

The Friendly Companion



John O'Groats from the Air

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

January 2017

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

This year, 2017, marks the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation, which began on October 31st 1517. As this is such an important anniversary to Protestants, in our first Monthly Message for 2017, we reproduce the preface to the Westminster Compact Bible, recently published by the Trinitarian Bible Society to mark this most significant occasion.

On 31 October 1517, Martin Luther's Ninety-Five Theses were posted on the door of All Saints' Church in Wittenberg. Composed in Latin and addressing the problems and excesses that Dr. Luther saw in the Roman Catholic Church, this simple yet pivotal event was a major catalyst for the Protestant Reformation. It led to a mighty work of God which restored to the church a fervent desire to read, understand, learn, preach, publish and circulate the Holy Scriptures, and thus revived knowledge of the Christ-exalting doctrines so closely associated with the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century.

As a result of the doctrines received in the Reformation, Protestants throughout Europe grew to understand the Scriptures more fully, and to hold tenaciously to the doctrines of the inspiration (2 Timothy 3. 16, 2 Peter 1. 21), purity (Psalm 12. 6, Proverbs 30. 5), perspicuity (John 5. 39) and preservation (Isaiah 59. 21) of the Word of God. This understanding led God's people to reject the idea that God would go to great lengths to give His Word by inspiration – a Word which, because of inspiration, is infallible – only to allow that Word to be destroyed or lost with the passage of time. Indeed, God's "**truth endureth to all generations**" (Psalm 100. 5).

The Reformers believed that the Lord had preserved His Word in purity in the Hebrew Masoretic Text of the Old Testament, and in what has become known as the Textus Receptus Greek New Testament. As stated in the Westminster Confession of Faith in 1646, "The Old Testament in Hebrew ... and the New Testament in Greek ... being immediately

inspired by God, and by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical.” In using the word “authentical,” the authors of the Westminster Confession were sanctioning the Greek New Testament and the Masoretic Hebrew Text of the Old Testament, as opposed to the corrupted Latin Vulgate which Rome regarded as authentic.

Because the true Word of God once more became the authoritative and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice for the church, there was a great desire to open the Bible to the people. Using the newly-available printed editions of the Greek New Testament and the Hebrew Old Testament, Reformed scholars soon began to translate the Scriptures into the vernacular languages of Europe. Before long the Scriptures began to roll off the printing presses of Europe: Luther’s German Bible (1534), the Zurich Bible (1531), Olivetan’s French Bible (1535), Reina-Valera’s Spanish Bible (1602), Diodati’s Italian Bible (1603), the Statenvertaling Dutch Bible (1637) and others beside. Men touched by the Biblical doctrines recovered during the Reformation were instrumental in providing the English-speaking peoples with the Word of God: Tyndale’s New Testament (1525), Matthew’s Bible (1537), the Great Bible (1539), the Geneva Bible (1560), culminating in the Authorised Version (1611), the publication of which was perhaps the zenith of the English Reformation.

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written: The just shall live by faith” (Romans 1. 16-17).

With best wishes from your sincere friend and Editor.

RETIREMENT OF THE EDITOR OF THE FRIENDLY COMPANION

A Statement from the Gospel Standard Committee

After twenty years of loving service our esteemed Editor, Mr. Buss is retiring, if the Lord will, at the end of March 2017. We appreciate the burden he has carried and give thanks to the Lord for help granted to him during these years and trust that his many labours have not been in vain.

The Gospel Standard Committee prayerfully considered the matter of a replacement Editor and at their October meeting it was unanimously agreed to ask Mr. Gary TenBroeke of Sheboygan if he would be willing to take on the Editorship. We are pleased that he has felt constrained to accept and, if the Lord will, his labours will commence with the April issue of the *Friendly Companion*.

May the Lord supply all his needs and grant His blessing on this appointment.

D. J. Christian
Secretary

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

John O'Groats

Those of our readers who live in Great Britain will be familiar with the phrase, "From Land's End to John O'Groats." These are supposed to be the two extremities of mainland Britain: Land's End in the south and John O'Groats in the north. Actually, the Lizard, also in Cornwall, is the southernmost point and Dunnet Head the northernmost. (Dramatic cliffs of 400ft dominate this beautiful headland.) Our readers may be interested to know how the village, John O'Groats, came by its name.

During the reign of James IV of Scotland, three brothers from the Netherlands settled in Caithness. Their names were Gavin, Malcolm and John de Groat. They purchased a large tract of land called Duncansbay, and after a few years there

were eight wealthy landowners in this area, all by the name of Groat.

It was their annual custom as a “clan” to hold a banquet in celebration of their arrival in this remote part of Scotland. On one of these occasions a terrible quarrel arose between the landowners, as to who should sit at the head of the table. (They sadly forgot the parable of the Lord Jesus praising the man who took the lowest seat and then was called up higher.) Strong words were used and blows threatened. The peace and harmony of the entire family seemed about to be shattered when John intervened. He promised that if each would go home quietly he would ensure that at their next gathering there would be no cause for strife. He evidently felt some shame at the bad witness his relatives were giving to others who lived nearby.

He said to himself: “If I can build an octagonal (eight-sided) building, having eight doors and eight windows, and place inside an octagonal table, each landowner entering by a different door, none will have precedence over another.” This he did and the next meeting was conducted in harmony and peace. We might say of John: *“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God”* (Matthew 5. 9).

For many years the building stood until wind and weather brought it down and all that remains is a grassy mound. Many years later a hotel was built nearby with a room designed on the model of John’s ingenious invention.

As a token of respect to John, the village took the name John O’Groats which name it bears now after all these years.

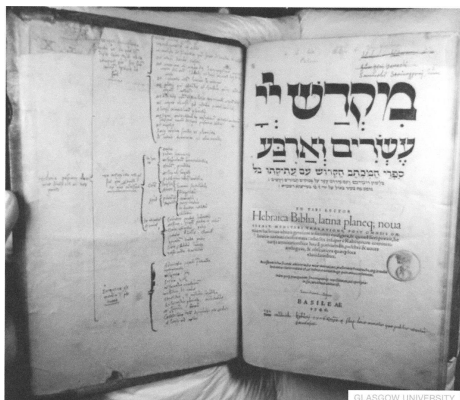
The distance by road (in modern times) between Land’s End and John O’Groats is 814 miles (1,310 km). It takes most cyclists ten to fourteen days although the record for running the route is nine days!

Editor

Time is fluid; and runs away;
Eternity only cometh to stay.

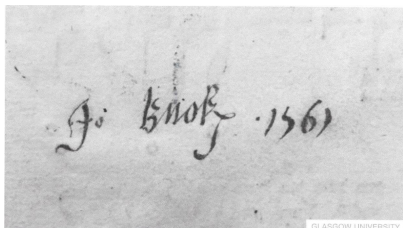
GLASGOW UNIVERSITY ARCHIVISTS FIND JOHN KNOX'S BIBLE

Experts believe an unidentified Bible held by Glasgow University may have belonged to John Knox – a founding father of the Protestant Reformation.



The large Old Testament, which is printed in Hebrew and Latin, was published in 1546 in Switzerland. It was bequeathed to the university in 1864 by William Euing as part of his collection of about 3,000 Bibles.

Archivists now believe that a signature dated 1561, on the reverse of the title page, may have been penned by Knox.



The find was revealed in an article posted on the university's webpage by assistant librarian, Robert MacLean. His article quotes leading Knox historian, Professor Jane Dawson, of Edinburgh

University. She states: "During his career and in common with most sixteenth-century figures, Knox used a variety of different signatures and writing styles. In such a Latin/Hebrew Old Testament he would have probably used that Latin abbreviation 'Jo.' of his Christian name, Joannes. The spelling of Knox with a second 'k' would also be unusual for him, though this was a variant used by his contemporaries."

Professor Dawson adds: “The signature in the Old Testament is in a formal style and has more in common with the signatures Knox employed in his earlier days acting as a notary. This makes it appear quite different from the flowing ‘secretary’ hand he commonly used when writing in English or Scottish in the early 1560s. Although there is no match with Knox’s known signatures, there is equally nothing to prevent this being Knox’s book.”

Glasgow University

A 21st CENTURY PRAYER FOR A PAIR OF BOOTS

The time had come when the footings for a new shed must be dug. It was the middle of a very hot summer and shoes that were usually worn to chapel and the office were hardly suitable, but there wasn’t enough money to justify a brand new pair of boots. What was to be done? At the same time as a prayer went up for a pair of boots, it seemed that the Lord directed me to go to town to the charity shops. Resisting the immediate temptation that you can’t pray for a pair of boots these days, the previous job was cleared up and I drove off to town, looking to see whether it was of the Lord, or not.

The town itself has several charity shops, mostly in one place on one side of the road with plenty of parking outside, but that day all the parking spaces there were full and I had to drive on. Finding the next available space down a side road, I walked back towards the shops, and went into the first charity shop I came to, away from the others and on the other side of the road. There I proved the Lord knew which shop the boots were in, He knew where the parking spaces were, and He knew how to direct me there, because in that shop were a pair, my size, in very good condition for a very low price, with toe protection, but light and just suited to a hot summer.

“But when the Lord’s people have need, His goodness will find out a way” (Newton). Elijah’s and John Newton’s God does not change.

Contributed

*“The
wicked
worketh a
deceitful
work.”*

*Proverbs
11. 18.*

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**ABSALOM**

David had a son named Absalom, who was a very handsome man. Absalom was most proud of his thick head of hair. He had chariots and horses and many servants. Absalom stood near the gate to speak to any who came to the king for judgment. He said: *"Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man ... might come unto me, and I would do him justice!"*

By his friendly words and good looks, Absalom stole the hearts of the people. He appeared to be a good man, but he had an evil heart. Absalom really wanted to be king instead of his father. He was even willing to kill David in order to be king.

After some time Absalom went to Hebron, pretending he wanted to worship God. He secretly called hundreds of people after him, as well as a trusted advisor of his father. Absalom sent spies into all the land, saying: *"As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron."* How deceitful Absalom was!

A messenger ran to tell David what was happening. He saw the danger he was in. David said to his servants: *"Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not else escape from Absalom."*

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the name of the handsome son of David?
 2. What did he really want to be?
 3. What did David say they must arise and do? (1 word)
- Please send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail. (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. Bathsheba. | 2. God. | 3. He died. |
| | | <i>Contributed</i> |

BIBLE LESSONS**THE GOSPEL PREACHED IN ICONIUM AND LYSTRA**

On the Sabbath day nearly all who lived in Antioch came together to hear Paul and Barnabas preach *“the Word of God.”* The Gentiles heard with joy the Word of God which the Jews despised. Like the Jews in Jerusalem who urged Pilate to crucify Jesus, the Jews in Asia Minor were filled with envy. They came into the assembly to contradict all that Paul and Barnabas said. They began to revile and condemn with cursing the Gospel of Jesus.

Then Paul and Barnabas boldly told the Jews that it was right for the gospel to be preached first to them, but since they rejected it, they had judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life. They declared further: *“For so hath the Lord commanded us, ... I have set Thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that Thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.”*

When the Gentiles heard this, they were filled with great joy: *“and glorified the Word of the Lord.”* What an example of grace! They did not glorify Paul and Barnabas who spoke the Word of the Lord. No, they saw right beyond the ministers who spoke the Word. May the Lord give us such grace to hear His Word in truth. The Bible tells us that: *“as many as were ordained (appointed) to eternal life believed.”* From such a verse as this we are taught the truth of God regarding **election**. It is God who ordains or appoints poor sinners to eternal life.

The Jews stirred up the city rulers, convincing them that Paul and Barnabas were dangerous men. Thus persecution was raised up against the ministers of God and they were forced to leave the city. As they left: *“they shook off the dust of their feet against them.”*

Leaving Antioch, they made their way to Iconium. The two strangers entered into the synagogue of the Jews and began to speak the Word of the Lord. The Lord so blessed the Word that many Jews and Gentiles who were gathered with them believed the preaching of Paul and Barnabas.

For many days they remained in the city boldly preaching the Lord Jesus. The Lord caused that great signs and wonders should be done by their hands. Many were healed of their diseases and afflictions.

Here too, the enemy of God and His people came in and stirred up the hearts of the unbelieving Jews. Soon the whole city was divided, some taking the side of the Jews, and others the side of the apostles. The Jews, with their rulers and the unbelieving Gentiles, were filled with such rage that they intended to seize the apostles and to stone them to death. It was now too dangerous for them to remain in the city, so they secretly left the city and fled to Lystra and Derbe.

Arriving at Lystra first, they began to preach the gospel. Among those who heard Paul preach was a poor man who had never walked. He was a cripple from his birth. As Paul watched the man, he perceived that he had faith to be healed and said with a loud voice: *"Stand upright on thy feet."* Immediately the lame man stood up and began to leap and walk. He did have faith to believe! His faith rested in the Lord Jesus whom Paul preached.

The people in Lystra were idol worshippers. When they saw what had happened to the lame man, they cried out: *"The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men."* They quickly gave names to the apostles: *"They called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker."*

You can read about this in Acts chapter 13 verses 44 to 52 and chapter 14 verses 1 to 12.

QUESTIONS:

1. What had the Jews judged themselves unworthy of?
 2. Who does the Bible tell us believed? (8 words)
 3. What did the Jews in Iconium intend to do to the apostles?
 4. What did Paul perceive the lame man had? (4 words)
 5. What did the lame man do when he stood up? (5 words)
- Please send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail (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. John Mark.
2. A Saviour.
3. The forgiveness of sins.
4. The grace of God.
5. The same words.

G. L. TenBroeke

GOD'S PERFECT TIME AND WAY

A well-loved minister in his "tent-making" labours had an agricultural implement business in which he and his father worked. Through difficult times when money was short, a court order was issued against them by one of their suppliers, to be paid by a certain date. They scratched and scraped, went without, but at last the day arrived – they were half-a-crown (two shillings and six pence – before decimalisation) short of the sum wanted. There was nothing to do but to carry on working; there was not enough to go to pay the court. As they took the plough to bits that morning, half-a-crown fell out of the joint and rolled down at the father's feet – it had evidently been used like a washer by the farmer to make up the needed thickness. "There's the Lord," said Dad: "I'll go and pay up." He arrived in time, the debt was paid, two shillings and six pence was knocked off the farmer's bill, and the Lord had all the praise. He did, for they both blessed His great and holy name together.

Selected

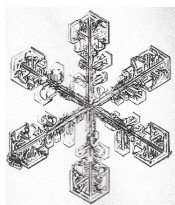
SNOWFLAKES – THE PATRON'S GIFT

How can one type of crystal adopt so many beautiful forms? Some of the world's greatest scientific minds have puzzled over this question.

Cloaked in the mid-winter darkness, John quickly made his way across the Charles Bridge to the newer residential section

of town. His destination was on the opposite side of the river from downtown Prague and the castle. He was running late for the New Year celebrations. To make things worse, the shops were closed where he might have purchased a gift for the host, his patrons who had paid for his scientific research over the past year.

As he passed under one of the lamps on the bridge, he noticed snow had begun falling lightly. Small, individual snow crystals were collecting on the dark fleece of his jacket. He stopped abruptly and watched with fascination as one geometric shape after another fell onto the arm of his coat. Their designs glowed brilliantly in the flickering light from the lamp above. Here was a small hexagon, there a feather-like pattern; a third, the shape of a star. Yet each crystal had six corners.



Never before had John taken the time to investigate individual snow crystals. Normally in snowstorms a dozen or more crystals would fall jumbled together in a large snowflake so he couldn't discern the individual crystals. But tonight they fell individually. The air was probably so cold and the snow falling so lightly that they didn't clump together. As John studied the various shapes and sizes, an idea began to form – he would explain why snow crystals all had six corners and present his thoughts to his patron as a gift!

He began to speculate. What if snow crystals are built from small particles, so small that they can't be seen with the naked eye? Could these particles fit together in a pattern to form hexagonal shapes with six corners?

