throat and tongue and reinforcing the head)
- A spongy bone specially located behind the beak
- A special skull bone containing spinal fluid

These features “stand in a row,” sequentially cushioning and dissipating the “mechanical excitations,” preventing brain injury. Other researchers confirm that it is the combined effect of these features that confers protection, rather than any single factor.

Inspired by the woodpecker's shock-absorbing spongy bone and hyoid, the engineers used the same principles with metal and elastic substances to design a shock-absorption system to protect commercial micro-devices.

When tested at 60,000 g, the woodpecker-inspired technology reduced the failure rate of micro-devices to just 0.7%, compared to 26.4% for conventional shock-absorption methods – a great design improvement. These same principles from woodpecker anatomy could guide the design of more effective helmets and other protective headgear.

Looks like engineers can recognise good design when they see it. So should we all (Romans 1. 20).

D. Catchpoole. Creation Magazine

GOD'S CLOAK

I remember reading about the Covenanters when they were so persecuted, which is one of the black blots on the pages of English History, but it was a bright spot in the history of the Church of Christ in Scotland, because God appeared oft times for His people, His dear servants.

There was one named Sandy (Alexander, really) Peden, and he was a very great preacher of the Gospel. On one occasion this Sandy Peden was preaching the Gospel to a large crowd of people gathered in a place which was supposed to be secret when they saw that the soldiers were coming to scatter them and to take the preacher to prison and to cut down any who sought to escape. This godly Sandy Peden simply stopped preaching and prayed, and said: "O Lord, cast the lap of Thy cloak over poor Sandy and Thy dear people round about him at this time." In a twinkling a thick Scotch mist came down where they were and enveloped them. They all escaped safely to their homes and the godly preacher escaped also because the soldiers did not know where they were or which way to go, for it was a very dangerous place where the people had assembled.

Now this is an instance, and there are thousands of instances like this which can be multiplied, how that God is to His people and will ever be an unfailing Refuge. "He will not fail them," the Word of God says.

H. Dawson

THE PREACHER AND THE BUS DRIVER

A preacher from out-of-state accepted a call to a church in Houston, Texas. Some weeks after he arrived he had an occasion to ride the bus from his home to the downtown area.

When he sat down, he discovered that the driver had accidentally given him too much change. As he considered what to do, he thought to himself: "You had better give the money back, it would be wrong to keep it." Then he thought: "Oh, forget it, it is only 25 cents. Who would worry about this little amount? Anyway, the bus company receives too much fare, they will never miss it."

When his stop came, he paused momentarily at the door and then he handed the 25 cents to the driver, and said: "Here, you gave me too much change."

The driver, with a smile, replied: "Aren't you the new preacher in town?" "Yes." Well, I have been thinking a lot lately about going somewhere to worship. I just wanted to see what you would do if I gave you too much change. I will see you at church on Sunday."

Our lives are the only Bible some people will ever read. Remember, you carry the name of Christ on your shoulders when you call yourself "Christian."

Watch your thoughts; they become words.

Watch your words; they become actions.

Watch your actions; they become habits.

Watch your habits; they become character.

Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.

Contributed

QUESTION: *What is justification?*

ANSWER: Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein the elect are accepted as righteous in God's sight alone, for the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and they receive it by faith.

Romans 4. 3-5, 24-25 & 5. 18-19; 2 Corinthians 5. 21;

Galatians 3. 5-11; Philippians 3. 9; Titus 3. 7.

THE MATHEMATICAL PATTERNS OF SCRIPTURE

Biblical research conducted by the Russian Mathematician Dr. Ivan Panin, presents a profound problem to those who reject the divine origin of Scripture. To the people of his generation, in the late nineteenth century, Panin was a kind of “Richard Dawkins figure,” an aggressive atheist who after lampooning faith at every turn, then dramatically converted to Christianity. Several years later he then started using his mathematical skills to display the supernatural origin of the Bible and became the founding father of the Science of Biblical Numerics.

Panin

Panin was born in Russia in 1855. He grew up as an ardent atheist and was involved in several plots to overthrow the Czar. He was, however, a mathematical, analytical and linguist genius and after being exiled from Russia, entered Harvard University in the US. He was a Master of Literary Criticism and was so well known in the literary field that his conversion from atheism to Christianity in 1882, made newspaper headlines.

One day in 1890 Panin was casually reading St. John’s Gospel in New Testament Greek. He suddenly noticed what appeared to be a numerical relationship between certain words. This aroused his curiosity to examine the Biblical text from a “mathematical perspective” which had never been done before.

Sevenfold Structure

As a Christian he devoted the next fifty years of his life to exploring and displaying the numerical patterns and designs underlying both the Greek text of the New Testament and the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. During these years he produced over 43,000 pages of analysis. He discovered that Scripture has been written with a “sevenfold mathematical structure or design” hidden in the text. The number seven or an exact multiple of seven featured in every conceivable way from Genesis to Revelation.

The significance of this astonishing complexity is that clearly

it could not have been the work of unaided human thought, but the result of divine inspiration. Panin died in 1942. The mathematical patterns he revealed have never been denied; one cannot argue with mathematics, and the implications of their presence has encouraged and strengthened the faith of countless millions across the world.

Genealogy of Christ

So what did his research reveal? For those of you with a mathematical flair here are several examples:

1. The genealogy of Jesus, as recorded in the first eleven verses of the Gospel of Matthew.

Studying the passage as it was written in Greek, research has revealed the following amazing details:

The number of words in the entire genealogy is exactly divisible by seven. The number of letters used is exactly divisible by seven. The number of vowels and consonants used is exactly divisible by seven. The number of words that begin with a vowel is exactly divisible by seven. The number of words that begin with a consonant is exactly divisible by seven. The number of words which occur more than once is exactly divisible by seven. The number of words which occur in more than one form is exactly divisible by seven. The number of words which occur in only one form is exactly divisible by seven. The number of nouns is exactly divisible by seven. Only seven words are not nouns. The number of names in the genealogy is exactly divisible by seven. Only seven other kinds of nouns occur. The number of male names is exactly divisible by seven. The number of generations is twenty-one, exactly divisible by seven.

The mathematical structure observed in the genealogy of Jesus is staggering, the numerous heptadic (sevenfold) features showing clearly that this could not be the work of unaided human thought, but the result of divine inspiration.

Birth of Jesus

2. Studying Matthew's account of the birth of Jesus (verses 18-25) reveals these details:

The number of Greek words in the passage is 161, exactly divisible by seven. The numeric value of all these 161 words is exactly divisible by seven. (NB. Ancient cultures used their alphabet not just to form words but also as their numbering system. Each letter in their alphabet also meant a number. The numeric value of a word is the sum total of what its letters add up to, when each letter is taken as a number). The number of Greek vocabulary words in this passage is exactly divisible by seven. The one word found nowhere else in the New Testament is the Greek word “Emmanuel.” It has a numeric value exactly divisible by seven. The number of forms in which these 161 words occur is 105, exactly divisible by seven. Of these 105, the number of verbs is exactly divisible by seven. Of the 105 forms, the number of proper names is exactly seven. The number of Greek letters in these seven proper names is exactly divisible by seven.

Old Testament

3. Studying the Old Testament in the Hebrew language reveals the same pattern.

Take for example Genesis 1.1: the simple yet profound statement: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” The number of Hebrew words in this proclamation is seven. The total numerical value of the three nouns: God, heaven and earth is 777, a figure exactly divisible by seven. The number of letters in these three nouns is fourteen, exactly divisible by seven. The numerical value of the first and last letters of the seven words of this proclamation is 1393, exactly divisible by seven. The total number of Hebrew letters in the seven words is 28, exactly divisible by seven. And so it goes on. In this proclamation alone, linguists have identified a total of eighteen separate features of the number seven.

This sevenfold structure is found throughout Scripture and is unique to the Bible. The number seven underlies and permeates the text in every way possible. These patterns are not found in any other ancient literature and the examples never seem to come to an end. This sevenfold pattern in

Scripture interlocks paragraph with paragraph and book with book.

Panin's research confirmed the supernatural origin of Scripture showing the unique character of the Bible. In an age when people are looking for signs and evidence that the Bible is true, how reassuring it is that God raised up this gifted man to strengthen the faithful and help the wavering.

(Slightly adapted)

John Willans BD British Church Newspaper July 2012

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

JOHN 17 – THE PRAYER OF JESUS CHRIST

THE SON OF GOD (X)

Only two types of people in the world

The aspect of this sacred prayer we would like to look at in this issue is the way Jesus Christ discriminates between 'His people' and 'the world.' In verse 9 He prays: *"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine."*

Also in verse 25 He prays: *"O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me."* Notice, *"I pray not for the world."*

But He prays for those whom the Father had given Him. How we need to be instructed in this example of Jesus Christ: one often feels a heavy burden for the salvation of precious souls but we have to qualify what we pray: 'Lord, bring in the purchase of Thy precious blood.' These are the precious souls that we desire to be brought into the house of God and called by divine grace. These are the precious souls that Jesus Christ prayed for.