He didn't just think in two dimensions. How could particles fill three-dimensional space to form hexagonal shapes? He visualised a stack of cannon balls and realised, when viewed from above, the stack forms a hexagonal pattern. He considered why bees construct hexagonally shaped honey-

combs and why flowers have different numbers of petals. He considered how pomegranate seeds fill space and other objects form hexagonal patterns, always with the question in mind – “Why do snow crystals have six corners?”

Today John is known as Johannes Kepler, the famous German astronomer who later developed the laws for elliptical orbits of planets. His laws formed the basis for Newton’s law of gravity.

He didn’t have microscopes to validate some of his ideas. But even today with high-power microscopes we don’t have a complete explanation for how snow crystals grow. It’s a source of endless fascination. Because of the pamphlet he later presented to his patron in 1611 (*On the Six-Cornered Snowflake*), he is recognised by many today as the father of crystallography.

He was unable to prove to his own satisfaction that the packing of small particles adequately explained six-cornered snow crystals, but he was on the right track. His insightful treatise shows how the relatively new scientific method combined careful observations and testing theories.

In addition to his proposal that particles fill space to form snow crystals, Kepler suggested that the Creator instituted a built-in “formative principle” which determines the shape. We know today that information is built into water molecules, which causes them to form hexagonal shapes when they freeze together as snow crystals.

Today crystallographers have classified over eighty basic types of snow crystals. Some patterns are even more complicated than six corners. The basic hexagonal pattern can be modified in a number of ways as the cloud’s temperature and moisture varies. Snow crystals grow in one dimension faster than in the other, depending on the temperature. As humidity increases, the corners develop more branches. Kepler’s argument for a “formative principle” is still valid today, not just for snow crystals but for all types of molecular processes. These are our God-given laws of chemistry and physics.

The next time a snowflake lands on your sleeve, take the time to enjoy its beauty, and share the glories of its Designer with the next person you meet.

Dr. Larry Vardiman (Answers Magazine)

JOHN ROGERS, FIRST OF MANY MARTYRS

John Rogers burned to death at a stake at Smithfield, England on Monday morning, February 4, 1555. Among the onlookers who encouraged him were his own children. What monstrous crime had earned him this cruel death?

Born about 1500, Rogers was educated at Cambridge. He became a Catholic priest and accepted a position in the church at the time that the Protestant Reformation was in full swing. His conscience told him that certain teachings of his established church were wrong and he resigned, moving to Antwerp, Holland, where he ministered to English merchants.

In Holland, he became friends with William Tyndale, a reformer who was translating the Bible into English. Tyndale converted Rogers to Protestant views and Rogers married. Nine months later, Tyndale went to prison; he would be executed as a heretic. But Tyndale left a precious manuscript in John Rogers' keeping. This was his English translation of the books from Joshua to Chronicles which had not yet been printed.

Rogers was determined to see that Tyndale's valuable work was not lost. For the next twelve months he laboured to put together a complete Bible. Its text was based on Tyndale and Coverdale; Tyndale had been declared a heretic, and his name could not go on the Bible. Rogers could not honestly claim the work as his own, and so he used a pseudonym – Thomas Matthews. When Bishop Cranmer saw a copy of the new Bible, he was so excited that he asked Chancellor Thomas Cromwell to see if the king would license it. Henry VIII did, and the Matthew Bible became the first officially authorised version in the English language.

After sickly Edward VI became king of England, John Rogers

returned from the continent, fetching his wife to England. He was given high positions in the Church of England. Regrettably, he was one of those who agreed to burn poor, insane Joan of Kent to death (some of her claims were blasphemous). He was urged to show mercy because some day he might need it himself, but did not listen.

Edward VI died. Mary, a Roman Catholic, became Queen. John Rogers preached a stirring message, urging his congregation to remain loyal to Reformation principles. Mary's Catholic bishops questioned him about this sermon, but he answered well and was released.

However, when a Catholic was appointed to speak at Paul's Cross, churchgoers rioted. The Mayor was present and could not restore order. The mob attacked Bishop Bonner, an eminent supporter of Queen Mary. Rogers shouted to the crowd to calm down and helped hustle Bonner to safety. Although no harm was done, the Queen's council was upset. They instructed the Mayor to prove he could keep order, or said he must give up his office. The Mayor arrested Rogers, the one who had saved Bonner's life. Rogers spent over a year in prison and was questioned several times about his beliefs by Lord Chancellor Stephen Gardiner.

According to *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, when the sentence of death was passed, Rogers begged Gardiner to let him speak a few words to his wife. Gardiner refused, telling Rogers he was not legally married because he had once been a priest. However, as Rogers walked to the stake, singing psalms, he saw his wife at the roadside, holding their youngest baby, whom he had never met.

At the stake, Rogers was offered a pardon if only he would recant his beliefs and return to the Catholic church. He refused. The fire was lit and Rogers washed his hands in the flames as though he did not feel them. He was the first of many martyrs in Mary's reign.

Dan Graves, MSL.

LESSONS FROM HEBREWS CHAPTER 1

1. The foundation of Christ's priesthood rests in His being eternally the Son of God.
2. Christianity centres in a Person:
 "Could we His Person learn to prize,
 We more should prize His grace."
3. He who upholds all things can uphold us.
4. It was *by Himself* the Lord Jesus made the atonement. There is a wonderful efficacy in His precious blood.
5. So great is our guilt, the only way we can stand in the presence of a holy God is if our sins are purged.
6. The angels are wonderful beings and perform a wonderful work, serving God's people; but they cannot be compared with Christ.
7. The glory of Christ is an attractive theme. It is sweet to see Him exalted in heaven.
8. It is because Jesus is who He is that there is value in His work.
9. All earthly things are transient ("Change and decay in all around I see.")
10. We can never get beyond that word: "*But Thou remainest.*"
11. The things of God are unchanging like Himself – His love, His faithfulness, His mercy.

In our early days as a believer we used to love to "browse" in the Epistle to the Hebrews. There were many things we could not understand but there was so much of the beauty of Christ. May our children and young people be led in this beautiful Epistle to "*see the King in His beauty.*"

B.A. Ramsbottom

Chilly prayers and answers warm
Join no more than calm and storm.

“TEMPUS FUGIT”

How quickly does time fly! “Tempus fugit” is the Latin for this truth, as some of you may have seen on some old clock faces, or sun dials. The Word of God speaks of time passing as a vapour (James 4. 14); as a tale that is told (Psalm 90. 9); as a sleep (Psalm 90. 5); as swift ships (Job 9. 26); like grass (Psalm 90. 5). So, as we come to the beginning of another year, we are reminded that our lives are moving on:

“Quickly do the moments pass.
Soon the sand runs through the glass.
Time ere long will cease to be.
Then, Oh then, eternity!”

Before many people had watches and clocks of their own in former generations, some would have what is called an hour glass. This had two sections: an upper and a lower, which were joined by a narrow hole. A certain quantity of sand was measured so that when it had fully run through from the upper chamber to the lower chamber, an hour would have passed. A smaller version (an egg timer) was common in my young days. There was just enough time for an egg to be boiled when placed into boiling water, when the sand had run through.

A famous Scottish preacher, Samuel Rutherford, said as he approached the end of his life: “The sands of time are sinking.” Thus, it is with us all, although with many of our readers the sand has probably only just begun to sink, whereas older ones will understand what Samuel Rutherford meant more readily.

If we are wise, we will be seeking how we may be prepared for the great moment when our sand-glass runs out. None of us knows how much sand remains in our glass to sink, but what a good year it would be for our readers, if this year we found the answer to the poet’s question:

“How stands the case, my soul with thee?
For heaven are thy credentials clear?
Is Jesus’ blood thy only plea?
Is He thy great Forerunner there?”

But then we must use the time we have left, well! David said: *"My times are in Thy hand."* If this is our privilege, then we will be asking the Lord to so guide us and lead us for our good and His glory. May David's confession be yours: *"This God is our God, for ever and ever. He will be our guide, even unto death."*

Editor

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST (1)

The Word of God is very clear: Jesus Christ is titled "the Son of God" and "the Son of man." In the one title, is defined His divine nature, "the Son of God"; in the other title is defined His human nature, "the Son of man." In the Epistles, the Apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, declares: *"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). What a sacred profound mystery this is: the holy, infinite, eternal Son of the Father took into union with His divine nature a sacred holy human nature.

Another name given to the Son of God is "the Word." In the opening passage of John's gospel we read of the eternal divine nature of the Son of God co-equal and co-eternal with His Father: *"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). In this same chapter this glorious Person of the Word is revealed to us: *"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).

This same glorious Person is revealed to us in the Book of Proverbs in His divine, eternal nature. *"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). "The beginning" in this context does not just mean the start of something, it is referring to the eternity of God. Look at the opening of Holy Scripture: *"In the beginning God."* This means before all things, in other words eternal.

Again He is revealed as the Creator. *"He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not"* (John 1. 10). The Apostle Paul, under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, reveals Him: *"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist"* (Colossians 1. 13-17).

We have revealed in these Scriptures that this glorious Man is the Son of God from all eternity. In the record of His incarnation in Luke we read: *"And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be*

called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1. 26-35).

My dear beloved friends, in this holy God-man is all our salvation: this is the eternal Rock on which we build, as Jesus Christ testified to Peter: "... upon this Rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

J. R. Rutt

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about LYING OR BEARING FALSE WITNESS. 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 2 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. Write out the ninth of the Ten Commandments. (Exodus 20. 16)
2. Write out a prayer of the psalmist in which he asks to be kept from "the way of lying." (Psalm 119. 29)
3. How does Solomon describe the difference between a faithful witness and a false witness? (Proverbs 14. 5)
4. Of whom is it said: "He is a liar, and the father of it"? (John 8. 44)
5. Who had "not lied unto men, but unto God," and in a solemn judgment, fell down dead? (Acts 5. 3-4)
6. When Abram went down into Egypt, what "false witness" did he tell Sarai his wife to bear? (Genesis 12)

7. Two false witnesses accused the Lord Jesus before the high priest. What did they accuse the Lord Jesus of having said, and what did Jesus actually say? (Matthew 26; John 2)
8. Sadly David told lies in his attempts to get out of trouble. What "false witness" did he tell Jonathan to bear in 1 Samuel 20, and how do we know it was false?
9. Solomon speaks of seven things which are an abomination to the LORD, of which two refer to lying. What are they? (Proverbs 6)
10. The Apostle John in his first epistle speaks of two people who "make Him [God] a liar" and three, each of whom he says "is a liar." Write out how the characters are described in each case.

ANSWERS TO DECEMBER QUESTIONS

1. "...and a time to every purpose under the heaven."
2. "...do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."
3. "... for who can make that straight, which He hath made crooked."
4. "...because they have a good reward for their labour."
5. "...for thou shalt find it after many days."
6. "...and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." (1. 18)
7. "...than that thou shouldest vow and not pay." (5. 5)
8. "...than to go to the house of feasting; for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart." (7. 2)
9. "...them that fear God, which fear before Him." (8. 12)
10. "...and that which hath wings shall tell the matter." (10. 20)
11. "...shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap." (11. 4)
12. "...fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." (12. 13)

Contributed

As soon grow corn upon a rock,
As grace upon old nature's stock.

A PASTOR'S DESIRE**For the Young in the Congregation**

Great God, stretch forth Thy mighty hand,
And kindly guard our youthful band,

In this degenerate day,
While God-less voices din their ears,
And often fill their minds with fears
Protect them Lord we pray.

While at their work they thus are vexed,
And travel homewards much perplexed

Be this their constant cry:
"Lord, teach me by Thy Spirit's power,
Do keep me in each trying hour,
And guide me with Thine eye."

Convince them of their need of grace,
And point out that safe Hiding-place,
Wherein they may abide.

Instruct them in Thy sacred Word,
That they may say: "Thus saith the Lord,"
When critics it deride.

Make these Thine earthly courts their home,
And may they never from them roam
To congregations dead.

Like Ruth of old, may grace compel
Their hearts to say: "With thine I'll dwell,
And seek for living bread."

Yet while we for our youth entreat
These favours at Thy mercy-seat,
Lord bless this church of Thine!

May no false doctrine here find place,
But hold us by Thy sovereign grace,
Beneath Thy wings divine.

From Waymarks 1932

The Friendly Companion



Martin Luther

“Thou therefore endure hardness,
as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”
(2 Timothy 2. 3)

February 2017

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

I wonder how many of you can play a musical instrument? The Bible speaks very early in its pages of a man called Jubal who *“was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.”*

Many years later we read of David who was especially skilled in playing the harp. The instrument which is probably mentioned most in the Bible, is the trumpet. This instrument formed an especially important role in the wilderness wanderings of the children of Israel.

Different notes were sounded for the various commands which the trumpets were used to give. Sometimes it was an alarm, at other times it might be to command to move on to another place, or a command to go to battle. Another most important time was over the sacrifice, on the Day of Atonement. The trumpet sounded a note of forgiveness, a most welcome sound. Again, if you were a slave, how eagerly you would listen in the fiftieth year, when the jubilee trumpet was blown. This told them they were free!

What a responsibility rested on the one blowing the trumpet! There had to be no uncertainty in the note or there would have been total confusion among the hearers. The people thus had to be listening for the sound of the trumpet, then they were to understand what message it was giving, and then they were to obey.

This is what Jesus meant when He said: *“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”*

The well-known hymn tells us:

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

Eli taught Samuel to pray: *“Speak LORD; for Thy servant*

heareth."

May we be made honest hearers of the trumpet sound of God's Word, and then as James tells us in his epistle, we will be doers also.

With best wishes from your sincere friend and Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

The man who appears on our cover this month is Martin Luther, whom we mentioned in our Monthly Message in January.

He was born just before midnight on November 10th 1483. His parents later moved to Mansfeld where he spent his childhood. They wanted to give him a good education as they could see he was very bright. They expected he would become a lawyer. He first went to school when he was seven, where he stayed until he was fourteen. He was by then able to speak and write Latin fluently. Latin was the language of commerce as well as the church. Every day, Martin would have to learn the Apostle's Creed and the Ten Commandments, but, speaking personally as a mathematician, sadly no arithmetic! The lessons had to be learned by heart and repeated to the master. Any mistake would result in being caned. One morning, Martin was caned no less than fifteen times!

At fourteen Martin went to Magdeburg where he was part of the cathedral choir school. Here Martin read the Bible for the first time. At fifteen he went to his final school in Eisenach where he thoroughly enjoyed his education. These early experiences were part of the way God prepared him for the mighty work which was later to fall to him. Many of us look back to our early days and see how certain events and influences were used of God to prepare us for the lot in life God intended.

What a remarkable man he became! Here are some of his quotes.

"I have held many things in my hands, and I have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess."

"To be a Christian without prayer, is no more possible than to be alive without breathing."

"If Moses had continued to work his miracles in Egypt but two or three years, the people would have become accustomed thereto, and heedless, as we who are accustomed to the sun and moon, hold them in no esteem."

"No greater mischief can happen to a Christian people, than to have God's Word taken from them, or falsified, so that they no longer have it pure and clear. God grant that we and our descendants be not witnesses of such a calamity."

"BEHOLD A BEAM IS IN THINE OWN EYE"

There was once a young pastor who had an older faithful deacon. The deacon was a quiet man of few words, and though his prayers were short, he always went into the vestry before each service to pray with the pastor and each visiting minister. One thing he used to pray for most times was that the Lord would help his servants everywhere that day. This used to upset the pastor, who would rather have heard just himself prayed for!

The pastor continued to be a bit cross about this until the Lord showed him two things.

Firstly, that he hardly ever prayed for his own deacon in public, nor for the deacons everywhere who are such burden-bearers and pillars in the churches, and that his prayer in secret for them was rather lacking too.