It is for these precious souls that we go into all the world to preach. This was the divine commission to the Lord's servants in Mark 16 v 15: *"And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."* I have heard it said that this word was a private word to the apostles only. This is completely wrong, we are instructed that no Scripture is

of a private interpretation, this Word is a divine commission to His servants down to the end of time. Wherever the Lord leads, guides and directs His servants they must go. The Apostle Paul could testify of the Thessalonians that the Word preached among them was by the power of the Holy Ghost in 1 Thessalonians 1. 4,5: *“Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.”* This is the only way we can know our election, by effectual calling. I have young people among the churches that have asked me: ‘How do I know if I am elect?’ There is only one way of knowing this, by being called by divine grace or as Jesus puts it: *“Ye must be born again.”*

When we are born again we then know Jesus Christ not just in our head or our intellect but in our heart, for: *“...it is with the heart that man believeth unto righteousness.”* My dear beloved young friends, do not be deceived by just giving consent to the Word of God or the preaching of the Word, this is not knowing Jesus Christ. It is when you come as a poor helpless, hopeless sinner and Jesus reveals Himself to you: this is believing, this is receiving Jesus Christ; when darkness and bondage envelopes your mind and He brings light and life and liberty into your soul.

These are the ones that Jesus prays for and sends His Holy Spirit to quicken their souls into life, to convince them of their sin and to guide them to Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of sinners. As Peter says in Acts 4. 12: *“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”* It matters not where we live in the world: this is the only Saviour of sinners.

The salvation for those whom Jesus prayed for is certain and sure: the Father has chosen them, the Son has redeemed them, the Holy Spirit will call them. I love that beautiful hymn of John Kent:

“There is a period known to God
 When all His sheep, redeemed by blood,
 Shall leave the hateful ways of sin,
 Turn to the fold, and enter in.”

As the apostle says, our gospel is not a yea and nay gospel, but a yea and Amen gospel. It is sure, it is certain. It is by divine revelation in the power of the Holy Ghost and it cannot miscarry. Are you among the righteous or the wicked?

(To be continued)

J.R. Rutt

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about STORMY WEATHER. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor either by post or e-mail (see page 218 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. When Jonah ran away from God and entered a ship at Joppa, what did God send into the sea? (Jonah 1. 4)
2. Who saw a “little cloud [arise] out of the sea, like a man’s hand,” which was followed by a great wind and rain? (1 Kings 18, 43-45)

The next two questions refer to the storm on the Lake of Galilee mentioned in Mark 4. 36-41 and Luke 8. 22-25.

3. Where was Jesus when the storm arose? (Mark 4. 38)
4. What three words did Jesus speak, and what happened? (Mark 4. 39)

The next four questions refer to an account of another storm on the Lake of Galilee recorded in Matthew 14, Mark 6 and John 6.

5. Which “watch of the night” was it when Jesus came and how did He come to the disciples? (Matthew 14. 25)
6. How far had the disciples rowed?
7. Why were the disciples afraid and what words of comfort did Jesus speak?

8. What did Peter say to the Lord Jesus?
9. "He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still." (Psalm 107) Who are those who see these "works of the Lord"?
10. Who records being in a storm "exceedingly tossed with a tempest" and said: "All hope that we should be saved was then taken away"? What happened to the ship?

ANSWERS TO SEPTEMBER QUESTIONS

1. Jubal. Harp and organ.
2. The rebuke of the wise.
3. Jehoshaphat.
4. Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego.
5. Harp.
6. God had delivered Israel from the Egyptian army at the Red Sea. (Exodus 15. 1)
7. "Saul hath slain his thousands and David his ten thousands." (1 Samuel 18. 6-8)
8. The one hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. (Revelation 14. 3)
9. Ezekiel. "They hear Thy words, but they do them not." (Ezekiel 33. 32)
10. The moving of the ark of God into the temple which Solomon had built, and its dedication. (2 Chronicles 5. 13)

Contributed

EDITOR'S POSTBAG

First answers to the monthly questions have been received from ISOBEL COTTINGHAM, CAYLEA and OLIVIA KNIBBE; DANIEL TOVADEL; ISAAC SAUNDERS;

The names of HARVEY, HENRY and SOPHIA HOOK should be added to the list of names which appeared in the September magazine.

The Editor thanks all those who have sent greetings cards from their holidays. These have been much enjoyed.

“DO NOT JUDGE TOO HARD”

“Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God” (Matthew 5. 9)

Pray not to find fault with the man that limps
Or stumbles along the road,
Unless you have worn the shoes he wears
Or struggled beneath his load.

There may be tacks in his shoes that hurt,
Though hidden away from view,
Or the burdens he bears, placed on your back,
Might cause you to stumble, too.

Don't sneer at the man who is down today
Unless you have felt the blow
That caused his fall, or felt the pain
That only the fallen know.

You may be strong, but still the blows
That were his, if dealt to you
In the selfsame way at the selfsame time,
Might cause you to stagger, too.

Don't be too hard on the man who sins
Or pelt him with words or a stone
Unless you are sure, yea, doubly sure,
That you have no sins of your own.

For you know, perhaps, if the tempter's voice
Should whisper as soft to you
As it did to him when he went astray
'Twould cause you to falter, too.

*Author Unknown
(Banner of Truth)*

The Friendly Companion



“Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and
Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.”
Psalm 36. 5.

November 2012

Editor: Mr. G.D. Buss, "Bethany," 7 Laines Head, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 1PH.

Tel: 01249 656910. Email: gdbuss@tiscali.co.uk

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EDITOR'S POSTBAG

First answers to the monthly questions have been received from DAISY BARKER, DANIEL CROWTER and JESSE GUDGEON.

OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

You will all know how many stones David took in his bag when he went out to meet Goliath. He took five smooth stones from the brook. In the event, through God's mercy, he only needed to use one of them as God so directed the first stone that it found the only weak spot in Goliath's armour and down the giant fell.

It is interesting and instructive to notice how often the Scriptures speak of specific numbers, often with a deeper meaning, as we noticed last month. For example, Elijah's servant was to go again, seven times, up Mount Carmel: seven, being considered a perfect number of times. It was on the seventh occasion that the little cloud appeared. God's perfect time had come.

Although the number five is not mentioned in the illustration we are about to use, there are nonetheless, *five* instructions which the Apostle Peter received, which he had to obey. He was in prison, the very night before he was due to be executed by Herod. God's people could not rescue him, but they knew Who could. Their's and Peter's God could! In answer to their urgent prayers God sent an angel into Peter's prison cell, and although there were four soldiers guarding him, Peter was delivered without their knowledge, the gates and doors of the prison miraculously opening at the behest of the angel until Peter stood a freed man in the street.

When the angel came into the cell, he smote Peter on the side and gave him *five* commands. Each of these commands is a lesson to us.

Firstly, he was to: "Rise up quickly." There was no time for delay, or waiting until tomorrow. This is a salutary reminder to us each of the importance of the things of God. "*I love them that love Me; and those that seek Me early shall find Me*" (Proverbs 8. 17).

Secondly, he was to gird himself. That is, he was to tie the loose clothes which are normally worn in hot countries, tightly around him, so that he would not trip up as he made haste

from the prison. Part of the armour mentioned in Ephesians 6 is being girded with truth: "*Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth*" (Ephesians 6. 14).

If we are enabled to take heed to the Word of God, it will save us from tripping up in the way of life.

Thirdly, he was to bind on his sandals. Of course, these were for walking in. Again, we are exhorted to be: "*shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace*" Ephesians 6. 15. It is the gospel, received into our hearts, which will give us the strength and courage to walk in God's ways.

Fourthly, he was to cast his garment about him. It was no doubt a cold night, as it often is in Bible lands, even though very hot in the day. The garment we need to be clothed with is Christ's righteousness. This is called a garment of salvation. When Boaz covered Ruth with his skirt he was saying he would take care of her. So God takes care of His people by covering them with a garment called "*THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS*" (Jeremiah 23. 6).

Fifthly, Peter was commanded by the angel: "Follow me"! How wonderful it must have been to follow the angel to his freedom! God said to the children of Israel: "*Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared*" (Exodus 23. 20). The Lord Jesus Christ said: "*...He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*" (John 8. 12)

Peter was one who was not only obedient to the literal commands of the angel, but grace had taught him the value of obedience to the spiritual counterpart. He had learned by painful experience the folly of following afar off, but also he had learned the great blessing of being *kept*.

May we each seek and find this same grace.

With best wishes from your sincere friend and Editor.

QUESTION: *What is sanctification?*

ANSWER: Sanctification may be taken in a three-fold sense.

1 Thessalonians 5. 23 (See Pages, 245, 251 and 264)

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

What a forbidding sight do the mountains appear in the picture on our front cover this month! The picture, kindly sent by one of our readers, is of one of the mountains found in the Dolomites in Italy. When believing eyes look on such scenery as this, what a lot of lessons there are to be learned.

Firstly, how great God is, who created these mountains by the Word of His mouth, and will dissolve them when time shall be no more. But He changes not!