Secondly, that the deacon's prayers for the Lord's servants everywhere, were not just selfish prayers that he might benefit from the preaching that day, (though he did need that), but prayers both in love to the Lord Jesus Christ that He might be exalted throughout His one church, as well as in love to the brethren that the whole church of God might profit.

"Judge not, that ye be not judged ... first cast out the beam out of thine own eye" (Matthew 7. 1 and 5).

Contributed

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**DAVID FLEES FROM ABSALOM**

David and all his household went out of Jerusalem and passed over the brook Kidron. Many friends and a large company from other nations went with him. *"And all the country wept with a loud voice."* What a sad day it was for the king! He was fleeing from his own son Absalom. David wept as he went up mount Olivet, barefoot and with his head covered.

The priests carried the ark of God out of the city, but David told them to carry it back. He said: *"If I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, He will bring me again"*

A man named Shimei followed David on the side of the hill, *"and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust."* One of his mighty men wanted to go and kill Shimei, but David would not allow it. He said: *"Let him alone ... for the LORD hath bidden him."* How humbled David was under his great affliction! He knew the LORD had allowed it to come because of his sin.

QUESTIONS:

1. From whom was David fleeing? (4 words)
2. What did the priests carry out of the city? (4 words)
3. Who followed David and cursed and threw stones? (1 word)

Please send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail. (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. Absalom.
 2. King.
 3. Flee.
- Contributed*

*“It may be
that the
LORD will
look on
mine
affliction”*
*2 Samuel
16. 12.*

BIBLE LESSONS**CHURCHES ESTABLISHED - PASTORS APPOINTED**

The healing of the lame man at Lystra had convinced the people that Barnabas and Paul were their gods appearing in human flesh. The priest of the temple of Jupiter came with oxen and flower garlands, intending to offer sacrifices to the apostles. When Barnabas and Paul realised what the people were about to do, they rent their clothes (as a sign of distress) and ran among the people. They cried out: *"Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach ... that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein."*

They told the people that it was God who sent the rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, which filled their hearts with food and gladness. By such words they prevailed upon the people and kept them from their sinful intention. With diligence they laboured to instruct the people in the way God must be worshipped.

Just as they had done before, the unbelieving Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and persuaded the people against the apostles with many untrue words. They stirred up the people of Lystra, so that instead of worshipping Paul, they stoned him. When they thought Paul was dead, they dragged his body out of the city and left him. We wonder how it was that Barnabas escaped being stoned.

The disciples were filled with deep sadness. As they came and stood around Paul's body, he suddenly rose up. What a miracle God had performed! Paul was so strengthened by God that the crushing blows of the stones did not kill him. With great joy they returned to the city.

The following day Paul and Barnabas left Lystra and came to the nearby city of Derbe. They boldly preached the gospel here also, and the Lord blessed the Word so that many became disciples. The Bible does not tell us how long they stayed in Derbe, but after some time they decided to return to their own country.

On the way they stopped again in the cities of Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch where they had already set up churches. In each place they strengthened the disciples and exhorted them to continue in the faith of the gospel. They reminded the believers: *“that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”* In each of the churches they prayed and fasted and ordained elders (ministers) as the Lord appointed them. With joy and sorrow they said goodbye in each place: joy to see the number of believers in each city but sorrow as they wondered if they would ever see them again. Knowing how many enemies the churches had and how powerful they were, Paul and Barnabas commended them to the Lord, who alone could keep and deliver them.

Leaving the region of Pisidia, they came to Perga in Pamphylia. They preached the Word here also, although the Bible does not tell us what effect it had at that time.

At last they sailed to Antioch from where they had begun, having fulfilled the work for which they were sent. How thankful they must have been for all that God had done for them and through them!

When they called the church together, they related how God had blessed His Word and opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

You can read about this in Acts chapter 14 verses 11 to 27.

QUESTIONS:

1. What did the people of Lystra intend to do to the Apostles? (2 words)
2. What did they really do to the Apostle Paul?
3. The apostles reminded the believers that they must enter the kingdom of God through what? (2 words)
4. To whom did the apostles commend the churches? (2 words)
5. What had God opened to the Gentiles? (4 words)

Please send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail (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. Everlasting life.
2. As many as were ordained to eternal life.
3. Stone them.
4. Faith to be healed.
5. Began to leap and walk.

G. L. TenBroeke

THE GOD OF ALL WEATHER

It is, of course, a common topic of conversation, the weather! Usually it is said to be either good or bad, but if we remember that it is God's weather, we should be satisfied with whatever He sends.

Below are some Scriptures which show His complete control over our weather, for His own honour and glory and our good:

"Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields" (Job 5. 10).

"Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the LORD our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season: He reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest" (Jeremiah 5. 24).

"When He made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder" (Job 28. 26).

"He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; He maketh lightnings for the rain; He bringeth the wind out of His treasures" (Psalm 135. 7).

"For He saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth; likewise the small rain, and to the great rain of His strength" (Job 37. 6).

"By the breath of God frost is given: and the breadth of the waters is straitened" (Job 37. 10).

"He giveth snow like wool: He scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes. He casteth forth His ice like morsels: who can stand before His cold?" (Psalm 147. 16-17).

Editor

MY FIRST PRAYER (6)

I well remember the first time the Lord answered my prayers – when I was nine years old. Every Friday we were taken from school by bus to the large swimming pool in the nearby town for swimming lessons. I was very nervous of the water and felt I would never learn to swim, and got very upset about it.

This particular morning I was feeling very scared and worried and wanted to tell my Mum. She was busy on the telephone and the time was getting nearer when I must go to school.

Then I remembered that my mother had told me that I could take everything to God in prayer. So I prayed and told the Lord all my fears about the swimming, and asked for His help.

That very day I finally learnt to swim, and I have never forgotten the feelings I had when I realised the Lord had heard and answered my prayer.

Contributed

“READ THE SECOND CHAPTER OF LUKE”

Bishop Hooper, in a letter to certain good people who were taken whilst praying in Bow churchyard, and now in trouble, wrote thus to them: “Read the second chapter of Luke; there the shepherds that watched upon their sheep all night, as soon as they heard Christ was born at Bethlehem, by and by they went to seek Him. They did not reason, nor debate with themselves, who should keep the wolf from the sheep in the meantime; but did as they were commanded, and committed their sheep to Him, whose pleasure they obeyed; so let us do now when we are called, commit all other things to Him that calleth us. He will take heed that all things shall be well; He will help the husband, comfort the wife, guide the servants, keep the house, preserve the goods, yea, rather than it shall be undone, He will send someone to wash the dishes and rock the cradle. Cast therefore all your care upon God.”

John Trapp note on Matthew 6. 34.

SPIDERS' WEBS

Children, you may have noticed a spider's web hung from nearby bushes, or perhaps even within your home. Early in the morning you can see the dew hang upon the threads and the patterns of the web are highlighted beautifully. Not only are they a spectacular sight, the spider's web is truly a wonderful piece of nature that was not created through millions of years of evolution. In fact, the properties of the spider's web are truly astonishing. Not only is the silk of a spider one of the strongest materials on earth, every property of the spider's silk is purposefully designed to capture flies in its web. For example, the "tensile" strength of a spider's web is comparable to high-grade alloy steel. This steel is used in jet turbine engines or spacecraft and is extremely strong. Some spiders are even able to capture small birds in their webs!

One further property of a spider's silk is its stickiness. Perhaps you may have noticed how much a spider's web sticks to you when you accidentally walk into one. The purpose of this is that once a prey flies into the web, the silk instantly sticks to the prey, preventing it from escaping. The more it fights to escape, the more tangled it gets within the web. This is due to tiny droplets of glue that are suspended from the silk itself. These are only two of the remarkable properties of the spider's web. The silk is also elastic and the web actually draws itself to the prey by being drawn by the static electricity given off by the prey as it flies through the air.

Some spiders use their webs to protect their eggs before they are hatched. There are a variety of different webs made by the spider such as orb, tangle and cob webs. Each one has a different function for capturing prey. Spiders also use their silk to transport them from one place to another.

Whilst for some people spiders can be scary and their webs a nuisance, they actually perform a vital role in the eco system. They keep many pest populations in check and prevent infestations within our homes. They are also an important part of the diet for birds, snakes and fish.

The wondrous mechanisms of spiders' webs are not made by chance or mistakes over millions of years. They are created by an intelligent designer which can only be the Creator Himself.

J. de Vogel

<http://theconversation.com/spider-silk-is-a-wonder-of-nature-but-its-not-stronger-than-steel-14879>

Griffiths, J.R.; Salanitri, V.R. (1980). "The strength of spider silk," *Journal of Materials Science*

<http://creation.com/spiderweb-stickiness>

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF THE LATE MRS. LILY LEVELL (1)

Our old friend, Mrs. Lily Levell, passed away in December 2015 at the great age of 100. In 1992 she was asked by Mr. Ramsbottom, the then Editor, to write down some memories of her childhood days at Bounds Cross Chapel, Biddenden, where Mr. Kemp was Pastor for many years. Lily was called by grace at an early age and her account makes, not only interesting reading, but also may it help some of our younger readers in whom the work of grace may be just beginning.

Some weeks ago, to my utter surprise, I was asked if I could write some "memories of old Mr. Kemp of Biddenden." Well, it quite took my breath away, and after a pause I said: "I'll think about it." Well, I have thought and thought: how can I? So I tried to pray to be helped to do this.

I left home when I was 14, and dear old Mr. Kemp died the next year – and besides how can I write about dear old Mr. Kemp without including Mrs. Kemp? She always wore black and looked exactly like the photo of her in Mr. Kemp's book. But what memories they are, and where shall I start?

We lived in a village called Smarden, and until I was thirteen we lived at the other end of Smarden called "Bakers' Bridge." Once when I was about six years old my parents sent me off, as it was a beautiful summer morning, to *walk* to chapel – about three to four miles to Biddenden. It was a beautiful walk and I

very much enjoyed it, but as I got nearer the chapel, how my little legs did ache! Then behold Mr. Luke Hopkins came along from Egerton with his conveyance driven with two black horses, and my mother was having a ride. I did hope they would stop and pick me up, but I expect there wasn't room.

But now I must get back to Mr. Kemp whom I am supposed to be writing about. One of my first memories of him is seeing him stand on the step of the chapel, usually after the afternoon service, and shake hands with various people, and I thought it was wonderful that he should take notice of me (a little girl three or four years old). But he would, and in his kindly way would say: "And how are you today?" and take my little hand into his large work-worn hand.

There are so many things I could write, but I will come to one Sabbath day. I could take you to the seat I was sitting in in Bounds Cross Chapel, Biddenden – centre right near the back. For young folks warning, for once I was wearing a marvellous blue stripy woollen hat with two loose bobbles on the side, and I couldn't resist shaking my head and making these bobbles move about. My mother sat near the front of the chapel so that she could nip out easily through the vestry with my baby sister if she cried, so she didn't see my behaviour. But someone must have told her for I got "told off" when I got home and told: "You will not wear that hat again," and I never saw it afterwards.

Well now, I was in that same seat (but previous to this I had had some very solemn thoughts and I felt very down) but this particular Lord's Day I am now writing about, old Mr. Kemp took for his text: "*Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall.*" I listened in my childish way but somehow I felt "*my daughter*" was for *me*. That was a very *special* Lord's Day to me. More than I can express on paper.

Sometimes on Sabbath evenings during the summer, my father would take his carrier van with Mr. and Mrs. Kemp and other chapel people in it to various little chapels round about: to Stone – which is still open (its full name is Stone-in-Oxney);

Grafty Green – now closed; Frittenden – also closed; and Hawkhurst – now closed. They were the main ones. The carrier van could take about fourteen people, and if we put some chairs and stools in (before regulations came in), we could squeeze in a few extra people.

On weekdays this van took rabbits (dead ones hung up), coal, eggs, farmers' corn, knitting wool, orders from people in outlying districts, groceries, farm tools, and I don't know what else besides! But it was an extraordinary mixture. On Sabbath days there was such a transformation (got ready on the Saturday, of course) that you would have hardly recognised the inside of the van for the same vehicle. It was all swept and garnished! A smart piece of coconut matting with some red stripes in it was all laid down the middle of the floor (that was the carpet!). Then behold seats lifted up from the sides (which were flat against the wall all the week) and to finish the scene, a set of brown motley "leather" cushions were all laid along. Should it be chilly, we had two rugs, cut lengthways to make four, grey with blue stripes, to cover us withal! How cosy we were! The tailboard was fixed firmly so that you could look out of the back of the van and "see the world go by." Also there were some windows high up along the sides so you could see the trees as well.

Well, this particular Sabbath evening we went to Grafty Green and Mr. Kemp took for his text: "*Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes*" (Song of Solomon 2. 15). It was a simple sermon that a child (like me) could understand. The little foxes were those little things we did wrong, the tender grapes were our prayers to God to be helped to get rid of those little foxes (sins). I found myself listening intently – I liked that sermon. Those things that worried us we could pray to God about and He could put them right. I remember coming home much comforted. I had a God I could go to and tell Him all my childish troubles. All this happened over sixty years ago, so my

memory fails somewhat, but I still remember how happy I felt – I had got a secret – I could pray to God and He would hear me.

Now on another occasion, we must wend our way to Stone chapel. We tucked dear old Mr. Kemp in the front cab beside my father and, with our congregation inside the van, off we went. Of course, not the speed we go now. O no! It was 15 to 20 miles an hour – or we might make 25 – that was fast! But now the picture of us all, gently swaying as we manoeuvred round the corners of those narrow country lanes, the people quietly talking of this and that and how they had been helped through another week. How I loved them all and had a little hope that I was one of those chosen ones!

Well, we had arrived at the little wayside chapel – out came the wooden steps of three my father had had made for the people to descend – and he would give them a helping hand down from the back of the van. “Now Mrs. X, gently does it,” and a response of, “Thank you, Mr. Oliver,” and we would all troop into the little chapel.

Now (skipping over the hymns, etc.) for the sermon, and dear Mr. Kemp would give out his text in his slow ponderous manner: Isaiah 55. 1: “*Ho, every one that thirsteth,*” – on to the end of verse 3 – “*even the sure mercies of David.*” How good it was, and I was the happiest person on this earth! It wasn’t long after that that I was baptized by the dear aged pastor. I was the youngest member, fourteen years and five months.

Friendly Companion November 1992

HE WAITS TO BE GRACIOUS

A poor woman stood at a gate looking into a vineyard.

“Would you like some grapes?” asked the owner.

“I should be very grateful,” replied the woman.

“Then give me your basket.”

Quickly the basket was handed over. The owner took it and was gone a long time among the vines, till the woman became discouraged, thinking that he was not coming again.

At last he returned with the basket heaped full. "I have made you wait a good while," he said, "but you know the longer you have to wait the more grapes you receive!"

So sometimes it is in prayer. We bring our empty basket to God and pass it over the gate of prayer to Him. He seems to be delaying a long time, and sometimes faith gets weary with waiting. But at last He comes, and our basket is heaped full with blessings. He waited longer, that He might bring us a better and fuller measure, an even more gracious answer to our deepest needs.

From a land famed for its vines a tourist took a trip to a villa in a beauty spot of the Italian Alps and was conducted through the exquisite garden by the head gardener.

"How long have you been here?" the traveller asked.

"Twenty-five years."

"And how often has the owner been to see the estate?"

"Four times."

"When did he come last?"

"Twelve years ago."

"He sends your instructions, I suppose?"

"Never."

"Who comes, then, to look after matters?"

"I am left pretty much alone; very seldom do I see even a stranger."

"Yet you keep the garden so spick and span and in such apple-pie order that one would think that you were expecting the owner tomorrow." "Today, sir, today," was the reply.

All who love our Lord Jesus should live as if they were expecting His return today. *"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come"* (Matthew 24. 42). Thinking of this hour, Christians gladly say: *"Even so, come, Lord Jesus"* (Revelation 22. 20). *"But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?"* (Malachi 3. 2).

"Therefore be ye also ready" (Matthew 24. 44).

Cheering Words

WHY THE “YE” AND “THOU”?

One of the most criticized characteristics of the King James translation of the Bible is the use of old English pronouns. Some unlearned scholars go to great lengths to make fun of *thee*, *thou* and *ye*. “Why not just use ‘you’?” they say. Yet this is one of the strongest points of the Authorised Version.

In the language of the Greek New Testament and Hebrew Old Testament there is a very distinct difference between the second person singular and the second person plural pronouns. We make no difference in modern English – both singular and plural are translated “you.” However, in old English there exists a difference just as there is in Greek and Hebrew. As a result the old English used in the King James Version gives a far more precise translation than would modern English.

In our King James Bible, “thee,” “thou,” “thy” and “thine” are always singular. “You,” “ye” and “your” are always plural. If the second person pronoun starts with a “t” (in the English translation) then it is singular. If it starts with a “y” it is plural. This information helps us better to interpret God’s Word.

It is interesting to note that, contrary to popular opinion, the word “you” is used in the King James Version of the Bible about 2,000 times in fact. The “thee”s and the “ye”s are used also for accuracy and directness of translation. Perhaps the so-called “old” English could better be described as good old “Bible” English.

Praise ye the Lord for it.

Dr. Bruce Cummons

A TRAFFIC JAM PRAYER

It was one of those very busy weeks. This day was particularly busy with a journey to the north for a funeral, and then a trip to the south to collect and take someone home from hospital, after visiting a needy friend in a home. Just as I was ready to set off, there was a shout for help with a lift to

school in the car. We had not gone far when a U-turn was needed to get one last thing missing from the school-bag and it was then we noticed how the traffic was building up already at one particular junction. When, with everything ready, we set off again, the queue stretched at a standstill for a very long way. How I fretted, and complained, and rebelled at all that I had to do, knowing that I had to come back that way and sit in that jam, which had no appearance of clearing anytime soon.

There was so much fretting in my mind, and so much complaining coming from my mouth, that it hardly seems possible that there was any prayer, but I believe there was by God's grace a prayer for the Lord to help me with that traffic jam. Although my prayer was very poor, yet God's answer was very good, and when I returned that way, there was no delay at that junction at all! How gracious God is! Even if I had to sit in that jam for a while I would still have arrived at each appointment through the day on time; but the Lord gave me relief even though it was certainly undeserved; and taught me a lesson in what I thought was just trouble and bother.

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55. 9).

Contributed

PEACE WITH GOD

"The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4. 7).

"Put me down," said a wounded soldier in the Crimea, to his comrades who were carrying him. "Put me down; do not take the trouble to carry me further. I am dying." They put him down and returned to the field. A few minutes after, an officer saw the man bleeding profusely, and said to him: "Can I do anything for you?"

"Nothing, thank you."

"Shall I get you a little water?" said the kind-hearted officer.

"No thank you, I am dying."

"Is there anything I can do for you? Shall I write to your friends?"

"I have no friends that you can write to. But there is one thing for which I would be much obliged. In my knapsack you will find a Testament: will you open it at the 14th chapter of John, and near the end of the chapter you will find a verse that begins with 'peace.' Will your read it?"

The officer did so, and read the words: "*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*" (John 14. 27).

"Thank you, sir," said the dying man. "I have peace – I am going to that Saviour – God is with me. I want no more," and instantly died.

Selected

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST (2)

In our last piece we drew your attention to the Scriptures that reveal to us the eternal Son of God manifest in the flesh: in other words, a real true Man. In Hebrews 2 the Apostle Paul by the Holy Spirit opens to us a little more of the profound mystery: "*But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man*" (Hebrews 2. 9). The term 'a little lower than the angels,' means, human nature. God is that pure uncreated Spirit from and to all eternity. The angels are created spirits: "*Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?*" (Hebrews 1. 14). Man is said to be a little lower than the angels because he has a physical body which is the dwelling place of his soul. "*And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul*" (Genesis 2. 7). So the Son of God assumed man's nature

in the womb of the virgin Mary as we read: *"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil"* (Hebrews 2. 14). Then, as if to intimate that he knew that poor, weak sinful men would seek to undermine and obscure this sacred doctrine of Christ he continues: *"For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people"* (Hebrews 2. 16-17).

What a sacred precious truth that is that the Son of God was made like unto His brethren "in all things." In assuming human nature He became, through the grace and power of our Heavenly Father, the Prophet, Priest and King of His people. If we prayerfully study the Word of God we find that these were the three offices under the Levitical dispensation: the required anointing with oil; the reason for this is that they were typical offices pointing us to the incarnation of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, "Christ" meaning, the Anointed One.

The prophet of old declares: *"And there shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears"* (Isaiah 11. 1-3). In another place he declares: *"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me; because the LORD hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that*

mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He might be glorified” (Isaiah 61. 1-3).

In the gospels the Lord Jesus read this Scripture in the synagogue at Nazareth and said: *“This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.”* John the Baptist witnessing to his disciples speaks the following words: *“For He whom God hath sent speaketh the Words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him” (John 3. 34).*

The sacred human nature of the Son of God was anointed without measure; all He said and did and the power that attended it was by the Holy Spirit. The miracles that He wrought, the sermons that He preached, the devils that He cast out were by the power of the Holy Spirit. Each one of His followers can only believe and follow as the Holy Spirit gives them grace to do so.

J.R. Rutt

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about JOSHUA. 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 26 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. We first read of Joshua soon after the children of Israel came out of Egypt. Whose son was he, and whose servant? (Numbers 11. 28)
2. While still young, Joshua had to lead an army to fight against Amalek. When did the Israelites prevail? (Exodus 17. 11)
3. Joshua (also called Oshea) had to go with eleven others on an important mission. What was it? (Numbers 13. 2, 8, 16, 17)
4. Many years later Joshua himself sent two others on a similar mission. Where did they go, and whose house did they lodge at? (Joshua 2. 1)
5. What happened when Joshua said to the Israelites, “Shout;

- for the LORD hath given you the city"? (Joshua 6. 16, 20)
6. In what way were Joshua and Caleb different from the ten other men mentioned in question 3? (Numbers 14)
 7. The inhabitants of which city deceived Joshua with dry and mouldy bread? (Joshua 9)
 8. What was "Ed," which caused a lot of misunderstanding among the tribes of Israel? (Joshua 22)
 9. What were the names of the six cities of refuge which Joshua appointed by God's command? (Joshua 20)
 10. "And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man." What had Joshua done?

ANSWERS TO JANUARY QUESTIONS

1. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."
2. "Remove from me the way of lying; and grant me Thy Law graciously."
3. "A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies."
4. The devil.
5. Ananias.
6. Abram told Sarai to say that she was his sister, and not to acknowledge that she was his wife. (Genesis 12. 11-13)
7. "I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days" (Matthew 26. 61). "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (John 2. 19)
8. David told Jonathan to tell Saul that he had gone to Bethlehem to a family sacrifice, (1 Samuel 20. 6) which he had not, because he was hiding in the field (verse 24).
9. "A lying tongue," "A false witness that speaketh lies." (Proverbs 6. 16-19)
10. We "make God a liar" "if we say that we have not sinned," (1 John 1. 10) and if we believe not "the record that God gave of His Son" (1 John 5. 10). We are liars if we say, "I know Him," and keep not His [God's] commandments (1 John 2. 4); if we deny "that Jesus is the Christ," (1 John 2. 22); if we say, "I love God," and hate our brother. (1 John 4. 20)

Contributed

“MY STRENGTH IS MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS”

I cannot know Thy perfect strength,
Except in weakness felt.

I cannot prove sufficient grace
Except in need 'tis dealt.

Except I feel my darkness deep,
I cannot know Thy light,
Unless I faint, how can Thine arm
Sustain me in the fight?

Unless I know the power of sin,
Can I prove reigning grace?
How should I know a Saviour's worth
And seek with tears His face?

Unless I felt the billows rise,
The tempest's frightening power,
How could I prove Omnipotence
To save me in that hour?

Is it not when I'm cold and dead,
I long Thy life to feel?
How wondrous is Thy Spirit's touch
Which leaves a heavenly seal.

Let me be willing for the worst,
That I may know the best,
My soul to Thee may I resign,
And in Thy pleasure rest.

E. Jempson

The Friendly Companion



Gannets on the Bass Rock in Scotland

“From the end of the earth will I cry unto Thee,
when my heart is overwhelmed:
lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.”
(Psalm 61. 2)

March 2017

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

This is the last time I will be writing to you as the Editor of the *Friendly Companion*, as from April 1st our good friend, Mr. G. Tenbroeke, Pastor of Sheboygan Chapel, Wisconsin, USA, will take up the burden we have borne for the past twenty years. Our friend is no stranger to these pages, having contributed the Bible Lessons for many years, and we wish him the Lord's richest blessing in this new path to which he has been called.

Looking back over the last twenty years, although we recognise many imperfections in our labours, the Lord has been most gracious in supplying material each month, and loyal helpers both in writing and behind the scenes. These are all most warmly thanked. We trust the Lord will provide a similar band of willing helpers for our new editor.

In editing these pages for the past twenty years, we remember the excellent advice given by our former editor, Mr. Ramsbottom: "Let the Word of God be central to its pages." In saying "Goodbye" we could well pass to you the same advice: "Let the Word of God be central to your lives in every part." When Joshua took up the leadership of the children of Israel after the death of Moses, he was commanded: "*This Book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then shalt thou make thy way prosperous and then thou shalt have good success.*"

It has been a pleasure to meet many of you, as we have preached in the Lord's name in so many chapels. We hope that as it was with us in our young days, so it will be with you. The constant reading and searching of God's Word gave us a store in our minds which even now after so many years we are thankful to God for.

Above all we have desired for you that the Word may be taken by the Holy Spirit and implanted in your hearts as an

incorruptible seed which will bear saving fruit in your lives.

As we bid you "Farewell," we would do as Paul did when saying goodbye to his friends at Ephesus: *"And now ... I commend you to God, and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."*

With very best wishes to you all from your sincere friend and Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

"Marvellous Are Thy Works"

The Bass Rock is in the Firth of Forth about 2½ miles out from North Berwick. It is about 350ft (120m) high, of basalt and covers some seven acres. It was a most dreadful prison in the times of the Scottish Covenanters. A lighthouse was built in 1902 on the site of the old prison and was manned by keepers until 1988 when it was automated. It still beams its warning light across the Forth. Nowadays the island is uninhabited by man, but is home to thousands of various seabirds, one species of which is the gannet.

Together with the cormorant, the gannet is our largest seabird with a wing-span of up to 5ft 6ins (1.8m) and weighing up to 9lb (3.6 kg), and can live for well over thirty years. It flies powerfully with shallow wing-beats and glides easily. It is strangely faithful to its mate and nest site to which it returns each year.

Both parents take turns to incubate the single egg under their webbed feet, and then to feed the chick which grows quickly. Frequent large feeds of oily fish (such as herring and mackerel) enable the young gannet to lay down a thick layer of fat, which provides essential nourishment when it leaves the nest, and without its parents goes out to sea. At twelve weeks old it is ready to go, but being too heavy to fly, must get to the edge of the Rock, spread its wings and glide down to the water below. Once at sea, the young gannet lives off its fat reserves

and as soon as it is light enough to fly, must quickly learn the specialised skills of fishing, gannet-style.

Gannets glide high in the sky, and use their superb eye-sight to spot fish below the surface of the water. They can bring their eyes to bear forwards giving them binocular vision. Then they plunge down folding their wings tightly back as they approach the surface, forming a perfect arrowhead, and entering the water at speeds of up to 60 mph.

Their bodies are *wonderfully* made for this, with sealed nostrils, protective membranes that flick across their eyes, and an extra-strong breastbone to protect their inner organs, and air-sacs (rather like bubble wrap) to cushion the brain. Once under the surface it uses its feet and wings to pursue fish and it usually swallows its prey underwater, but exceptionally large fish are brought to the surface. Gannets can swallow fish of up to 20 in. (50 cm) long.

The young gannets head south towards the west coast of Africa and live permanently at sea until they are ready to breed, when they return to where they were born.

As these birds find refuge on the Bass Rock, may we find our refuge in the eternal, everlasting Rock of Ages.

Contributed

IMPORTANT NOTICE

As from April 1st, answers to the monthly questions should be sent to Mr. Andrew Baker, 4 Greenside Close, Swavesey, CB24 4RF (email: ajbaker@cantab.net). Overseas answers may be sent, if desired, direct to the Editor, Mr. G. L. TenBroeke, 1725 Plainwood Drive, Sheboygan, WI 53081 USA (email: fceditorUS@gmail.com).

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**A FRIEND TURNS AGAINST DAVID**

David had a close friend named Ahithophel. He was a very wise man whom David trusted for advice. Now Ahithophel had turned against David and secretly joined with Absalom. It must have been a shock to David. He said: *“O LORD, I pray Thee, turn the counsel of Abithophel into foolishness.”*

The LORD sent another wise friend to help David as he was fleeing. His name was Hushai. David asked him to return to the city and try to *“defeat the counsel of Abithophel.”*

Soon Absalom asked Ahithophel to *“give counsel”* on what they should do. Ahithophel wanted to choose twelve thousand men and pursue after David that same night, while he was weak and weary, and smite him.

When Hushai was asked for advice, he spoke with many smooth words. He told Absalom to wait until a large army was gathered and then he should go before them to battle.

Absalom and all the men of Israel said that the counsel of Hushai was better than that of Ahithophel: *“for the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Abithophel”* The LORD had heard and answered the prayer of David.

QUESTIONS:

1. Which friend had turned against David?
2. David asked the LORD to turn his counsel into what?
3. Who was the wise friend sent to help David?

Please send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail. (See page 50 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

Contributed

ANSWERS TO FEBRUARY QUESTIONS

1. His own son Absalom.
2. The ark of God.
3. Shimei.

*“Yea, mine
own familiar
friend, in whom
I trusted ...
hath lifted up
his heel
against me.”
Psalm 41. 9.*

BIBLE LESSONS**A GREAT CONTROVERSY SETTLED**

The days following their return to Antioch were very busy for the apostles, as they told of the churches they had formed in the cities they had visited. There was great rejoicing in the church at Antioch for the mighty power of God in turning the Gentiles from their long-held idols to serve the living God.

However, their rejoicing was dampened by certain men who came from Jerusalem. They were not sent by the apostles but came out of zeal for the customs of their fathers. They told the Gentile believers at Antioch that they still could not be saved unless they were circumcised. Paul and Barnabas reasoned that the Jewish customs were not necessary for the Gentile believers.

The church at Antioch decided that to settle this conflict, Paul and Barnabas, along with other men, should go to the apostles at Jerusalem. Upon their arrival, they related to the apostles and elders all that God had done, especially among the Gentiles.

Some of the Pharisees which believed were persuaded that the Gentiles must be circumcised and follow the law of Moses. As it is so often in the church of God, there were strong feelings on both sides. It is very sad that often those who are most adamant and vocal are the ones mistaken in their beliefs.

After much disputing back and forth, Peter stood and reminded the brethren how God had first blessed the Gentiles under his preaching. He said: *"God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us; and put no difference between us (Jews) and them (Gentiles), purifying their hearts by faith."* Peter would have them know that the keeping of circumcision and the law of Moses was like a heavy yoke (unbearable burden), which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear.

The Gospel of Jesus was an easy yoke, and through the faith given by the Lord Jesus Christ, both Jew and Gentile should be saved.

At last James, who was the esteemed leader in Jerusalem said: *"Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them,*

which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: but that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, ... and from blood."

The gracious counsel of James was well received by the rest. The letter being written, they sent it with Paul and Barnabas. They also sent two of the chief men in Jerusalem, Judas and Silas, to go with Paul and Barnabas.