Secondly, how solemn are the words in Revelation 6 where we read that when the Lord Jesus appears for judgment, many of all classes of men will call for the mountains and rocks to cover them from the wrath of His countenance. These are they who despised Him, His Word, His people, His laws and His ways. They denied Him the rightful place He ought to have in our lives choosing rather to give that place to Satan, the world and sin. What an awakening it will be for all those who lived and died in false religions, atheists, agnostics, humanists and secularists, who tried to 'airbrush' the things of God out of society.

Thirdly, how precious are the thoughts of God towards His people concerning these mountains? *"For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee"* (Isaiah 54. 10). These are the ones who will be able to answer the question in Revelation 6. 17. *"For the great day of His wrath is come: and who shall be able to stand?"*

Will we be amongst them?

QUESTION: *What is the first sense of sanctification?*

ANSWER: To sanctify is to appoint, consecrate, or set apart any person or thing to a holy and special use; thus the elect were sanctified by God the Father.

*Exodus 30. 28-29; Leviticus 20. 24; Psalm 4. 3; John 17. 17;
2 Corinthians 6. 17; Jude 1. 1.*

*FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES***THE ALTAR OF WITNESS**

The tribe of Reuben, the tribe of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh were given land east of the Jordan River. Moses gave them that land before the children of Israel entered Canaan. But the men of those tribes went armed over Jordan with the rest of Israel. They fought with them until all of Canaan was taken.

Now Joshua told the men of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh to return home in peace. He warned them to keep the laws of God and *“blessed them, and sent them away.”* But when they came to the river Jordan, they stopped to build a great altar. Would they so quickly turn away from worshipping at the tabernacle? The rest of the people were ready to go to war against them. But first they sent Phinehas, the priest, and ten princes of Israel to speak with them.

The men of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh said they had built this altar for a witness between them. It would not be used for offerings or sacrifices, but the pattern would prove in time to come that they were part of Israel. How this answer pleased Phinehas and the princes! Phinehas said: *“This day we perceive that the LORD is among us, because ye have not committed this trespass against the LORD.”*

QUESTIONS:

1. Which three tribes were given land east of the Jordan River?
 2. What did they stop to build at the river Jordan?
 3. What had they built it for? (2 words) *(Contributed)*
- Please send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail (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. Caleb.
2. Eighty-five.
3. Strong faith in God.

*“Behold the
pattern of the
altar of the
LORD, ... it
is a witness
between us
and you.”*

Joshua 22. 28.

BIBLE LESSONS**THE HIGH PRIESTLY PRAYER**

What an evening it had been! Jesus and His disciples were gathered together in the upper room to eat the Passover supper. There, Jesus revealed that one of them was a traitor; Jesus washed the disciples' feet; Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. Jesus told them that He would be leaving them and yet would not leave them comfortless. He would pray for the Comforter (Holy Spirit) to be sent and abide with them.

Now the day was far spent and night was coming on. Oh, what a night was ahead! What dangers were awaiting their Lord and themselves, as well! Before leaving that upper room, there was one final act that Jesus would do. He would offer up prayer for Himself and for them. Oh, WHAT A PRAYER!

Many believed that Jesus was a PROPHET raised up by God. Some also realized that He was a KING. He had yet to be revealed as the great: "*HIGH PRIEST over the house of God.*" You may remember how the High Priest was such an important figure in the lives of the Jewish people. Aaron, the brother of Moses, was the first to hold the office. When the High Priest died, his son would be High Priest in his stead. Thus, the Old Testament High Priest would always come from the tribe of Levi. The High Priest in the time when Jesus lived upon earth was Caiaphas. The High Priest was appointed to make atonement and to pray for the people. For what must he atone? He made atonement for the sins of the people. Sin separates men from God. It makes them enemies to each other.

Jesus was sent by the Father to become a Man, that He might atone (make peace) for His people. What a beautiful word "atone" is. It is made of two small words: at one. This was the great work of the Lord Jesus: to make such wicked, vile sinners "at one" with His Holy Father.

He began to pray by saying: "*Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee.*" It was the hour for which He came into the world: the hour when He would die for the sins of His people. He added that the Father

had given Him power: *“that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him.”*

He also could say: *“I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.”* Do you remember what He said when only a boy of twelve years old? *“Wist ye not that I must be about My Father’s business?”*

Even at such a time, when He felt the burden of His people’s sin, with all the curse of God being laid upon Him, He still thought of His people. *“I pray for them [His people]: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine.”* How tenderly He asked His Father to keep them, that they may be one with the Father and Himself!

This was the great concern of the Lord, that all His people might know that His Father: *“... hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me.”* Further He prayed: *“Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me.”*

How the hearts of the disciples must have been filled with love and wonder and joy to hear their Lord pray so powerfully, so earnestly for them! They had heard Him pray many times before, but never had He prayed like this. It was the prayer of THE HIGH PRIEST.

You can read about this in John chapter 17.

QUESTIONS:

1. What was Jesus yet to be revealed as?
2. Who was appointed to make atonement and pray for the people?
3. What had the Father given Him power to give?
4. For whom did He pray? For whom did He not pray?
5. What did He pray that His people should behold?

Please send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail. (See page 242 for the address.) Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

G. L. TenBroeke

ANSWERS TO OCTOBER QUESTIONS

1. Peter.
2. Peter.
3. Many mansions.
4. Another Comforter.
5. Pruning.

A MIRACLE

A little girl went to her bedroom and pulled a glass sweet jar from its hiding place in the closet. She poured the change onto the floor and counted it carefully. Three times. The total had to be exactly perfect. No chance here for mistakes. Carefully placing the coins back into the jar and twisting on the lid she slipped out of the back door and made her way to Rexall's Drug Store with the big Red Indian Chief sign above the door.

She waited patiently for the pharmacist to give her some attention, but he was too busy at this moment. Tess twisted her feet to make a scuffing noise. Nothing. She cleared her throat with the most disgusting sound she could muster. No good. Finally she took a coin from her jar and banged it on the glass counter. That did it!

"And what do you want?" the pharmacist asked in an annoyed tone. "I'm talking to my brother from Chicago whom I have not seen for ages," he said, without waiting for a reply to his question.

"Well, I want to talk to you about my brother," Tess answered back in the same annoyed tone. "He is really, really sick and I want to buy a miracle."

"I beg your pardon?" said the pharmacist.

"His name is Andrew and he has something bad growing inside his head and my Daddy says only a miracle can save him now. So how much does a miracle cost?"

"We do not sell miracles here, little girl. I am sorry, but I cannot help you," the pharmacist said, softening a little.

"Listen, I have the money to pay for it. If it is not enough, I will get the rest. Just tell me how much it costs."

The pharmacist's brother was a well-dressed man. He

stooped down and asked the little girl: "What kind of miracle does your brother need?"

"I do not know," Tess replied with her eyes welling up. "I just know he is really sick and Mummy says he needs an operation. But my Daddy cannot pay for it, so I want to use my money."

"How much do you have?" asked the man from Chicago.

"One dollar and eleven cents," Tess answered, barely audible. "And it is all the money I have, but I can get some more if I need to."

"Well, what a coincidence," smiled the man. "One dollar and eleven cents, the exact price of a miracle for little brothers."

He took her money in one hand and with the other hand he grasped her hand and said: "Take me to where you live. I want to see your brother and meet your parents. Let us see if I have the miracle you need."

That well-dressed man was Dr. Carlton Armstrong, a surgeon, specialising in neurosurgery. The operation was completed free of charge and it was not long before Andrew was home again and doing well. Mum and Dad were happily talking about the chain of events that had led them to this place. "That surgery," her Mum whispered, "was a real miracle. I wonder how much it would have cost?"

Tess smiled. She knew exactly how much a miracle cost: one dollar and eleven cents ... plus the faith of a little child.

In our lives, we never know how many miracles we will need.

Derrick King (USA)

QUESTION: *What is the second sense of sanctification?*

ANSWER: The elect are sanctified by the blood of Christ, which blots out their transgressions as a cloud, has satisfied divine justice, removed the curse and purges the conscience from dead works.

Isaiah 43. 25 & 44. 22; Jobn 17. 19; 1 Corinthians 1. 2, 6-11; Ephesians 2. 13; Colossians 2. 13-14; Hebrews 9. 14 & 10. 10,14 & 13. 12.

THE TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

(I expect many of our readers have been to Westminster Abbey and will have seen the Tomb of The Unknown Soldier. The history of this important symbol is related below. This month the sacrifice made by those who laid down their lives for their country is remembered on Armistice Day, November 11th.)

One of the many sorrows which attended horrors of the 1914-18 War was that many of its casualties were unidentified and buried in graves on the continent, there being no name to identify the brave young men who had laid down their lives for the king and country.

During the war an army chaplain called David Railton, serving in France, had been deeply moved one evening by the sight of a small fenced garden which contained a single grave, marked by a simple wooden cross, on which was written: "An Unknown British Soldier." As he looked at this sad relic of the war, he wondered whether one of the unidentified men who had been buried in similar circumstances could serve as a symbol of comfort to the many hundreds of relatives back in England who had never had the opportunity to attend a funeral to show their last respects to their dearly loved ones.