The believers in Antioch anxiously waited for the return of Paul and Barnabas. As they listened to the letter, their hearts began to rejoice. They would not be compelled to follow all the Jewish customs and ordinances, which the Jews themselves found hard to keep.

Judas and Silas remained for a time to assist Paul and Barnabas in establishing the Gentile converts. Then the church in Antioch let them go in peace. However, Silas felt constrained to abide at Antioch. Little could he or the rest know the purpose of God in directing this decision.

After some days Paul suggested to Barnabas that they go again and visit the brethren in the cities where they had preached the Word. Barnabas agreed and asked John Mark to go with them. You may remember that John Mark went with them on the first journey but forsook them halfway through. Paul thought it was not good to take John Mark.

Sadly, the contention was so strong that these two brethren were split apart. How often Satan uses such things to divide brethren. Mercifully God overruled it, for Barnabas took John Mark and went unto Cyprus. Paul chose Silas, and they went through Syria and Cilicia.

You can read about this in Acts chapter 15.

QUESTIONS:

1. The Gentile believers were told by some that they could not be saved unless they were ____? (one word)
2. What did Peter say God had put between the Jews and the Gentiles?
3. Whom did the disciples send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas?

4. Whom did Barnabas decide to take with him?
5. Whom did Paul choose to go with him?

Please send your answers to the Editor either by post or by e-mail (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. Offer sacrifices. (or worship them)
2. Stone him.
3. Much tribulation.
4. The Lord.
5. The door of faith.

G. L. TenBroeke

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF THE LATE MRS. LILY LEVELL (2)

I have been requested to add to the little account previously written – to write about my baptism. I ought to explain that I refrained from mentioning much about it because I was supposed to be writing about old Mr. Kemp.

Well, what can I say? I was somewhat disappointed at my actual baptism on April 15th, 1931, when I was fourteen years and five months old. I did not feel anything special as I was baptized, except the answer of a good conscience. But let me tell you about my visit to Chapel House, Biddenden, previous to this.

I was told that I must “go and see old Mr. Kemp.” I had told my parents how I felt about being baptized, and so it was arranged that one afternoon I should cycle over to Chapel House. Dear Mrs. Kemp kindly received me and ushered me into the dining room where our dear old pastor sat in an armchair by the fire (it was about March 1941). Mrs. Kemp placed me in the other armchair opposite Mr. Kemp. She attended to the fire and then gave me such a kind look, and as she left the room she turned to me and nodded, as only Mrs. Kemp could. It somehow spoke volumes to me and I’m quite sure a prayer went with that nod.

Well there we sat, the dear old chap one side and a fourteen-

year-old slip of a girl opposite him with a long plait of hair. Neither of us said a word, just the fire crackled, and I looked out of the window opposite me, and then Mr. Kemp spoke: "Well, Lily, I expect you can tell me a few things." I sighed and "looked up" – I mean, of course, that I prayed to God for help – and then told Mr. Kemp how when I was about eight years old I felt what a sinner I was, and if I felt like that, what must a holy God think of me? Also I remembered someone preaching at Biddenden, who I think may have been Mr. Boarer, and I felt very bad – there seemed no hope for me – but then I told Mr. Kemp how he preached from: "*Sit still, my daughter,*" which I think I have mentioned in my previous account. And then about: "*Ho, every one that thirsteth,*" (which I have also mentioned). I glanced up (as before I had looked down at the carpet) and I saw the dear old chap brush a tear away and he said something like: "Go on," so I continued.

I told him about a dream I had had three nights running – "*Follow Me*"; the words *wouldn't* leave me day or night – and then about the view by faith I had of the dear Lord Jesus with that crown of thorns on His head, and I felt my sins were the cause of those thorns, and so I ended by saying out of love to Jesus I wanted to do as He said and "follow Him."

Mr. Kemp didn't say much but he smiled kindly, and then Mrs. Kemp came in and (to my surprise) handed me a cup of tea.

After that I soon went home on my bicycle and I was told that, because I was so young, I wouldn't have to see the deacons but, of course, I had to go before the church. Actually, I had no idea previous to this that you had to go before the church. I thought it was like the eunuch in the Bible – who after he believed said: "*See, here is water; what doth binder me to be baptized?*" I realised, of course, that someone would have to fill the baptistry. (People kept crying when I spoke before the church and I could not make out why – I understood I was received unanimously.)

Now I must tell you about the sermon when I was baptized.

Although my actual baptism wasn't really special to me, the chapter old Mr. Kemp read *was*. It was Psalm 45, and his text was verses 10 and 11: "*Hearken, O daughter, and consider ... forget also thine own people and thy father's house,*" and verse 11. I just could not understand about forgetting my father's house – my parents were godly, gracious people – so I didn't listen much but I kept reading verse 13 and the first part of 14 about the king's daughter – clothing of wrought gold. I knew what that meant – the Lord Jesus had clothed me. It was really as the hymn says:

"Tis He, instead of me, is seen,
When I approach to God."

And so all through the sermon I kept reading that verse, it just seemed to stand out, and I felt so happy.

Mother had made a long white robe for me to wear and my hair tied with a large white bow. Dear old Mr. Kemp called me "his daughter in the faith." I remember that. After my baptism I was quickly taken into the vestry; I was disappointed about that as I wanted to stay behind and sing the doxology, but there it was. Then after I was dressed, dear old Mr. Pearson, the old deacon (father of the late Mr. Victor Pearson who later became pastor of Biddenden), came up to me and planted a kiss on my forehead and said: "My sister." I looked at him so surprised and I wondered for the minute what he meant, and he said: "You are my sister in the faith." Then we all went home.

I felt very happy, but I wondered what "following the Lord" would really mean. Now I am nearly seventy-six and many, many things have happened since that day all those years ago. How the Lord has kept me, and chastened me often, for I was a very rebellious child, but His child, and what a mercy that the Lord so loves us that He chides us when we do wrong!

Now I have passed the allotted span we are promised – I am on borrowed years – but He is faithful and will keep us to the end, and so I must leave this little account.

(Friendly Companion: December 1992)

MY FIRST PRAYER

When reading the accounts of “*my first prayer*,” it constrained me to try and remember what might have been my first prayer. I know there were so-called prayers from my childhood, as we were taught in the home and at chapel the importance of prayer. However, the prayer that stands out in my memory is the one that I believe the Lord truly answered, although it was an answer contrary to my will.

As a young man of twenty-one, I had been dating a young lady for about three years. We seemed to be in agreement on so many things. The only subject we had disagreement on was in religion. Having dated for three years, she began to suggest that we should consider marriage. Upon returning to my parents’ home that night, I thought: “Well this is an important step, and I should ask the Lord’s blessing upon it.” However, I did not pray that the Lord would show me His will, for I only wanted His blessing upon my will. Getting up from my knees, I took up the Bible, not knowing where to read. As I took it, it fell open to the third chapter in the Book of Amos. Immediately my eyes were directed to the third verse: “*Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*” These words were against me, at least against my plans. I read nothing else, closing the Bible again, trying to forget these words.

In great rebellion, the following week I bought an engagement ring, which I promptly gave to her. However, the next week, as I was coming home from her house, I was involved in an accident. I hit a horse on a very stormy night and the car I was driving was rendered a total loss. This was the beginning of the end of our relationship. I believe that through God’s mercy, it also proved the beginning of His work upon my heart.

“Thou didst once a wretch behold,
In rebellion blindly bold;
Scorn Thy grace; Thy power defy;
That poor rebel, Lord, was I.” *Newton*

G.L.T.

“FOOLS FOR CHRIST’S SAKE”

“If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.” (1 Corinthians 3. 18.)

Very many years ago when I was a boy and used to go to a Sabbath School, I was standing on one occasion near the chapel waiting for my parents who were inside, attending a service which was held at the same time as the afternoon session of the school. On this day the school was closed a few minutes earlier than usual, and thus it was that I had to wait outside for my father and mother, to accompany them home.

During this period of waiting, I observed two men walking along the street, and when they came opposite the chapel, they paused and looked at it. One of the men lived in the town and I knew him very well; the other man was a stranger and, evidently, was a visitor to the neighbourhood. Over the main entrance to the chapel was a stone on which was inscribed: “Particular Baptist Chapel, 1815.”

The stranger read these words aloud and the other man commented: “Yes; and *very particular* the people who go there are.” “But who are they?” asked his companion. “Well,” he answered, “I don’t know all who go there, but I do know they are mostly fools.”

I well remember how indignant I felt when I heard this man describe as “mostly fools” not only my parents but many others who, I knew, were staid, sober and good-living people. When I told my father what I had heard I expected he too would be indignant, but he did not appear in the least perturbed but merely smiled and said: “Yes; we are fools for Christ’s sake.” The answer added to my bewilderment and I wondered why my father should admit that he was a fool. I did not know then, nor for many years after, that the words he used were not his own but that he had quoted them from the Bible.

When in the course of time, I read them in Paul’s first Epistle to the Corinthians, the circumstance that I have related flashed upon my mind and I saw that, just as Paul was a fool in the eyes of the Greek philosophers because he preached Christ

crucified; so in the eyes of worldly-wise people of today, those are also considered fools who will have nothing to do with men who have introduced innovations in religion, but cleave fast to that which the Scriptures of Truth reveal, and will not for a moment listen to those who advocate that the Bible should be modified to fit in with the latest scientific theories.

J. Pack

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

It is very important for every Christian to read the Bible. It is the Word of God and that is food for our souls. Christians should avoid reading books that hinder their Christian life.

But how should we read the Bible? It may be read *topically*: that is, searching for what the Bible says about certain words or topics. Take *love* for instance. There are many examples of love in the Bible. Take the words: *grace, faith, assurance, heaven or hell*. With a concordance you can find out many wonderful things about these words in the Bible.

You may take one book, say, the Gospel of John. Every chapter except two speaks of *believing*. It has nineteen personal interviews with Christ and “*Verily, verily*” occurs twenty-five times. In the Book of Revelation “*blessed*” and “*overcome*” occur seven times. 1 Peter speaks of five “*precious things*.” Ephesians speaks of seven “*walks*.” In Romans chapter 5 “*much more*” occurs five times. Check “*behold*,” “*looking*” and “*believing*” in the New Testament.

You may read and re-read one book of the Bible. Genesis is a seed plot of the Bible. Observe how many doctrines that are introduced in Genesis are developed in the rest of the Bible.

Or read systematically. Some people begin at Genesis and read through to Revelation. Others read one book from the Old, then one from the New, and so cover the entire Bible. Observe how the New Testament is hidden in the Old, and the Old Testament is opened and revealed in the New.

Do not read a few verses here and there, or neglect the

context or setting. Read a whole book. Notice the theme and the object of each book; the main lessons to be learned.

Always pray before you read. Ask God to be your teacher and to enlighten your eyes by the Holy Spirit. In prayer you speak to God. In the Bible He speaks to us. Read the Bible in faith, believing every word He says, and read His Word obediently, desiring to do whatever He commands us to do.

Let it be your fixed principle to read the Bible; it is your spiritual nourishment. If you have no food, you have no strength. The more you read the Bible, the more wonderful things you will discover and the more delight you will have in reading it.

Selected

WHAT CAME FROM TELLING THE TRUTH

Two country boys came at an early hour to a market town and, arranging their little stands, sat down to wait for customers. One was furnished with fruits and vegetables of the boy's own raising, and the other was supplied with fish.

The market hours passed along, and each little merchant saw with pleasure his store steadily decreasing, and an equivalent in dollars and coins in his money cup. The last melon lay on Harry's stand when a gentleman came by and, placing his hand upon it, said: "What a fine, large melon. What do you ask for it, my boy?"

"The melon is the last I have, sir, and though it looks very good, there is an unsound spot in it," said the boy, turning it over.

"So there is," said the man. I think I will not take it. "But," he added, looking into the boy's fine open countenance, "is it very businesslike to point out the defects of your fruit to customers?"

"It is better than being dishonest, sir" said the boy, modestly.

"You are right, little fellow; always remember that principle, and you will find favour with God and man also. I shall remember your little stand in the future. "Are those fresh fish?" he continued, turning to Ben Wilson's stand.

“Yes, sir; fresh this morning, I caught them myself,” was the reply; and a purchase being made, the gentleman went away.

“Harry, what a fool you were to show the gentleman that spot on the melon! Now, you can take it home for your pains, or throw it away. He is no wiser about those fish I caught yesterday. Sold them for the same price I did the fresh ones. He would never have looked at the melon until he had gone away.”

“Ben, I would not tell a lie, or act one either, for twice what I have earned this morning. Besides, I shall be better off in the end, for I have gained a customer and you have lost one.”

And so it proved to be, for the next day the gentleman bought nearly all his fruits and vegetables from Harry, but never spent another penny at the stand of his neighbour. Thus the season passed; the gentleman finding he could always get a good article from Harry, constantly patronized him, and sometimes talked with him a few moments about his future prospects. To become a merchant was Harry’s greatest ambition; and the gentleman wanting a trusty boy for his warehouse, decided on giving the place to Harry. Steadily and surely he advanced in the confidence of his employer, until, having passed through various posts of service, he became an honoured partner in the firm.

The Banner of Sovereign Grace Truth

“STAR WITNESSES” TO A YOUNG CREATION

We cannot use science to *prove* the age of the universe because science can only deal with what is observable now. We can measure the rates of all manner of things in the present. However, to use these as “clocks” to estimate ages, we have to assume a history, which in turn depends upon our *beliefs* about where we came from. The Bible gives us an eyewitness record of what happened, the order, and the time-frame, which “science” cannot tell us.

Nevertheless, today’s widespread belief in a very old universe fails to account for many “clocks” that indicate a far younger age. Here are two:

Blue Stars in Galaxies

Blue stars are the biggest and brightest of all “main sequence” stars, but this means they burn up their nuclear fuel very fast. Indeed, they burn so fast that the biggest ones could not last more than a million years, and the smallest around 10 million years. Yet blue stars abound in spiral galaxies, including our Milky Way. This suggests that these galaxies cannot be even one million years old. This problem for the belief that the galaxies are billions of years old is “solved” by assuming the blue stars formed more recently than the rest of the galaxy. However, no one has observed such a star formation and there is not even a viable mechanism for it to happen.

Neutron Stars in Globular Clusters

Globular clusters are compact, ball-shaped groups of stars that orbit the centre of a galaxy. They supposedly contain “very old” stars. The secular big bang story has great difficulty explaining them. Astronomers have seen many fast-moving neutron stars in globular clusters. These are thought to arise from supernovas (exploding stars) within the cluster, where a neutron star is created that is “kicked” out at very high speed. With the compact sizes of globular clusters and the high speed of the neutron stars, all neutron stars should be ejected from such clusters in less than two million years. Many globular clusters should have emptied in a few *thousand* years. A major study of this so-called “retention problem” called it a “long-standing mystery.” These observations, too, are consistent with a young age of the universe.

Don Batten, Creation

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST (3)

We have looked briefly at the person of Jesus Christ as the “Son of God,” secondly as the “Son of man” showing that in this one glorious Person there are two natures, a divine nature and a human nature. This, of course, is a profound mystery as

the apostle declares: *“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). This glorious Person came to this earth for one reason only and that was to redeem His church, His beloved bride given to Him before the foundation of the world by His Father. It is revealed by the Holy Spirit in Holy Scripture that there is an eternal covenant in the Godhead between the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. This is a covenant of salvation as we read: *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will”* (Ephesians 1. 3-5).

In this covenant the Lord Jesus became our surety, which means that He would redeem His people from sin and Satan's power and all law charges against us would be placed against Him. To do this the Son of God must assume a holy human nature as the law was made for man. Then He in His own Person would fulfil that holy law that we have broken: this perfect obedience to the law by Jesus Christ is revealed in Scripture as the righteousness of Jesus Christ, it is called a robe by the prophet: *“I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels”* (Isaiah 61. 10). King David, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in Psalm 45 speaks of the King's daughter and her clothing. The King he speaks of is the Lord Jesus Christ; the clothing he speaks of is the bride of Christ and because He is a King she becomes a Queen: *“Kings' daughters were among Thy honourable women: upon Thy right hand did stand the queen*

in gold of Ophir. Harken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou Him. And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour. The King's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto Thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the King's palace" (Psalm 45. 9-15).