After much prayerful pondering, he approached the Dean of Westminster, a man called Herbert Ryle, who immediately supported the suggestion and made the first approach to King George V. At first the King was very hesitant but the Prime Minister succeeded in persuading the King that this was indeed a most worthy suggestion.

In the village of Saint Pol-sur Ternoise, twenty miles from Arras, a small tin hut had been adapted to form a makeshift chapel. Four days before the second anniversary of the Armistice, four unidentified bodies of British Soldiers had been recovered from their graves and placed in the chapel, suitably protected and covered with the Union Flag. From one of these four, the Unknown Soldier would be chosen. They had been gently retrieved from four different battlefields, each of them unknown except that they had been buried in British Army

uniform.

At midnight on Sunday November 7th 1920 Brigadier General L. J. Wyatt, the General Officer commanding the British troops in France and Flanders, entered the dimly lit chapel and put out his hand towards one of the flag-draped bodies and touched it. The body was placed in a coffin made from an ancient oak tree from Hampton Court. The King had sent one of his own ceremonial swords to accompany the coffin on its journey back to England.

Throughout its journey, full ceremonial honours were given on both sides of the English Channel, and as the ship bearing it arrived at Dover, huge crowds gathered whilst the band played "Land of Hope and Glory." The flags of all the naval vessels lowered their flags, a custom usually reserved for the King or Queen only.

On Thursday morning November 11th, Armistice Day, the streets around Westminster Abbey were filled with huge crowds. Six black horses pulled the black gun carriage from Victoria Station, where the coffin had lain overnight, guarded by the Grenadier Guards. All of the Services were represented in military formation ahead of the coffin as it made its way, and the King himself stood waiting to show his respects. On the coffin was inscribed:

*A British Warrior who fell in the Great War 1914-1918
for the King and Country*

Covering the coffin was a battered and blood-stained flag which had been recovered from one of the battlefields. As the coffin reached the place where King George V stood, a wreath was handed to him to place on the coffin. On it was written the words:

*"In proud memory of those Warriors who died unknown in
the Great War. Unknown, and yet well-known;
as dying, and behold they live."*

The choir of Westminster Abbey standing outside the Abbey

struck up: "*O God our help in ages past, ...*" and then the Archbishop of Canterbury led, repeating the Lord's Prayer.

When all the ceremony was over, the coffin was taken reverently into the Abbey and there interred, six barrels of earth from a battlefield of Flanders were lowered at the same time, into the grave to cover it before it was sealed.

Now for nearly one hundred years monarchs, royal brides and other dignitaries, making their way down the nave of the Abbey have walked round this grave rather than walk over it as a symbol of lasting respect to the memory of those unknown heroes of a past generation. They and the next generation fought that we might have the freedom of conscience which has been long enjoyed by this nation but now is being sadly compromised by those who rule over us.

(Adapted from an article kindly submitted by one of our readers)

THE GREAT EJECTION

The present year celebrates the 350th anniversary of the ejection of about two thousand clergy from the Church of England. This happened on the 24th August 1662, in the reign of Charles II, who by the Act of Uniformity required all the clergy to declare their consent to the English Prayer Book. The very date seemed to be significantly chosen, being what is called St. Bartholomew's Day, when in 1572 some thirty thousand Protestant Huguenots were massacred in France. On this day then, in 1662, these two thousand ministers left their livings in the Church of England because they could not with a good conscience conform to the Prayer Book, for which they have been called Nonconformists, together with all who since that time have felt they must separate themselves from the National Church.

We may wonder on what grounds those good ministers felt they could not consistently abide by the contents of the Prayer Book, and would rather give up their livings; and it may be well for us to consider why we ourselves, as a body of Strict

Baptists, are unable to conform to all the things prescribed therein, and therefore come under the denomination of Non-conformists. We can only touch upon the major points of dissent very briefly, but we hope it may be sufficient to show why we find ourselves among the Non-conforming religious bodies.

One point is the constitution of the National Church of England in the appointment of bishops and archbishops to exercise an authority over the clergy and people. It was not until a few centuries after Christ that these orders of church officers were introduced into the Christian churches, and this eventually led to the Bishop of Rome being set up as the Pope, having rule over other churches and bishops in the world. From this sprang all the wickedness of the Papacy, and the Pope's claim to supremacy over all kings and rulers, as well as over the churches.

But you may say, there are bishops mentioned in the Bible. Yes, but not in this sense. The ministers of the Gospel are sometimes called in the Scriptures, bishops or overseers, and sometimes presbyters or elders, and the term "bishop" is not used to distinguish some ministers as having rule over others. You may see this in Acts 20. 17 and 28, where Paul says to the *elders* of Ephesus: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you *overseers*" [or bishops]. Then Peter tells the *elders* to feed the flock of God, taking the *oversight* [or bishopric] thereof (1 Peter 5. 1,2). So you see that ordinary elders or ministers are bishops, and bishops are elders, and the one have no rule over the other.

Then the bishops in the Church of England are called "reverend fathers in God," whereas Christ said we should call no man "father" in this sense. The bishops also affect to impart the Holy Ghost by the laying on of their hands, which was a power possessed only by the Apostles in their day. Then the clergy who are ordained in this way by the bishops are called

“priests,” which implies that they offer a sacrifice; “for every high priest is ordained that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins” (Hebrews 5. 1). Again, the bishops have to wear special vestments which also appear to have a priestly significance; and when they “consecrate” the bread at the Lord’s Supper, and the communicants receive it kneeling, there is so far a resemblance to the adoration of the consecrated wafer by the papists, whose dreadful error is that the body of Christ is actually present in the bread, and that the priest offers it as a sacrifice, while all worship it as divine.

It is no wonder that the Puritans and Nonconformists regarded these things, retained in the Prayer Book, as so many “dregs of popery” which ought to have been expunged at the Reformation; and doubtless it is for want of this further reform that it has been possible for so many of our Ritualistic clergy to graft on to the Prayer Book service almost the whole of popery. There are other popish remains left which we can only name, such as saints and saints’ days, and the pronouncement of absolution by the bishops and clergy upon penitents.

But we as Baptists, and in that sense distinct from other Nonconformists, have a further ground for dissent as we cannot agree that the sprinkling of infants is the baptism of the Bible. An infant cannot make a profession of its faith, nor does anything but immersion in the water resemble the sufferings, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Prayer Book again requires the sign of the cross to be made on the infant’s forehead, and then says “that this child is regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ’s Church,” which is nothing better than the grievous error of baptismal regeneration.

For these Scriptural reasons then we are compelled to dissent from the Church of England, and may we be enabled to hold fast to our position as Nonconformists, especially in view of the shameful return to popery which has taken place in so many of our National Churches.

L.R. Broome

“UNFORTUNATELY”

I wonder how many of us have used the word “unfortunately” in the past week and not even considered what we have said. Even if we have not said the word, it might well have been in our hearts and evident in our actions.

Some thoughts on the word:

What does the word mean: the Free Dictionary gives the following definition:

1. Characterised by undeserved bad luck; unlucky.
2. Causing misfortune; disastrous.
3. Regrettable; deplorable.”

From the very definition, we can see the awfulness of using such a word. However, our acts, words and thoughts often contain the very essence of the word, even if we do not use it. From the definitions we can infer that if we say it is unfortunate that something has happened, or has not happened, we are questioning the very right of God to control the world and our lives. Are we not implying that we think we know better than He? How unkind this is to a good and gracious God.

Looking into the word further, we see that the two awful sins of pride and unbelief come very close to “unfortunately”: firstly, in that we think we know how to control circumstances better than God, and secondly, in that we do not think that all things are ordered for our best interests.

Finally, from the above thoughts we can see that if our thoughts, words and actions are mirroring “unfortunately,” we are certainly not bringing any honour to God, rather the reverse. We should always remember that we are created for one thing, to honour and glorify God. How we need grace, faith and love to be kept from “unfortunately,” and to praise God for His dealings with us.

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.” (Romans 8. 28.)

Contributed

***“THE SUNDAY COMPANION” “LETTER OF THE YEAR”
FROM A POPE’S NEPHEW***

I was brought up in a very religious family in a little village in Northern Italy. There was a cry in my heart to have a real meeting with God. The only way I knew was to become a priest. But in the seminary, the more I advanced in studies, the farther I seemed to be from God.

Then I began to seek God in physical penances: one of the worst ones was lashing my body with a small chain ending in seven tails. The more we lashed our bodies, the greater was the storm in our souls.

One day in confession, I cried to my spiritual director: “Oh, give me peace.” He sadly looked to the ground and said: “I cannot give peace.” “Why?” I asked. “Because I do not have peace myself,” was his reply.

On 15th August 1956, I went up for the first time to the altar to celebrate Mass. As I went to meet with God, as I thought, I wanted to tell Him the tragedy of my soul. I needed reality: a personal meeting with God. When my first Mass was over, there was great rejoicing and feasting around me, but my soul was in anguish. Everything had failed. Even there on the altar, I could not find God.

One day I visited my uncle, a Pope: then Archbishop of Milan. I told him some of my struggles, and he urged me to go on mission work to Argentina. I felt in this way I could get peace with God, so I determined to go.

While in Argentina, an Indian man asked me what I was doing. I told him I was seeking peace. This man was a poor Indian, despised by society and had difficulty speaking Spanish, but he was telling me how to find peace.

Determined to try any possible way of finding peace, I accepted his invitation to the evangelical church. The Lord began to teach me that it was not through philosophy and theology that one meets Him, but the path of humility. After several months, I realised fully that in these meetings was given to me the answer to my quest for peace.

On 31st October, I was supposed to carry a statue through the streets in a procession and shout: "Christ is reigning!" But I knew He did not reign in my heart. An evangelical meeting was scheduled for the same day, and I was determined to go to that instead. On my way to church, a number of my fellow-priests tried to drag me back into our church. I pulled loose, and walked into the evangelical church. That very service the Lord met me, and revealed Himself in a wonderful way.

After several days, I wrote to my mother in Italy, and as a result, she found peace and joy in the assurance of salvation.

In my heart there is a great desire to go back to Italy and give witness to the power of God. I do not care what it costs me: the only thing I want is for Christ to be glorified through my testimony. The cry of my heart is that Christ will convert Roman Catholic priests and bishops. He can even convert the present Pope. He is able!

Juan Babtista Trecinna

COLIN OF THE PEATS

Mr. Kennedy, in writing his father's life and giving some accounts of some wonderful conversions in his parish (Killearnan), speaks of several over seventy years of age being called, and continues as follows:

"Still older was 'Colin of the peats,' as the schoolboys called him, before the light of truth dawned on his darkened soul. One of my earliest memories is the visit of old Colin to the school with his little cart of peats. We then thought him to be a century old, and his pony's age was reckoned at almost half its owner's. Up to his hundredth year he continued a dark earthworm, without a thought about his soul, or one care about its safety. His mind, never vigorous, was then in the weakness of a second childhood. If there was one on earth that seemed quite beyond the reach of grace, it was old Colin of the peats. Able yet to walk, he was regularly in church.

After a Sabbath, on which he was observed to have a wakeful,

earnest expression on his deeply furrowed face, he came to his minister. 'I saw a most beautiful One last Sabbath,' the old man said as he sat down in the study. 'Where did you see Him?' he was asked. 'In the sermon,' was Colin's answer. 'What was His appearance, Colin?' 'Oh, He was fairer than the sons of men; I cannot tell what He was like, for He was altogether lovely.' His minister then asked: 'What effect had the sight of Him on your heart?' 'Oh, He quite took my heart away from me,' was Colin's simple and touching answer.

This was all that he, in his weakness of mind, could tell about the change through which he passed. But thereafter old Colin thought and spoke of Christ, of whom he had never thought nor spoken before, and he cared now to think and speak of none and nothing else. The little exercise of intellect now left in Colin's mind was bathed in Gospel light, and the old man's broken heart gave forth, with all the freshness of a child's affection, the savour of the love of Christ. A year of this new life was added to the century, during which he had lived 'without God in the world,' and then he quietly fell asleep."

Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire, by John Kennedy
Friendly Companion 1955

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

JOHN 17 – THE PRAYER OF JESUS CHRIST THE SON OF GOD (XI)

A discriminating prayer. Part 2.

We will look a little further at this aspect of the prayer of Jesus Christ: "*I pray not for the world*" (*John 17. 9*). In our last issue we highlighted the essential nature of the work of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the salvation of His people. We will now look a little at the fruits of that work in the heart of a poor lost sinner.

In John 14 we read: "*Judas saith unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?*" The very instructive answer reveals to us that where the Spirit of God works there will be fruit produced in

that person's life. There will be love in that person's heart to God. Consider the words of John the apostle in his first epistle: *"We love Him, because He first loved us."* Now consider the Lord's answer to Judas: *"Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings: and the word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me"* (John 14. 23-24). The mark and the evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit is the change of heart, and of our walk, and of our conversation. Like King David says in Psalm 116: *"I love the LORD, because He hath heard my voice and my supplications."* Do we love God's holy infallible Word of truth? The heart is the innermost part of our being, the centre of our affections. The Apostle Paul instructs us in Romans 10: *"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."* If our heart is right then everything else in real religion follows. The thing that stands out in my own conversion is that after Christ was revealed to me, all the affections of my heart were drawn to Him. I began reading the Word of God with new eyes; I loved its every page and drank in its precious doctrine. At that time the Psalms, Proverbs and Solomon's Song were so precious to me, I read them again and again. The sacred ordinances of the gospel were very precious as in love I followed my Lord and Master. The house of God, the people of God, became my companions.

The world, the public house, the cinema, no longer held any attraction for me. My former companions were forsaken and Jesus Christ took all my affections. My experience was the same as the apostle exhorts in 2 Corinthians 6. 17-18: *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."* This was not something I did: it was the love of Christ shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost that wrought such a wonderful

change. This word: “*Come out from among them*”: who is the “them”? It is the world, the things of the world, the ways of the world, the fashion of the world. But how is this change accomplished? The Word of God puts it so beautifully in Romans 5. 5: “... *because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*”

It is the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ that does this mighty work in a poor lost sinner. Not all our strivings, nor any of our good works, nor any of our resolutions to make ourselves better, but the love of God in Jesus Christ completely changes our heart’s affections.

“The more I strove against its power,
I sinned and stumbled but the more;
Till late I heard my Saviour say,
“Come hither, soul, I AM THE WAY.”

Lo! glad I come; and Thou, blest Lamb,
Shalt take me to Thee as I am;
Nothing but sin I Thee can give;
Nothing but love shall I receive.” (J. Cennick)
(To be continued)

J.R. Rutt

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about STORIES FROM THE BOOK OF NUMBERS. Younger children need only do five questions. Except where stated, references are to the Book of Numbers. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail (see page 242 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. Aaron and Miriam found fault with Moses. Why? (12. 1)
2. Moses sent twelve men to search the land of Canaan, but only two brought back a good report. Who were they? (14. 6, 7)
3. The Israelites complained at the manna which God sent. What fruit and vegetables did they remember eating in Egypt? (11. 5)

4. What 'flesh' did God send them to eat? (11. 31)
5. On another occasion when the Israelites complained, God sent 'fiery serpents' (snakes) which bit the people. What did God command Moses to do? (21. 9)
6. Moses was a very meek man, but once he was provoked and disobeyed God. What did God tell him to do, and what did he actually do? (20)
7. Korah, Dathan and Abiram were jealous of Moses and Aaron and rebelled. How did God deal with their sin? (16)
8. What miraculously happened to Aaron's rod, by which God said He would "make to cease from Me the murmurings of the children of Israel." (17)
9. Which animal did God make to speak with a man's voice (22) and where is this referred to in the New Testament?
10. Balak hired Balaam to curse Israel, which God would not permit him to do. But what did Balaam do to try to make God angry with His people? (The Revelation) See also Numbers 25. 1-3; 31. 15-16

ANSWERS TO OCTOBER QUESTIONS

1. "But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea."
2. Elijah's servant.
3. Jesus was asleep in the hinder part of the ship.
4. "Peace, be still." There was a great calm.
5. The fourth watch of the night. Jesus came walking on the water.
6. Between twenty-five and thirty furlongs. (John 6. 19)
7. The disciples thought they saw a spirit (or ghost). "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." (Matthew 14. 26-27; Mark 6. 49-50)
8. "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water." (Matthew 14. 28)
9. Those that "go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters." (Psalm 107. 23)
10. The Apostle Paul. The ship was run aground and then broken by the violence of the waves. (Acts 27. 41)

Contributed

“THE LOT IS CAST”

“The lot is cast,” where I’m to go,
 And what I am to do below,
 With all the steps I am to tread
 ‘Till I arrive with Christ, my Head.

“The lost is cast,” by love Divine,
 Then why, my foolish heart, repine?
 God’s mind is fixed both firm and sure,
 And, like Himself, it will endure.

“The lot is cast,” and in His light
 I see it is both just and right:
 And sure He may the same dispose
 Without me asking what He does.

“The lot is cast,” is very plain,
 And all my murmuring is in vain:
 Then may I sit submissive down,
 Rejoicing Jesus wears the crown.

Lord, may this be my comfort still,
 “The lot is cast,” and at Thy will,
 Whether the same’s adverse or not,
 I with Thy own shall have my lot.

Latchford

QUESTION: *What is the third sense of sanctification?*

ANSWER: The third sense of sanctification is the work of God’s Spirit, whereby the elect are renewed after the image of God, which is called the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

*Romans 12. 2 & 15. 16; Ephesians 4. 22-24 & 5. 26-27;
 Colossians 3. 10; Titus 3. 4-6*

The *Friendly Companion*



The Grave of John Brown of Priesthill

“And I will put enmity between thy seed and her Seed.”

Genesis 3. 15

“For Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.”

Matthew 2. 13

December 2012

Editor: Mr. G.D. Buss, "Bethany," 7 Laines Head, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 1PH.