Not only did He fulfil the law for her but he also suffered what she should have suffered for the punishment of her sins. The Son of God in His divine nature could not suffer, He could not be tempted of evil, He could not experience death, but the Son of God as a man could be tempted, could suffer and could die. This is what Jesus has done for His people as that glorious God-man. He offered a perfect holy sacrifice on the cross of Calvary: He thereby satisfied all the demands of divine justice as the surety of His people. Our gracious heavenly Father laid upon Him the iniquity of us all and as we read in that same chapter: *"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."* (Isaiah 53. 4-5). May the Holy Spirit lead us to that scene of matchless grace, the Lord Jesus suffering in the room, place and stead of His people and may we feel as the hymn writer said:

"Was it for crimes that I had done
He groaned upon the tree?"

This is what the living child of God desires to know. Did the Lord Jesus suffer for **my** sins? Was He wounded for **my** transgressions? The Lord Jesus not only suffered but He paid the full price and died for our sins. But the wonderful thing is that He died to rise again for our justification. As the apostle

declares: *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God"* (Romans 5. 1-2).

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the clear evidence that divine justice is satisfied and the sin of the church is put away forever. I speak hypothetically but if one sin of His beloved bride had not been atoned for, He would never have risen from death. But blessed be God, the redemption price has been paid, the church has been freed forever, as we read in Job: *"Then He is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom"* (Job 33. 24). We conclude with the apostle's sacred words: *"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).

J. R. Rutt

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about THE APOSTLE PETER. 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 50 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. Jesus gave the name Peter (or Cephas) to a fisherman called Simon. What does the name mean? (John 1. 42)
2. What were the names of Peter's father and brother? (John 1. 40-42)
3. Jesus asked His disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" then: "But whom say ye that I am?" What answer did Peter give? (Matthew 16. 16)
4. On another occasion Jesus told Peter to go "to the sea, and cast an hook." What did Jesus say he would find? (Matthew 17. 27)
5. What question did Jesus ask Peter three times by the Sea of Galilee, after the resurrection? (John 21. 15-17)

6. "And Peter went out, and wept bitterly." (Luke 22). Why did Peter weep bitterly?
7. A voice spoke to Peter in a vision saying, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." What had Peter seen in the vision? (Acts 10)
8. To the lame man who asked alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple, Peter said: "Look on us." What did he say afterwards? (Acts 3)
9. How many times was Peter shut up in prison, and an angel came to open the prison doors and set him free? (Acts 5. 12)
10. Twice we read of Peter fishing all night to no avail, followed by a miraculous catch on obeying the word of the Lord Jesus. What did Peter afterwards say to the Lord Jesus on the first occasion, and how many fish were caught on the second?

ANSWERS TO FEBRUARY QUESTIONS

1. Joshua was the son of Nun and Moses' servant.
2. The Israelites prevailed when Moses held up his hand.
3. Joshua was sent to search (to spy out) the land of Canaan.
4. The two men went to Jericho and lodged with Rahab.
5. The people shouted and the walls of the city of Jericho fell flat.
6. Joshua and Caleb were men of faith who believed that God would bring the children of Israel into the land He had promised. (Numbers 14. 6-9)
7. Gibeon. (Joshua 9. 3, 12)
8. Ed was an altar erected as a witness by the two-and-a-half tribes close to the river Jordan. (Joshua 22. 34)
9. Hebron (Kirjath-Arba), Kedesh, Shechem, Bezer, Ramoth, Golan. (Joshua 20. 7-8)
10. Joshua had commanded the sun and moon to stand still. (Joshua 10. 12-14)

Contributed

A TRUE SEEKER'S PRAYER

May I love Thee, and adore Thee
O Thou bleeding, dying Lamb;
Teach my heart to bow before Thee,
Kindle there a sacred flame.

Teach me what I am by nature –
How to lift my thoughts on high;
Teach me O Thou great Creator,
How to live and how to die.

Prone, alas, I am to wander
In pursuit of earthly joys;
Prone my fleeting hours to squander
'Mongst the world's alluring toys.

Let not earth with its devices
Steal my youth, my best of days;
Lord, preserve when sin entices,
Make me shun its dangerous ways.

What's the earth with all her pleasures
But a vain and empty show;
Thou alone hast living treasures –
Endless blessings to bestow.

Anon

The Friendly Companion



“Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats.” (Exodus 12. 5)

April 2017

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Cover photograph courtesy of Donald Macleod, Stornaway, Scotland

OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

As we begin the work of editing the *Friendly Companion*, we keenly feel our inability and lack of grace. Thus we begin with many fears lest we should prove to be as the man Jesus spoke of in one of the parables, who failed to count the cost and began to build but was unable to finish.

No doubt when you think of beginning, you think of January and the beginning of the year, or possibly you think of September, when the new school year begins for most children. Did you know that for God's people there is another beginning? They have a new beginning when their souls are quickened and made alive spiritually. They have new desires and new thirsts because they have been given a new heart. Saul of Tarsus, who became Paul an apostle, never forgot that day when on the way to Damascus the Lord Jesus revealed Himself unto him. You can read of this marvellous account in Acts chapter 9. Paul often referred to that wonderful event. It was the beginning of his following the Lord Jesus. In Acts chapter 22, after his second missionary journey, he returned to Jerusalem where he related before the unbelieving Jews and their leaders his beginnings on the road to Damascus. In Acts 26, when Paul was called to testify before King Agrippa and other Roman authorities, he boldly spoke of his beginnings in following the Lord Jesus from that day on the road to Damascus.

We read in the Book of Exodus how God's ancient people Israel were so oppressed by the king of Egypt. At their cry, the Lord sent Moses to lead them out of Egypt unto the land promised to their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. On the very night they were to leave Egypt, the Lord instituted the Passover feast, which they were to keep each year in remembrance of their great deliverance. Perhaps you remember how they were commanded to take a lamb without any blemish, setting forth the sinless life of Jesus. The Lord told Moses and Aaron that: *"This month shall be unto you the*

beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you."

It was to be the most important month of the year to them. It was called the month Abib, which means "ears of corn." It was the month when the barley crop, the first ripe crop, was ready to harvest. It corresponds with the same part of the year as our March and April.

More importantly, it marked the time of year when Jesus suffered and died on the cross as the Lamb of God, for He was put to death on the Passover day.

Paul tells us in the Book of Colossians that Jesus: "... *is the beginning, the first born from the dead.*" When Jesus appeared to His servant John in the Revelation, He said: "*I am ... the beginning and the ending.*"

May the Lord grant to each of you: "*The fear of the Lord (which) is the beginning of wisdom.*"

Wishing you the Lord's blessing.

With love from the Editor.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

On behalf of the readers of the *Friendly Companion*, we would thank Mr. Buss for the many years that he edited the magazine. Many of the readers were little children when he began in September 1996 and are now young adults, perhaps some with children of their own.

Through the years, many friends, both young and old, have found help and encouragement, and at times warning and rebuke, from the various articles in the magazine.

We trust he will yet prove the promise: "*Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days*" (Ecclesiastes 11.1). Likewise: "*Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord*" (1 Corinthians 15.58).

Although he lays aside the editorship, we hope he will be able to contribute with various articles. We are sure the readers of the *Friendly Companion* would look forward to any articles that he is able to submit.

Above all, we prayerfully commend him to God, that he may be spared to his own church, the churches at large, and to his dear wife and family for many years to come.

We would also thank Mr. Jabez Rutt for the many years of service that he has given in writing the "Bible Study for the Older Ones." We are sure that it has been a labour of love on his part. May the Lord bless his labours, both in what has been sown and what he may be given strength to undertake. We have asked him to contribute pieces from time to time, which, the Lord willing, he has agreed to do.

* * *

The Editor is hoping to introduce a series of pieces under the heading of "First Impressions." We would invite our fellow ministers and church members to submit for consideration, as enabled, accounts of some of their first and early impressions which may be of help to our young friends. If there are any further accounts of "my first prayer," we would also be pleased to consider them.

OUR FRONT COVER

What an endearing picture the little lamb makes! He seems a picture of innocence. How harmless and meek he appears, created with a nature that so aptly pictures the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Have you ever wondered what life must have been like for a boy or girl growing up in an Israelitish home in Egypt? For years they suffered great oppression under Pharaoh's taskmasters. How difficult and trying their life was! There seemed to be no relief in sight.

One day a stranger appeared to the elders of the people, telling them that the God of their fathers had heard the cries of the people and was come down to deliver them. When would it happen? How would it come about? First, their God would bring upon the Egyptians great and fearful judgments (plagues), which would finally induce Pharaoh to let the

people go. The last plague would be the heaviest of all, for God would send His angel throughout Egypt to slay the firstborn of man and beast. For Israel, God would make a way of escape through death and blood. The stranger, of course, was Moses, who became their leader.

The month Abib had come (see Our Monthly Message), and on the tenth day of the month each family of Israel was to go to their flock and look for the BEST LAMB they had. It was to be a male of a year old. They were to examine it carefully to make sure it had no blemish. This pictured the perfect, sinless life of Jesus Christ and the cutting off of His life in the strength of youth. He: *"offered Himself without spot to God"* (Hebrews 9.14).

As evening approached on the fourteenth day of the month, there was a flurry of activity in the camp of Israel. In every house, the lamb they had separated from their flock was taken. The father killed the innocent lamb, catching its blood in a basin. The lamb was to be roasted in fire, and all of it must be eaten by the whole family. They were to eat it with bitter herbs. Likewise, God's dear people receive the Lord Jesus with the bitter herbs of godly sorrow and repentance.

The father went out into the fields near their house and took a bunch of hyssop. He began to dip it in the blood of the lamb and to strike it on the two side posts and the lintel (top piece) of the door of the house. How the firstborn son would watch closely everything that his father did!

Still, there was one more thing they had to do. They must enter the door lined with blood and stay inside through the night. God had said: *"And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you..."* (Exodus 12.13).

There are three important lessons for us here. **First**, sin must be punished: *"The soul that sinneth, it shall die"* (Ezekiel 18.4). *"For the wages of sin is death"* (Romans 6.23). *"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the*

judgment" (Hebrews 9.27). **Second**, that sin can only be pardoned through blood shedding and death. *"And without shedding of blood is no remission"* (Hebrews 9.22). **Third**, there is a hiding place provided in the death of Jesus Christ. *"For the LORD will pass through to smite...; and when He seeth the blood ..., the LORD will pass over ..., and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you"* (Exodus 12.23). *"Come My people, enter thou into thy chambers, ... hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast"* (Isaiah 26.20). *"And a man shall be as an hiding place ... , as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land"* (Isaiah 32.2).

A REMARKABLE PRAYER

The late Lady Lucy Smith of Wilford House, near Nottingham, of fragrant memory, one day during her residence in Scotland, visited a poor old woman in her hut, and talked to her of spiritual things. It was a cold wintry day. A packman opened the door, and asked the old woman to allow him to light his pipe, and to give him a drink of water. Lady Lucy, anxious not to miss an opportunity of speaking a word to the poor man, said: "Let him come in, and warm his fingers; he looks cold."

He had no sooner seated himself than Lady Lucy said, "Do you ever pray?"

He replied, "I try."

"Then try now."

The three immediately knelt down on the floor of the hut; and the stranger, in his slow, solemn Scottish style, uttered this remarkably full and short prayer: "Lord, give us grace to feel our need of grace. Give us grace to seek grace. Give us grace to receive grace. And give us grace to use grace when we have got grace. Amen."

He then disappeared, leaving her ladyship and the old Scotchwoman filled with amazement, and never afterwards could they ascertain who he was.

*FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES***THE DEATH OF ABSALOM**

Absalom led a large army over the River Jordan. He was coming to fight against his father, King David. The army of David was going out to meet them. David stood by the gate as they went out by hundreds and by thousands. All the people heard as David told his captains to “*deal gently*” with Absalom. He still loved his son and did not want him to be killed.

The battle took place in a great forest. Thousands of the men of Israel were slain before the servants of David. Even more people died in the wood than by the sword. Absalom rode upon a mule, and it went under the thick branches of an oak tree. His head was caught in the oak, and the mule ran on without him.

One of David’s men saw Absalom hanging in the oak and told Joab, his captain. Joab hurried to the place. He and his armour bearers killed Absalom. They did not obey the order of David to spare him. Then Joab blew the trumpet to end the battle, and the people of Israel returned home.

A messenger was sent to tell David the news. How bitterly he wept for Absalom! He knew that the soul of Absalom was lost, for he did not fear God.

QUESTIONS:

1. How were the captains to deal with Absalom? (1 word)
2. Where did the battle take place? (4 words)
3. What was the head of Absalom caught in?

Please send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail. (See page 74 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

ANSWERS TO MARCH QUESTIONS:

1. Ahithophel.
2. Foolishness.
3. Hushai.

*“But the
wicked shall
perish, ...”*

Psalm 37.20

BIBLE LESSONS**A YOUNG CONVERT AT LYSTRA – PAUL'S VISION**

Although Luke, the writer of the Book of Acts, journeyed with Paul, and thus recorded the events of his journey, we must remember that Barnabas and John Mark likewise went forth preaching the gospel. No doubt the Lord blessed their ministry to poor sinners, as well as the ministry of Paul and Silas.

Paul and Silas had made their way through the regions of Syria and Cilicia and had arrived at the cities of Derbe and Lystra. You may remember that it was in Lystra that Paul had been stoned and carried out of the city and left for dead.

Upon their return to the city, they must have been gladdened to see that their preaching had not been in vain. The church was thriving, and they found a young convert named Timotheus. This young disciple had a good report from all the believers in Lystra and Iconium. Years later when Paul was shut up in prison, he wrote two letters to him, which we call the Epistles to Timothy. It is evident that Paul's preaching had been blessed to Timothy, as he called him: *"my own son in the faith."*

Timothy's mother was a Jew who believed, as well as his grandmother. When Paul wrote his second letter to Timothy, he said that he was filled with joy: *"When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also."* Paul also gives us a glimpse of Timothy's childhood: *"And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."*

Paul desired to have Timothy go with him and Silas that he might be of help to them, and it would afford opportunity for Paul to instruct him more fully in the knowledge of Christ. What a privilege for Timothy in his early days to observe and learn from the eminent apostle.

The Bible tells us that as Paul and his companions visited the churches in the regions of Galatia and Phrygia, they delivered to them the decrees that had been ordained by the apostles at Jerusalem. God so blessed His Word that the churches were established in the faith and grew in numbers daily.

Emboldened by their success, Paul and his company ventured into the region of Asia. This was not the big continent of Asia that we know of today, but a small region that bordered the Aegean Sea. But what a strange thing! The Bible tells us that they were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia. Later there would be many churches formed in this region. However, at this time there was no open door. Even the great Apostle Paul had to learn that God's ways and God's thoughts were high above his own.

The region of Bithynia lay just to the north of Asia, so Paul and his company thought they would go there to preach the Word. The Bible tells us that: *"The Spirit suffered them not."* What a strange way it must have seemed to them. Yet they would prove (as Israel did in the wilderness) that: *"He led them forth by the right way."*

They finally arrived at Troas, a city of the sea coast. Across the sea lay the regions of Macedonia and Achaia, which today are known as Greece. No one had gone that far from Jerusalem with the Gospel of Christ. No doubt Paul was greatly troubled over which way they were to go.

While in Troas, one night Paul had a wonderful vision. He saw a man of Macedonia praying: *"Come over into Macedonia, and help us."* Now Paul understood why they could not stay in Asia or go to Bithynia. *"Immediately (they) endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them."*

You can read about this in Acts chapter 16 verses 1 to 10.