Tel: 01249 656910. Email: gdbuss@tiscali.co.uk

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

In the Holy Bible there are many prophecies which to us seem very obscure, particularly in the Prophecies of Ezekiel and some of the Minor Prophets for example; and in the New Testament, the Book of The Revelation. If, however, we put ourselves in the place of the Old Testament believer who was waiting all those generations for the coming of Christ, we could equally see apparent obscurity.

We are told in Micah that Christ would be born in Bethlehem, yet we are also told in Hosea, that He would be called out of Egypt; and Matthew assures us yet further that the Old Testament prophets declared that He would be called a Nazarene. How confusing this must have been to their natural understanding of God's Word! Yet we know that when Christ came, He was indeed born in Bethlehem; that He was called out of Egypt, where His mother and Joseph had fled at God's command; that He did indeed dwell most of His childhood in Nazareth.

To us, in New Testament times, there are many prophecies concerning the last times, which to us may seem contradictory, like those we have mentioned in the Old Testament. Yet when God fulfils them in His time, it will be seen most clearly that "all God's words are right." God will vindicate His own Word in the eyes of all the world.

Perhaps some of you are in difficult times when it seems that God's ways are contradictory even to His promises, as Joseph must have felt in Genesis. What you need is for faith to be given to you that you may walk by God's light and not in the light of your own understanding.

Solomon's words are a good note to end with this year. "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3. 5-6).

This was how Joseph and Mary, Zacharias and Elisabeth, the shepherds and the wise men had to walk. They all proved that

“the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”

May each of our readers, young or old, prove the same blessing by God’s grace.

With very best wishes

Your sincere friend and Editor

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

Ever since the fall of man, there has been a bitter enmity between Satan and Christ’s people. God said: “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her Seed...” (Genesis 3. 15). This was very soon seen when Cain slew Abel. It was seen in many ways throughout the Old Testament and then very vividly, when the Lord Jesus Christ was born. Herod, in vicious anger and jealousy at the thought of a rival for his throne, had all the young boys of two years of age and under in Bethlehem, killed with the sword. We know that the Lord Jesus Christ was preserved as Joseph was directed to flee into Egypt, from where he was later directed to go to Nazareth, thus fulfilling the words in Hosea: “Out of Egypt have I called My Son,” and, “He shall be called a Nazarene.” The same bitter hatred which prompted Herod also later moved the religious leaders of the day, to have Christ crucified at Calvary.

This bitter spirit, called “anti-Christ,” is still at large in our own generation, as more and more bitter enmity to the real Church of Christ is seen.

The picture this month shows a grave of one of the Scottish Covenanting Martyrs. There lies the body of John Brown who was shot dead in front of his own family, for refusing to acknowledge that the King had authority over Christ’s church. The article below is about this brave man and his wife who were on the right side of this warfare. May God put and keep us also on the same side as God is!

JOHN BROWN OF PRIESTHILL

One of the most touching and tragic incidents of the persecuting times was the cold-blooded murder of John Brown, who is familiarly known in history as the "Christian carrier."

He lived at the farmstead of Priesthill, a few miles from Muirkirk in Ayrshire. The house was situated on the summit of a gently rising ground, fronting the east.

He was the Ayrshire carrier, a man of blameless life, who had taken no part in the rising or public demonstrations of the Covenanters. His only crime was non-attendance on the curate of the parish, and retiring with others like-minded with himself to the moors for prayer and praise. This was quite sufficient to make him a marked man, and his name was on the list of fugitives in the Royal Proclamation, 5th May 1684.

When the persecution became darker around his homestead, John could no longer be allowed to remain at peace, but was compelled to leave his house, and seek shelter in the remoter solitudes of the country.

On 1st May 1685, he was at last captured in his own home, where he had been unmolested for some time. He had risen early and performed family worship. The chapter read that morning was John 16, which closes with the remarkable words: "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." He then went out to prepare some peat ground. Meanwhile, Claverhouse had heard of John, and arrived early from a neighbouring garrison. He tracked him to the moss, and surrounded him with his troopers. Leading him down to the door of his own house, his brave, heroic wife, warned of his approach, with one boy in her arms and a girl in her hand, came out to meet him, and calmly played her part in the frightful tragedy.

Claverhouse asked John why he did not attend the curate, and if he would pray for the King. John gave the usual Covenanting answer, on which Claverhouse exclaimed, "Go to your knees, you shall immediately die." John prayed so

fervently that the dragoons' hard eyes began to moisten, then turning to his wife, he reminded her that when he first proposed marriage, of having said that this time might come, and asked her if she was willing to part with him.

"Heartily willing," was her reply. "This," he said, "is all I desire. I have nothing more to do, but die." He then kissed his children, and said: "May all purchased and promised blessings be multiplied to you." "No more of this," roared the savage Claverhouse, and ordered six dragoons to fire: but they stood motionless. Fearing a mutiny, he snatched a pistol from his belt, and shot the good man through the head. Then turning to the wife, he said: "What do you think of your husband now?" She replied: "I aye thought much of him, but never so much as I do this day."

On the spot where John Brown was shot, a flat stone was placed many years ago. The epitaph is in the form of an acrostic. This has been enclosed with a wall, and in the interior a square pillar was erected in 1826.

*Adapted from "Tombstone of the Covenanters"
by James Gibson, 1876.*

A LETTER FROM A GRANDMOTHER

My dear little Granddaughter,

I thank you for the sweet little card you sent from you all.

I hope you are all better. Granddad and myself are feeling better this evening, so I have arranged to go to your Aunty on Thursday, all being well.

Granddad was not able to take the service at Pick Hill on Sunday evening: we went part of the way, but he had to return.

I am so pleased to hear, my dear, that you are a good girl and help your dear Mother. You will never regret it, my dear. When she gets old, if spared, do all you can to help and the blessing of God will rest upon you. The Bible says much about obeying your parents.

My dear Mother and Father are gone, I believe, into heaven.

How I wish I had done more for them, although Mother often said how I worked to help them; and my dear Father, when dying, the last he said, apart from a kiss and goodbye, he wished me the blessing of a good husband because you have been such a good girl to us. So you see, my dear, what a reward he gave me with his dying lips and the Lord answered that, my dear, by giving me your dear Granddad, one of the kindest of husbands.

But we have had many trials, but the dear Lord has always appeared. Oh, I can say tonight that He has never failed us in the day of trouble. We are now both old and grey-headed, fast coming to the grave – Oh may we both prove the grave a downy bed, and you too, my dear.

I hope I have made this clear to you, my dear, that you will never lose by being a good girl and work and be obedient to your parents: ever seek to try and make their burdens light, especially your dear Mother, as she has a lot of little children. I can remember when I was a little girl. Uncle Walter was a twin and the other little baby lay dying, and I did so want to comfort my dear Mother in the trial. She told me to go and scrub a room out and as I scrubbed, I sang:

“I no more at Mary wonder
Dropping tears upon the grave,
Ernest asking all around her,
Where is He that died to save.”

Someone called out, “Surely that is enough.” O, I thought them hard. When I wanted to comfort my dear Mother I was singing it again and again, until I heard that voice calling.

May the dear Lord bless you each and make you, my dear, to be a seeker of Himself.

Your loving Grandma, fondest love to all.

*(Mrs. Annie Field, wife of Mr. Jabez Field,
one-time Pastor of Blackboys)*

*FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES***JOSHUA'S LAST WORDS TO ISRAEL**

Many years had gone by since the children of Israel were settled in the land of Canaan. Joshua was now an old man of one hundred and ten years. He wanted to speak to the people and their leaders one more time before he died.

All the tribes of Israel came to Joshua at Shechem. He reminded them of all that God had done for them from the time of Abraham even to the present time. He warned them to keep the Law of Moses and to cleave unto the LORD. If they forsook Him and served other gods, He would turn against them. Then Joshua said: *“Choose you this day whom ye will serve; ... but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”* The people answered Joshua: *“The LORD our God will we serve, and His voice will we obey.”* They made a covenant or promise to serve the LORD.

Joshua wrote all the words in a book. He also set up a great stone under an oak by the sanctuary of the LORD. It would be a witness of the promise they made. Then the people returned to their homes, and Joshua, *“the servant of the LORD, died.”*

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Joshua remind the people of? (7 words)
2. What did the people make a promise to do? (3 words)
3. What did Joshua set up as a witness of this promise?

Please send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail. (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. Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh.
 2. A great altar.
 3. A witness.
- Contributed*

*“Now therefore
fear the
LORD, and
serve Him
in sincerity
and in truth.”*

*Joshua
24. 14.*

BIBLE LESSONS

THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

After Jesus had finished His High Priestly prayer, He led His disciples out into the dark night. They quietly made their way through the deserted streets of Jerusalem and left the city through one of its many gates. They descended into the valley that lay between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. Then they went over the brook Kidron, which flowed through the valley, and entered a garden called Gethsemane. You may remember that David, the great King of Israel, crossed over the brook Kidron when he fled from his son Absalom.

It was a place that Jesus loved to visit, and He often met with His disciples there. They had enjoyed sacred seasons in this garden of olive trees. But it was so different this time! As they entered, Jesus told the disciples to sit down while He went yonder to pray. He then took Peter, James, and John, and as they walked a little further, He became very sorrowful. With a heavy heart, He said unto them: *“My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with Me.”* Jesus then withdrew from them about a stone's cast.