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the name of the young convert at Lystra?
2. What did Paul call him?

3. What had he known from a child?
4. Who forbade them to preach the Word in Asia?
5. What did the man say in Paul's vision? (7 words)

Please send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail. (See page 74 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

ANSWERS TO MARCH QUESTIONS

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| 1. Circumcised. | 4. John Mark. |
| 2. No difference. | 5. Silas. |
| 3. Judas and Silas. | |
-

THE DYING BOY AND THE LOST SHEEP

Many years ago, writes a gentleman, I was engaged in the Lord's work in a remote district in Ireland, a wild, mountainous region, and was asked to visit a boy who was dying.

Entering a little hovel, I saw him lying on a heap of straw. "My poor boy, you are very ill; I fear you suffer a great deal."

He replied with difficulty: "Yes, I have a bad cold; the cough takes away my breath, and hurts me a great deal."

"Have you had this cough long?" I asked.

"Oh, yes a long time! Nearly a year now."

"And how did you catch it?"

"Ah!" he answered, "It was that terrible night – about this time last year – when one of the sheep went astray; my father keeps a few sheep upon the mountain, and that's the way we live. When he reckoned them that night there was one wanting, and he sent me to look for it."

"No doubt," I replied, "you felt the change from the warm peat fire in this close hut to the cold mountain blast."

"Oh, that I did! There was snow upon the ground, and the wind pierced me through and through; but I didn't mind it much, I was so anxious to find father's sheep."

"And did you find it?" I asked, with increasing interest.

“Oh, yes; I had a long weary way to go, but I never stopped till I found it; and I just laid in on my shoulder and carried it home that way.”

“And did not all at home rejoice to see you when you returned with the sheep?”

“Sure enough and they were! Father and mother, and the people around that had heard of our loss, all came in next morning to ask us about the sheep; for you know that the neighbours in these matters are kind to each other. Sorry they were, too, to hear that I was kept out the whole dark night; it was morning before I got home, and the end of it was that I caught the cold.”

Wonderful! I thought. Here is the whole gospel history: the sheep is lost; the father sends his son to seek for and recover it; the son goes willingly, suffers all without complaining, and in the end sacrifices his life to find the sheep.

Dear readers, as we read the above affecting and instructive narrative, our prayer was, Lord grant that many of the dear ones who read it may live to sing, with joyful hearts,

“Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God;
He, to save my soul from danger,
Interposed His precious blood.”

Little Gleaner 1893

THE OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S DAY REMARKABLY REWARDED

The writer remembers hearing of a barber, who lived at Bath in the last century. Passing a Church or Meeting one Sunday, he peeped in just as the minister was giving out his text: “*Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy*” (Exodus 20.8). He listened long enough to be convinced that he was constantly breaking the laws of God and man by working as a barber on Sunday. He became uneasy and went with a heavy

heart to his Sunday task. At length he took courage and opened his mind to the minister, who advised him to give up Sunday work and worship God. He replied that poverty would be the consequence. He had a flourishing trade, but it would likely all be lost. The minister told him that he must not confer with flesh and blood, but trust God, who requires from us no more than is for our good and never asks us to make any sacrifice but for which He will abundantly compensate; the command being absolute, admits of no relaxation.

He could not bring his mind to do it at once. Having consulted his customers, he soon found they would employ another. At length, after many a sleepless night spent in weeping and praying, he was determined to cast all his care on God. The more he reflected, the more his duty became apparent.

He discontinued Sunday work and went constantly and early to church or meeting. The consequences he foresaw, actually followed. His genteel customers left him, as he was nicknamed a Puritan or Methodist. He was obliged to give up his fashionable shop. Over the course of years, he became so reduced as to take a cellar under the old market-house and shave the farmers.

One Saturday evening at dusk, a stranger passing through town asked for a barber and was directed to the cellar opposite. Coming in hastily, he requested to be shaved quickly, as he did not like to violate the Sabbath! This touched the poor barber on a tender chord: he burst into tears and asked the stranger to lend him money to buy a candle, as it was not light enough to shave him with safety. He did so, considering in his mind the extreme poverty to which the poor man must be reduced, before he could make such a request.

When shaved, he said, "There must be something extraordinary in your history, which I have not now time to hear. Here is half-a-crown for you [a considerable sum of money]; when I return, I will call and investigate your case.

What is your name?"

"William Reed!" said the astonished barber.

"William Reed!" echoed the stranger. "By your dialect, you are from the West."

"Yes, Sir; from Kingston, near Taunton."

"William Reed, from Kingston, near Taunton! What was your father's name?"

"Thomas."

"Had he any brother?"

"Yes, Sir; one, after whom I was named; but he went to the Indies; and as we never heard from him, we suppose him to be dead."

"Come along, follow me!" said the stranger, "I am going to see a person who says his name is William Reed, of Kingston, near Taunton. Come and confront him. If you prove to be indeed him whom you say you are, I have glorious news for you: your uncle is dead, and has left you an immense fortune; which I will put you into possession of, when all legal doubts are removed."

They went and saw the pretended William Reed and proved him to be an impostor. The stranger, who was a pious attorney, was soon legally satisfied of the barber's identity. He told him that he had advertised for him in vain. Providence had now thrown him in his way in a most extraordinary manner, and he had great pleasure in transferring a great many thousand pounds to a worthy man, the rightful heir of the property.

Thus, man's extremity was God's opportunity. Had the poor barber possessed even a little money or even had credit for a candle, he might have remained unknown for years. But he trusted God, who never said: "*Seek ye Me in vain.*" He had read in the Bible (which he often consulted, though he seldom saw a newspaper), "*Trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before Him.*" "*In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths*": not perhaps in the way of

man's wisdom; no, He sees the end from the beginning; He weighs out all His dispensations in the balances of the sanctuary.

Author Unknown

The above is an interesting, instructive and encouraging instance of the honour God puts on His own institution and Word. Man should keep the Sabbath, and God has said: "*Them that honour Me I will honour.*" O, young people, keep the Lord's day! Remember Him who set the Lord's day apart for rest and public worship. It is good physically, and when you meet for public worship, who knows what the Spirit of God may do for and in you in a saving work of grace?

J. K. Popham

Friendly Companion 1927

THE MINISTRY OF SINGING

Our worship services are made up of four principal parts: the reading of the Scriptures, the expounding (preaching) of the Word, the making of request unto God (prayer), and the lifting up of the voice in song. Because they are done every service in the same order, there is a great danger that they become routine.

Perhaps the part to which we give so little heed is the reading of the Scriptures. Is it because only five or ten minutes of the service is comprised of the reading? In the days of Nehemiah we are told that the people: "*...stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the LORD their God one fourth part of the day*" (Nehemiah 9.3).

In the reading and expounding of the Scriptures, God ministers unto His people. Even in the prayer, which is expressed to God, yet in answering God ministers unto His people. But the singing is His people ministering unto God. But what can sinners minister to God? Praise! How often we read in the Psalms expressions such as: "*Make a joyful noise unto the LORD*" (Psalm 100.1) and "*Praise ye the LORD. Sing*

unto the LORD a new song, ... let them sing praises unto Him ... Let the high praises of God be in their mouth" (Psalm 149). Perhaps if you read carefully through the Psalms, you may note how often the exhortation to "*praise the Lord*" is found.

David the King of Israel has often been referred to as: "*the sweet psalmist of Israel*." We are told in 1 Chronicles 6.32 that he appointed certain of the Levites for the purpose of singing: "*And they ministered before the dwelling place of the tabernacle of the congregation with singing*."

WONDERS OF GOD'S CREATION

Many children are taught in school that humans are mammals and therefore a part of the animal kingdom. According to evolutionary theory, humans evolved from the same ancestor as apes. However, this is not what Scripture says, and the scientific evidence does not support that idea either.

Human bodies are unique. In Genesis 1.27 we read: "*So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them*." Thus, man was distinct from the rest of creation. Humans have unique features not found in any part of the animal kingdom. For example, human hands and feet differ greatly from those of apes. Apes are made for climbing and swinging through trees and walking on their knuckles, while humans are made for walking upright on two feet and working with their hands.

The human spine is designed differently from the spines of other creatures. When God made humans in His image, He perfectly engineered the curve in our backs to hold our heads upright and efficiently transfer our body weight to our hips. This design works with our other body structures so we can stand and move on two feet. No other creature shares the human body design, showing that God made us to be unique.

God engineered skulls differently in order to fit creatures' mode of living. A human's spine joins the bottom of the skull

so he or she can stand up. But an ape's spine joins the back of the skull for knuckle walking.

The ability to speak is uniquely human. Unlike animals, our brains, throats, mouths, and other body structures are designed for speech.

Human behaviour is unique. Emotional, intellectual, and spiritual behaviour is far more complex than that of any other living thing on the planet. For example, we are able to ponder, imagine, and make objects (such as art, architecture, etc.), and show compassion. But most important of all, we are different from other creatures in our relationship to God. Humans are the only beings that were created to worship God. *"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."* Man alone was created with a soul that will live forever.

Adapted from F. Sherwin, 2013

Guide to God's Animals – The Institute for Creation Research

"A CERTAIN MAN"

There are people in the Bible who have often taken our notice over the years as we expect they have yours; people who are not named, possibly only mentioned once, and yet are used of God to perform a very important work. In many cases, there is no reason to suppose they were even gracious people. They are brought on the scene, so to speak, that we may see the power of God in making whatsoever use of them He will. They are necessary to His purpose, and we hope it may be helpful to look at a few of them.

The first one we mention is a *"certain man"* (Genesis 37.15). He was, in fact, one of the most important men who ever entered into the life of Joseph. To go back a little, God had promised Abraham that his seed should be *"a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years"* (Genesis 15.13).

You all know about Joseph's dream and how his father sent him to see whether all was well with his brothers in Shechem

where they were feeding the flocks. Quite an ordinary thing for Jacob to do, and quite an ordinary and obedient response from young Joseph. He was seventeen years old. "*Children, obey your parents in all things.*" And can we not imagine how pleased Joseph was to go, for it seems that whilst he had helped with the flocks before (Genesis 37.2), he was not allowed to go on this occasion. So he leaves home, in quite an ordinary way, yet never to return to it again. But God does not tell him so, nor his father. No faith is needed here, for both were unaware of the purpose God had started to unfold.

So he comes to Shechem, only to find his brothers are gone somewhere else, and this is where the "*certain man*" comes in (verse 15). He finds Joseph wandering in the field and asks him who he is looking for. Joseph tells him. Now this "*certain man*" had information, but he did not realise what important information it was. In fact, the message came from God and then, as we should say, only in a casual way. But God's ways are not casual. Listen to this most important piece of information from the "*certain man's*" lips: "*They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan.*" That was all he said. As we read it, the man only overheard them talking among themselves, and had he been a little farther away, he would have missed hearing it. But no, over this narrow distance in the open field, God transmits a message. On what a slender thread the purposes of God were hung. His whole covenant promise to Abraham was in this information, for had the "*certain man*" not heard the brothers talking, Joseph would not have known which way to go and would have been obedient to his task if he had gone back home. Instead he goes on to Dothan and there finds his brothers and the flocks. All this in one verse – just one verse – verse 17. Nothing more is heard of the "*certain man*," but he has, without knowing it, done what God intended him to do. You see how simply and easily God "*doeth according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth*" (Daniel 4.35).

But before we leave Joseph, one more thought occurs. You know how, when any big event has taken place in your lives,

you go back over the details in your quieter moments. Do you not think that Joseph, especially when he was in so much trouble in the prison for such a long time, went back in his mind to that "*certain man*" in the field at Shechem? Without imputing wrong thoughts to him, we wonder whether he did not sometimes think: "If only I had not gone on to Dothan."

Whatever his thoughts, he in due time saw how necessary the "*certain man's*" information was to the ordering of God's purpose for him and his whole family and learnt to drop all his "ifs" when he said to his brothers: "*Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it for good*" (Genesis 50.20). Mary and Martha dropped their "if" also when Jesus raised their brother to life again. Oh, to have our matters so cleared up of God that we, too, may drop our "ifs."

L. R. Broome, Friendly Companion 1965

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

THE FAITH OF FAITHFUL ABRAHAM

In the Word of God, we read of Abraham that he: "*believed God*" (Romans 4.3). Not just that he believed that God is, but he believed the words which God had spoken to him, and trusted in God that He would bring them to pass. We read that the devils believe in the being of God and tremble, but they never love Him or trust in Him. We will not be saved just because we believe in the being of God. It may be that some of you suffer at school or college because other children mock you in a scornful way when they hear that you believe in God. We live in such a sad day, when many openly profess that they do not believe in God.

What is meant, then, when we read that "*Abraham believed God*" (Romans 4.3)? God spoke to Abraham, not just in his natural ears, but into his heart, and by God-given faith Abraham believed what God had spoken to him. He believed the Word of God. And how did this faith come? "*Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God*" (Romans 10.17).

As he received the Word of God by faith, so that same faith enabled him to obey God and to walk by faith, that is, to look for the fulfilment of God's promise.

Hebrews chapter 11 is a wonderful chapter, setting forth how true faith works in the hearts and lives of God's people. So we read of Abraham: *"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went"* (Hebrews 11.8). When we go on a journey, we always find the best route to take and have a fair idea of how we are going to get there. However, what is set forth here concerning Abraham is typical of the spiritual pilgrimage of every child of God. Ur of the Chaldees was an idolatrous place, where they worshipped false gods – so is this world in which we live, and also, so is the heart of every soul born into this world: *"Born in sins"* (John 9.34) and *"shapen in iniquity"* (Psalm 51.5). *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked"* (Jeremiah 17.9). It is only as the Lord God is pleased to work in the hearts of His people, showing them something of themselves, that they begin to understand the awful state and condition they are in by nature. When the Lord begins to communicate with them, they by faith begin to communicate with Him in prayer. *"God be merciful to me a sinner"* (Luke 18.13).

What a wonderful thing it is if the Lord has been pleased to communicate something of His Word to our souls, causing us to receive His Word into our hearts. What a wonderful thing it is if the Lord has taught us to pray unto Him. Abraham was "called by God." The Lord's people are also "called by God," called by His free and sovereign grace. They are called out of this world which lies in wickedness, called to forsake all, and called to follow Him; called to follow Him unto the inheritance of heaven. This is faith. May we be found amongst that blessed number.

Next month, if the Lord will, we hope to speak something of how Abraham had to be taught to “*walk by faith, not by sight*” (2 Corinthians 5.7).

A. T. Pickett

THE MUTE BOY'S EXAMINATION

A clergyman once paid a visit to a deaf and dumb asylum in London, for the express purpose of examining the children in the knowledge they possessed of divine truth. A little boy, on this occasion, was asked in writing: “Who made the world?” He took up the chalk, and wrote underneath the question: “*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*” The Clergyman then inquired in a similar manner: “Why did Jesus Christ come into the world?” The little fellow wrote: “*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*” A third question was then proposed, eminently adapted to call his most powerful feeling into exercise: “Why were you born deaf and dumb, while I can hear and speak?” “Never,” said an eye-witness, “shall I forget the look of holy resignation and chastened sorrow which sat on his countenance as he took up the chalk and wrote: ‘*Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight.*’”

Gospel Gleanings for Young People

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about THE SABBATH DAY. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail. (See page 74 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. Write out the fourth of the Ten Commandments, which refers to the Sabbath day. (Exodus 20.8)
2. What could not be done on the Sabbath day? (Exodus 31.15)

3. Numbers 15.36 records that, while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, a man was stoned. What had he been doing?
4. Why did God set apart the seventh day of the week as a day of rest? (Genesis 2.3; Exodus 20.11)
5. What did Jesus say it is right to do on the Sabbath day? (Matthew 12.12)
6. Nehemiah was a godly man who was grieved at the profaning of the Sabbath. What were the "men of Tyre" doing? (Nehemiah 13)
7. Give an example of a work of mercy which Jesus said was lawful to do on the Sabbath day. (Luke 14)
8. The Pharisees found fault with the Lord Jesus because He performed miracles on the Sabbath. What three ailments does Luke record were healed on the Sabbath? (Luke 6, 13, 14)
9. "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2.27). Say in your own words what you think this means.
10. There is one Psalm which is headed, "A Psalm or Song for the Sabbath day." Write out the first verse.