Under the dark shadows of the olive trees, a lonely Figure fell on His face to the ground. Suddenly the quiet stillness of the night was broken by a lamentable cry: *“O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.”* What did Jesus mean by the “cup”? No doubt, He meant His great sufferings and agonizing death.

After some time, Jesus arose and returned to the three disciples and found them sleeping. After waking them, He said to Peter: *“What, could ye not watch with Me one hour? WATCH and PRAY, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”* It was Peter who had protested that he would never forsake Him.

Jesus knew that very shortly they would be sorely tried and tempted to forsake Him. He then left them and went away the second time and prayed: *“O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.”* When

He returned to the disciples, they were asleep again. What a poor watch men keep! Little did they understand the great conflict their Master was in.

Jesus went away a third time and prayed the same words. The Bible tells us that: “... *being in an agony He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*” His labour in prayer under the heavy burden laid on Him was so intense that it forced a sweat of blood through the pores of His skin. How weak He had become through the sufferings already endured and from the loss of blood!

Suddenly another figure approached Him. Was it one of His disciples? No, they were still sleeping. Then who could it be? It was an angel sent by His Father in heaven to strengthen Him. Oh just think! The Lord, the Creator, had so humbled Himself that one of His Own creation must strengthen Him. Now He could go forth and rest in the will of His Father for all that remained of suffering, shame, and death.

Jesus then returned to the three disciples and said: “*Sleep on now, and take your rest.*” It was as if the Lord would say that this part of the conflict was now past, and He had no more need that they should watch with Him.

Then Jesus awoke them and said: “... *behold, the hour is at hand, ... rise, let us be going; behold, he is at hand that doth betray Me.*”

You can read about this in Matthew chapter 26 verses 36 to 46, Mark chapter 14 verses 32 to 42, Luke chapter 22 verses 39 to 46, and John chapter 18 verses 1 and 2.

QUESTIONS:

1. What brook did they cross over?
2. What was the name of the garden?
3. What warning did Jesus give the disciples when He found them sleeping? (9 words)
4. What did He sweat?
5. Who was sent to strengthen Jesus?

Please send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail (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. The great High Priest. | 2. The High Priest. |
| 3. Eternal Life. | 4. His people. The world. |
| 5. "My glory." | |

G. L. TenBroeke

WHY DOG'S PAWS DO NOT FREEZE ON ICE

Dogs can walk for long periods on snow and ice without their paws freezing, but how? Researchers recently studied the paws of four adult dogs and found that the arteries supplying blood to the pads had networks of numerous small veins closely associated with them. This system acts as a *counter-current heat exchanger*. Warm blood comes to the paws via the arteries, and its heat is transferred to the veins closely associated with the arteries, which keeps the blood warm as it returns to the body.

This design is found in many different types of creatures, e.g. fish gills, whale tongues, and squirrel tails. Designs such as this appear in a pattern called *convergence* – very similar designs found in completely unrelated contexts. Evolutionists must say that this system evolved in different creatures *independently*. But this is an extremely weak explanation. It makes much more sense that this testifies to a single Designer of life who made life with unifying patterns that defy naturalistic explanations.

Creation

Authorship Amendment Notice

The article in the November *Friendly Companion* entitled "The Great Ejection" should have been attributed to Mr. S F Paul and not Mr. L R Broome as stated. It first appeared in the August 1962 magazine and was slightly adapted. *Editor*

HORSES

I suppose most young people like to see and admire horses, whether they be used by the military, or perhaps used in agricultural displays showing the old methods of ploughing and soil preparation of seedbeds, and, of course, when they are used in display.

The Bible speaks much about horses, so I would like to bring to your attention what we read in the Song of Solomon. There are many ways in which scholars and men of past years have sought to understand and give their, often wrong, thoughts on this precious part of God's Word. I believe the only way to see the true meaning of King Solomon's inspired writings is to see that they, in the Song of Songs, speak to us about the Lord Jesus Christ. So I would like us to think about one verse in chapter 1, verse 9 where it speaks of believers in the Lord Jesus, as being like a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots. *"I have compared thee, O My love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots."*

To many people this seems a strange statement, but I will set before you what a godly man called John Gill wrote, and preached over three hundred years ago: for Mr. Gill preached one hundred and twenty-two sermons on this precious book of the Bible.

So, with God's help, I will try to tell you briefly and simply his comments, as the Holy Spirit taught his heart. Dr. Gill has three headings:

1. A loving title the Lord Jesus gives to believers, His church: *"O My love."*

2. He compares them to horses in Pharaoh's chariots.

3. Why this comparison is made and mentioned.

1. Yes, God loves His people, and as people who love one another share things together, so the Lord Jesus Christ shares with His people His love for them.

2. The Lord sees His people in this instance as a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots, so He has made believers like unto them, united in their purpose of the following the Lord.

3. These horses were well looked-after and had the best food. So do the believers in the Lord Jesus, for they feed on the Bread of Life and trust in His precious blood. The Lord Jesus said: "*For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed*" (John 6. 55).

These well-fed horses were then well groomed and taken care of. So we have those unseen angels that watch over God's people. The Lord Jesus is the keeper of His people, referred to as His vineyard. Horses have been the delight of kings and princes down the ages.

We know that horses are strong. God's people can be strong, but not in themselves, for of themselves they can do nothing; they must be kept. How important it is for us to pray each day that the Lord will keep us in every situation. In this godless age in which we live, I know it is the prayer of all godly parents and grandparents that the rising generation of young people will be kept by God's grace, and made to be even as the horse, who is renowned to have undaunted courage and is as bold as a lion. As our Protestant forefathers were given that strength to endure all the hardships of persecution, may we earnestly ask for that same grace. May the Lord give us each His strength for each day, for we cannot be immune from the ways and awful language of this godless world. These horses, too, when not employed for royal occasions did not run amok!

May we be the same, but by God's grace walk together each day in the fear of the Lord, with each other, and not to forsake the meeting together with the local assembly of the Lord's people, but be like "*a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots,*" being united together as were those chariots and horses.

Contributed

EDITOR'S POSTBAG

First answers to the monthly questions have been received from JOSIAH BUDEN, CALEB BURGES and JOSHUA JEMPSON.

DO YOU EVER PRAY?"

One day I came out of the prayer meeting and the deacon, old Mr. Negus, followed me out and said to me: "Winston, do you ever pray?" I said: "I try to, Mr. Negus." He said: "I would like to have a chat with you. Come round and see me Tuesday evening." I had an awful feeling he was going to ask me to speak in public prayer, although I was not a member or had not any thoughts of joining at that time. If the deacons thought there was a work of grace going on in any male members of the congregation, they would call on them.

I went on the Tuesday evening to Mr. Negus' and knocked at the door. The old gentleman came to the door, he was over eighty. When he saw it was me, he threw the door wide open and said: "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord; why standest thou without?" which made me tremble more than ever. I thought: "Oh, this is it." I went in and he asked me a lot of questions about myself and I pleaded with him not to call upon me. I said I was not in a fit state, I would love to know my sins were all pardoned before I was called on at a prayer meeting, so that I would have something to thank the Lord about. He said: "Well, I have decided there is one way for you. Before you leave this room get down on your knees and pray to the Lord. I promise you, I will not call on you in public for some time yet." Of course, I took the opportunity of getting out of praying in public by trying to pray in front of Mr. Negus. What I said I do not know, what I prayed for I cannot remember. He shook my hand and said goodbye and said: "I will see you again sometime."

I went on for some time after that until Mary was expecting our twins. When they were safely born, Mr. Negus thought to himself: "Well, now is the time to call on Winston publicly, he has got something to thank the Lord for." So I went to the prayer meeting after the birth of the twins. I did not realise it was to be my first time in public prayer. Mr. Negus never said anything, he just called on all the others present. Right at the end he said: "I am going to call on our young friend Mr. Kelsall

to say a few words in prayer and close the meeting.” It was a few words, but I did say a few words, and that started me off in public prayer.

W. Kelsall

HOW TO PREPARE YOURSELF TO FACE EACH DAY

Jesus answered: “It is written: Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

A story is told of a man who challenged another to an all-day chopping contest.

The challenger worked very hard, stopping only for a brief lunch break. The other man had a leisurely lunch and took several breaks during the day. At the end of the day, the challenger was surprised and annoyed to find that the other fellow had chopped substantially more wood than he had.

“I don’t get it,” he said. “Every time I looked at you, you were taking a rest, yet you chopped more wood than I did.”

“But you did not notice,” said the winning woodsman, “that I was sharpening my axe when I sat down to rest.”

Very often, Christians can become a lot like that challenger. They step out into the battle of the Christian life, trying to live by their own power, only to find that they have made it more difficult. That is because they never take time to get into God’s Word and “sharpen their axe” before they actually face the Christian life.

It is easy to think that the more you “do,” the more effective you will be in the spiritual life. But instead of blowing and going so much, spend time every day reading and meditating on the Bible. Ask God to help you live life to the full, and be better prepared to face the day by sharpening your axe with the Word of God!

Contributed

Careless walkers are in the general complaining souls.

HUMILITY

Whilst staying in Germany we went several times to a Protestant church, where a weekly Lord's Day morning service was held in English. One occasion made such an impression upon us. The preacher paused in his sermon and said: "You know, no-one can see Jesus unless they are humble." He paused again, and said: "No-one can make themselves humble." After another pause he said: "Because if they could, they would be proud."

D. Goodge

THE FIRST RAINS OF THE SEASON IN INGWENYA

James Fraser was a missionary at the Free Presbyterian Mission in Ingwenya for many years. The article that follows is from a most interesting account of his life there amongst the African people to whom he was so devoted. The first rains of the season were eagerly anticipated each year.

At last in the third week of October, rain fell upon the parched veld. For several days previously there was a build-up of cloud which promised well, but always the early morning sun shone from an empty blue vault. On the Wednesday, however, the clouds had by midday blotted out the sun completely, and to the west could be seen the spasmodic flashing of lightning. As the afternoon wore on, the flashes with their thunder peals drew nearer until at half-past four Ingwenya seemed to be at the very heart of a major storm. James wrote:

"When darkness set in, the scene was grand and awful beyond description. The lightning seemed to be playing incessantly and in every direction at once. One fraction of a second I could see a vivid serpentine flash scaling the sky at the western horizon, and the next, a mighty blinding flash would seem to fill all intervening space from east to west. Such flashes would illuminate the whole district with a curious heliotrope light. The thunder was at first quite similar to what we experience at home, but at the height of the storm, attained

a volume of sound which was both astonishing and awe-inspiring. One would think that the heavens would burst under the stress of such a cannonade. One peal came with such a terrific burst of sound that I involuntarily sprang to attention and uttered an exclamation of surprise. Rain fell, gently at first, then very heavily for about three hours.

Next morning, Ingwenya seemed a different place. Instead of oppressive heat, there was a pleasing freshness and coolness in the air, reminiscent of Bonnie Scotland's moors, and the earth was moist and dark in colour instead of dry and sandy. Large pools had gathered in the river, and herds of cattle, goats and donkeys were joyfully slaking their thirst. Poor animals! I felt glad that the rain had fallen, if only for their sakes. Many of them will now be spared a lingering death, for the rain, although not abundant, has been sufficient to revive grass and other forms of vegetation. Already the bush, which a week ago was burnt and arid, is taking on a light green hue, indicative of new life."

J. Fraser

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

**JOHN 17 – THE PRAYER OF JESUS CHRIST
THE SON OF GOD (XII)**

The perfect work of Christ

I would like to look at the sacred doctrine contained in verse 4: *"I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do."* We read the words of Jesus Christ in Proverbs 8. 23: *"I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was."* Also in John 8. 58: *"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."* When the Son of God was made flesh and lived as a true Man upon this earth, the purpose was to glorify His Heavenly Father on earth. What a profound mystery this is, as expressed by the Apostle Paul to his son in the faith, Timothy. *"And without controversy great is the mystery of*

godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory”(1 Timothy 3. 16).

How did He glorify His Father on earth? We can only touch on these precious truths.

1. He lived a perfect, holy, sinless life. In doing this as a true Man, He fulfilled the holy righteous law of God. As He said in Matthew 5 v 17: *“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.”* As the prophet declares in Isaiah 42 .21: *“The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness’ sake; He will magnify the law, and make it honourable.”* How He honoured and glorified His Father in His perfect obedience! This obedience is the everlasting robe of His righteousness in which His bride is clothed.

2. He became the Sin-Bearer of His church, His bride. This is so beautifully expressed in Isaiah 53 when His eternal Father took the sin of the Church and imputed it to His only begotten Son in the flesh: Isaiah 53. 6: *“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”* So the church has imputed, or given, unto her the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ and the awful sins of the church were imputed, or given, unto Him. *“For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him”* (2 Corinthians 5. 21). How this glorified His Heavenly Father!

3. Being the Sin-Bearer of His people, He suffered bled and died for their sins. Isaiah draws our attention to this in Isaiah 53. 4-5: *“Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.”* How the cross of Christ glorified His heavenly Father! The sin of the church was atoned for; it was put away forever. It is expressed by the prophet Micah so beautifully: *“Who is a God like unto*

Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.” The sacred words of Calvary speak of the divine satisfaction of the sacrifice of Christ: *“It is finished.”*

4. The death of Christ was a powerful almighty death: the death that was to destroy death. Think of the words of Jesus: *“Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father.”* He rose again for our justification. The glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ is the tangible proof and evidence that the sin of the church has been paid for. If one sin of the church was not atoned for, Christ could never rise from the dead. How the resurrection glorifies His holy Father!

5. This glorious finished work of Jesus Christ brings us to the ascension of Jesus Christ. The eternal Father speaks of this in Psalm 110: *“The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.”* The Apostle Paul continually reminds us in the Hebrews that Jesus is sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high. In Hebrews 4 he directs us to Him: *“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.”* In Philippians 2 he shows us the glory of Christ in heaven: *“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."

The eternal security and safety of the Church of Jesus Christ

Every step, every word, every thought of Jesus Christ glorified His heavenly Father and every step was a fulfilling of the work that His Father gave Him to do. That work is finished, the church is redeemed to the glory of God the Father.

This brings us to another verse in this beautiful prayer, what we could call the crowning glory of it: "*Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world*" verse 24. It reminds us of the words of the sweet psalmist of Israel: "*He giveth grace and glory,*" or as some of the Puritans use to say: 'Grace is glory in the bud.' Those precious words of Jesus Christ which have brightened many a death bed come to mind: "*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.*

All the safety and eternal security of the church are found in these sacred words of grace. Child of God, everything you stand in need of for time and for eternity is found in Jesus Christ, as the Lord Himself said to Peter: "*And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*"

(Matthew 16. 16-18).

We read of those heavenly mansions: *“And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Revelation 21:2-4).* Also: *“And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: And they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.” Revelation 22. 3-5.*

J.R. Rutt

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about KING AHAZ. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail (see page 266 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. How old was Ahaz when he became king and how long did he reign? (2 Kings 16. 2)
2. Rezin and Pekah, who came against Ahaz in battle, were the kings of which countries? (2 Kings 16. 5)
3. How many of Judah were killed in one day, “because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers”? (2 Chronicles 28. 6)
4. Perhaps unexpectedly, God promised that Rezin and Pekah would not be able to overcome Jerusalem. What message did God give by Isaiah the prophet? (Isaiah 7. 4)

5. Ahaz did not seem to take much notice, because he sent for help to another king. Which king of which country? (2 Kings 16. 7)
6. What present did Ahaz send to this king?
7. Did the king help him? Try to explain the apparent differences between the accounts in 2 Kings 16 and 2 Chronicles 28. (Please note that the name of the king is spelt slightly differently in 2 Chronicles from 2 Kings but it refers to the same man.)
8. We read of some of Ahaz's sons being sacrificed, another slain in battle, yet there was one who was truly godly and over whom God seemed to watch with a special providence. Who was he?
9. Which of the Old Testament prophets prophesied during the reign of Ahaz? (Look at the first verses in each of the books.)
10. Write out two prophecies concerning the coming of the Lord Jesus which seem to have been given during the reign of Ahaz? (Isaiah 7, Micah 5)

ANSWERS TO NOVEMBER QUESTIONS

1. Moses had married an Ethiopian woman.
2. Caleb and Joshua.
3. Cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, garlic.
4. Quails.
5. God commanded Moses to make a serpent of brass and put it on a pole; if any man who had been bitten looked at it, he lived.
6. God told Moses to speak to the rock and it would bring forth water; instead Moses struck the rock twice and spoke unadvisedly. (Numbers 20. 7-11)
7. The earth opened and swallowed them up alive. (Numbers 16. 31-33)
8. Aaron's rod "brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds." (Numbers 17. 8)
9. Ass. (Numbers 22. 28-30) 2 Peter 2. 15, 16
10. Balaam persuaded Israel to join in the worship of idols and to commit whoredom (fornication). (Revelation 2. 14.)

Contributed

“WE SAW THEE NOT”

We saw Thee not, Incarnate God
Contracted to a span
The Word made flesh, such wondrous love
When Thou lived here as Man.

We saw Thee not, O Lamb of God
At Thy most lowly birth
Holy and sinless, undefiled
To dwell upon this earth.

We saw Thee not, Emmanuel
When as a Babe Thou came
To save Thy people from their sins
For Jesus is Thy name.

We saw Thee not in Bethlehem
When in a manger laid
In humbleness and poverty
Who all the world has made.

We saw Thee not when angels came
Nor shepherds too, one night
Who saw Thee wrapped in swaddling clothes:
O such a glorious sight.

We saw Thee not when wise men came
Who travelled from afar
With gifts for Thee, the King of Kings
The bright and morning star.

We saw Thee not at Calvary
Where Thine own blood was shed
When suffering on the cruel cross
In our own place and stead.

But O to know by Thee alone
Our sins can be forgiven
And then to see and be with Thee
For evermore in heaven.

Lance Y Morley