ANSWERS TO MARCH QUESTIONS

1. A stone.
2. Jona (or Jonas) was Peter's father; Andrew was his brother.
3. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."
4. Jesus told Peter he was to catch a fish and in its mouth would be a piece of money.
5. "Lovest thou Me?"
6. Peter wept because, as Jesus had forewarned, he had three times denied Jesus. (Luke 22.55-62)
7. Peter had seen in the vision a great sheet, knit at the four corners, wherein were all kinds of beasts, creeping things and fowls.
8. "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." (Acts 3.6)
9. Twice. (Acts 5.18-19 and Acts 12.5-10)
10. "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5.8). Peter caught 153 "great fishes" (John 21.11).

Contributed

THE DEATH OF THE LAMB OF GOD

Come children, and learn of the infinite grace
Of Jesus, in coming to die;
He left His bright throne, that all-glorious place,
His beautiful home in the sky.

O! think of the Lamb, who on Calvary died,
And died for such sinners as we;
The thorns on His brow, and the spear in His side,
When He suffered and bled on the tree.

Ah! never was sorrow so bitter this,
The anguish He suffered below;
The dear Son of God had done nothing amiss;
For others He tasted such woe.

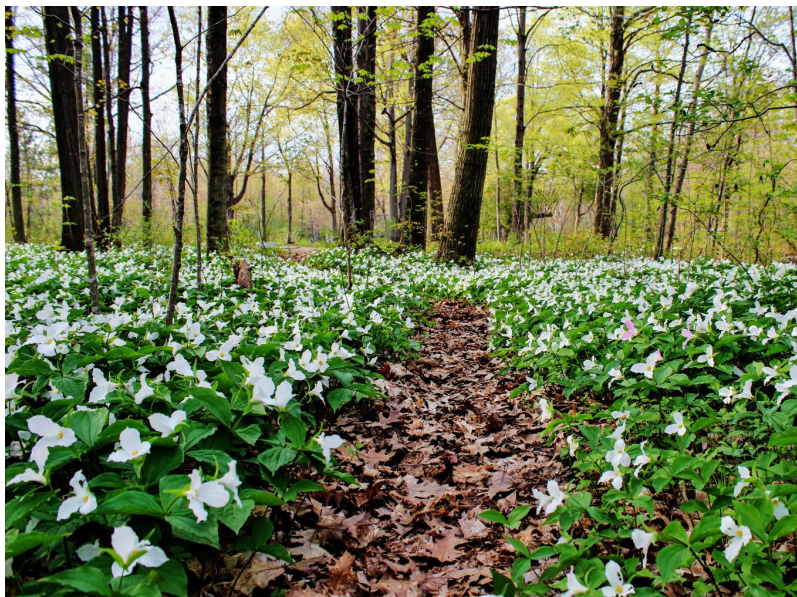
O! think of His love, when He gave up His life
For sinners so guilty as we;
'Twas for them He finished the conflict and strife;
'Twas for them He bled on the tree.

Dear little ones, think, is it nothing to you,
The tale of His wonderful grace?
He'll come in the clouds; will you joyfully view,
Or tremble to look on His face?

O may you be led to the Saviour who died,
And died for such sinners as we;
Find shelter from wrath in His once riven side,
Find health in His wounds on the tree.

Young People's Hymnal

The Friendly Companion



Trillium Flowers in North American Woodland

“The flowers appear on the earth ...”
(Song of Solomon 2. 12)

May 2017

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

The month of May, for those who live in the Northern Hemisphere, is a time of emerging. The trees begin to bud, and the flowers appear on the earth. The strong rays of the sun have warmed the ground, preparing it to receive the seed.

In many places in the Northern Hemisphere, the month of May is a time of sowing. The farmers are busy in the fields sowing their crops. Perhaps your family has a garden plot in which you sow vegetable seeds.

The Lord Jesus once told a parable about sowing. He began by saying: *"Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, ... Some fell upon stony places, ... And some fell among thorns; But other fell into good ground, ..."* (Matthew 13.3-8).

The parable has four principal parts: the sower, the seed, the ground, and the fruit.

The Lord is the chief Sower, while His apostles and ministers are appointed to sow after Him. He told His disciples that the seed is *"the Word of God."* The seed is pure and clean. We read in Psalm 126 that it is *"precious seed."* It is the best seed. This seed is cast, or sown, through the preaching and reading of the Word.

The hearts of men are the ground upon which the seed is cast. The first ground that Jesus mentioned was called *"way side."* He explained that the way side ground was hard, and those hard hearts could not understand the Word. We remember once hearing it explained that those hearts were hard because of wicked thoughts continually passing upon them. The Lord tells us that the wicked one (the devil) comes and takes the Word away from the way side hearers.

The second ground was called *"stony."* This ground provided some crevices where the seed might be hidden for a time from the birds of the air, so that it could sprout. It is a picture of many who seem to enjoy hearing the Word of God until reproach or persecution comes. Then they are proven to have no root, so the Word does not profit them.

The third ground was called “thorny.” Here too, the Word would spring up, only to be choked by the thorny plants, called “*the deceitfulness of riches*” and “*the cares of this world*.”

The fourth ground was called “good ground.” The Lord said that these are they: “*which in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience*.”

How was it that these hearts were made good ground? This was the work of the Holy Spirit. No man’s heart is good ground by nature. The Lord gives His people a new heart that receives His Word and hides it within.

With the first three grounds, the seed fell “*by the way side*,” “*upon*” the stony places, and “*among*” the thorns. In contrast, we are told in Matthew 13.23 that the seed fell “*into the good ground*.” May God grant to us each this vital difference!

OUR FRONT COVER

One of the signs of spring is the appearance of flowers upon the earth. How they brighten the bleak landscape that winter has left behind! The fields of daffodils and gardens of tulips bring joy to mankind.

In some of the woods of North America, the trilliums appear like a carpet of green and white under a canopy of trees. Prior to their emergence, the ground was covered with brown decaying leaves. Each stem of the trillium bears one flower and three leaves. There are nearly forty types of trilliums, the most common being the white trillium. The most colourful is the painted trillium, whose white flowers have deep pink or purple stripes.

In the Song of Solomon, the Lord speaks to His church: “*Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; ... and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell*.” What a picture of the resurrection: life from the dead! May the Lord grant that we may hear His voice bidding

us to rise up and come away from our ruined state in Adam, from our sinful past, and from the world that lieth in wickedness. Oh, to appear as those flowers in His garden!

A SERMON WRITTEN ON A PANE OF GLASS

The well-known preacher George Whitefield stopped for several days at the house of a general in Providence, Rhode Island. The general, his wife, his son, and three daughters were without grace. Whitefield departed from his usual custom of speaking to each individual in the house where he stayed concerning the welfare of their souls.

The last evening came, and on the last night he was to spend there, he retired to rest. The flesh said, "Do not speak to these people; they are so good, and so kind, that you could not say a harsh thing to them." He rose and prayed. The sweat ran down his brow. He was in fear and anxiety.

At last, a happy thought struck him. He took a diamond, went up to the window, and wrote these words upon the glass: "*One thing thou lackest*" (Mark 10.21). He did not have courage to say a word to those in the house but went on his way.

No sooner had Mr. Whitefield gone than the general, who had a great regard for him, went into the room he had occupied. The first thing that caught his attention was the sentence upon the window: "*One thing thou lackest.*" That was exactly his case. The Spirit of God blessed it to his heart.

A descendant of his family later kept in her possession the pane of glass with the inscription of warning.

(The Gospel Echo)

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**DAVID COUNTS THE PEOPLE**

Israel had become a mighty nation while David was king. He wondered just how many people there were and how large his army was. One day he asked Joab, his chief captain, to go through all the land and count the people.

After many months Joab came back. He told David the number of men who were able to fight. At once David knew he had been wrong to count the people. He should trust in God alone and not upon a large army. David prayed: *"I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech Thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly."*

The Lord sent the prophet Gad to tell David to choose one of three things: either three years of famine, or three months to be destroyed by the enemy, or three days of pestilence by the *"sword of the LORD."* What a hard choice it was! David said: *"Let me fall now into the hand of the LORD; for very great are His mercies."* So the Lord sent pestilence upon the land.

QUESTIONS:

1. What did David ask Joab to do? (3 words)
2. Into the hand of Whom did David want to fall? (2 words)
3. What did the Lord send upon the land? (1 word)

Please send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail. (See page 98 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

ANSWERS TO APRIL QUESTIONS

1. Gently.
2. In a great forest.
3. An oak.

*“...let us fall
now into the
hand of the
LORD; for
His mercies
are great.”*

2 Samuel 24.14

BIBLE LESSONS**THE CONVERSION OF LYDIA**

Although God had shut the door for Paul and his company to preach the gospel in Asia and Bithynia, He opened the door into Europe. What a great comfort it is to the people of God when He makes known His will to them!

Later Paul would write in his Epistle to the Corinthians: *"For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries"* (1 Corinthians 16.9).

Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke were eager to set sail from Troas and cross over to Macedonia. Arriving at Neapolis, the port city, they made their way to one of the chief cities, called Philippi.

While there were no synagogues in the city, Paul and his company heard of a gathering outside the city. On the Sabbath day, they went out to the river side, where a few women had gathered to pray. The Bible tells us that there: *"... prayer was wont to be made."* Such prayer God will hear and answer. All around them the people were worshipping idols, yet these women had been taught to worship God. However, they needed a teacher to instruct them more perfectly in the way to worship Him.

Little could these women have known when they set out for the river that Sabbath morning, that in answer to their prayers, God had sent His servants to teach them. The four strangers came and sat down with them.

Paul, the chief spokesman, began to speak of the Lord Jesus. One of the women who worshipped God, heard him: *"...whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."* Her name was Lydia, and she was from the city of Thyatira.

As Lydia believed on the Lord Jesus, she followed His commandment and was baptized. Those of her household, who believed on the Lord Jesus like Lydia, were also baptized. Thus Lydia was the first convert from Europe.

Lydia manifested her love to the Lord by inviting His servants to stay with her. Being a seller of purple, a very costly dye, she was likely a woman of wealth, which enabled her to provide for Paul and his three companions. How humbly she asked: *"If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there."* Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke may have been hesitant, but Lydia constrained them. What a provision God had made for them in this distant country!

We are not told how long they remained in Philippi, but they soon found opposition. This time it was not from the Jewish leaders, as on their first journey, but from a young girl who was possessed by an evil spirit. There were certain men who used her affliction to make themselves wealthy. They convinced people to pay great sums of money to hear her prophesy their futures.

As the servants of God went to the place of prayer each day, she followed them, crying out: *"These men are the servants of the most high God which shew unto us the way of salvation."*

After some days Paul was very grieved. He turned to the poor girl and said to the evil spirit: *"I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her."* Immediately, the evil spirit departed.

You can read about this in Acts chapter 16 verses 10 to 18.

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Paul say was opened to him? (5 words)
2. To what city did Paul and his companions come?
3. What did God do to the heart of Lydia?
4. What did she do when she heard Paul preach? (7 words)
5. What did the young girl say Paul and his companions were? (6 words) What did they shew? (4 words)

Please send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail. (See page 98 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

ANSWERS TO APRIL QUESTIONS

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Timotheus (or Timothy). | 4. The Holy Ghost. |
| 2. My own son in the faith. | 5. Come over into |
| 3. The Holy Scriptures. | Macedonia, and help us. |
-

ROOTS: A LESSON FROM NATURE

Every tree lives and grows upon its own roots. We may say that the life of a tree is in the roots. The roots draw up the moisture from the earth. Sap rises from the roots and spreads through the tree, making the leaves burst forth in all their beauty, and finally loading the trees with fruit.

How much depends on the roots! The tree must have suitable soil in which to grow, it must have sufficient moisture, and it must have plenty of air. Then we may say: "What a lovely tree!"

As it is with the life of a tree, so it is with our souls. We must have the root of life implanted within us. We cannot give ourselves this root. In the Bible it is called "*being born again*" (1 Peter 1.23). When a man or woman or child is born again, they have a new root planted in them. And this new root which God puts in them can never die; it can never be cut off. It will never die because those who are born again are united to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is called "*the Root and the Offspring of David*" (Revelation 22.16). So, if we have Jesus Christ in us, "*the Hope of glory*" (Colossians 1.27), then we have a root within us that can never perish.

Godly Job said of himself that "*the root of the matter*" was found in him. (Job 19.28). This reminds us of an incident that took place in a nursery garden. It is recorded in Mr. Huntington's life that a lady, who mistook him for the gardener, asked him for a plant with a root that would last. He replied, "You will find that in the Book of Job." He said that if she had that root in her, it would last forever.

If this root is in us, it will bring forth fruit after its own kind: love, faith, righteousness, godly sorrow for sin, and a life and

walk becoming the Gospel of the grace of God. Love is spoken of as the greatest of all fruits: *"For love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God"* (1 John 4.7). We may speak of love as a root that bears all manner of good fruits.

What a very great mercy it is to have a good root! We read of some in the Bible who brought forth *"no fruit to perfection"* (Luke 8.14). They withered and died, for they had *"no root in themselves"* (Mark 4.17). We hope many of our dear young friends may be led to pray very earnestly to the Lord that He will put a living root within them, a root that will never die; a root that will grow and bring forth fruit to the glory of God, the eternal good of their own souls, and the good of their fellow creatures.

S. Boorne (Little Gleaner)

REAPING AN HUNDREDFOLD

More than a hundred years ago, before railways were introduced, a stage coach used to run every day between Glasgow and Greenock. One day a lady, who was travelling in this coach, noticed a boy walking barefoot, looking very tired as he struggled to get along. She asked the coachman to take him up and give him a seat and said that she would pay for it. When they arrived at Greenock, which is a seaport town, she asked the boy what he had come there for. He said that he wished to be a sailor and hoped one of the captains would hire him. She gave him half a crown, saying that she hoped God would bless his efforts and that he would succeed.

After this, twenty years passed. One afternoon the coach was going along the same road, returning to Glasgow. Among the passengers was a sea captain. When they reached just about the same spot where the lady had ordered the boy to be taken up, the captain observed an old lady on the road, walking very slowly, and looking very weary. He asked the

driver to put her in the coach, as there was an empty seat, and said that he would pay for her.

Shortly after, as they were changing horses, all the passengers got out except the captain and the old lady. As they were alone, the lady thanked the captain for his kindness in giving her a seat, as she was unable to pay for one. He said he had always felt a pity for poor, tired foot-travellers, for twenty years before, when he was a poor boy travelling on foot near this very place, some kind-hearted lady had ordered the coachman to take him up and paid for his seat.

"I remember that very well," she said, "for I am that lady; but my condition is very much changed. Then I was very well off, but now, by the bad conduct of my own son, I have been brought to poverty."

Then the captain shook hands with her and said how glad he was to see her.

"God has indeed prospered me," he said, "and I am able now to retire and live on my property. I will arrange for you to receive twenty-five pounds every year as long as you live."

Thus, God gave her back again more than a hundredfold what she gave in pity to that poor boy.

Dr. Richard Newton, The Little Gleaner 1940

WONDERS OF GOD'S CREATION

THE SKELETAL SYSTEM: A STRONG SUPPORT

God has given you a framework of bones to support your body. Your bony skeleton helps you move, protects your insides, and supports the soft tissues, like skin and muscles. Bones are made of both harder and softer materials in just the right combination to provide maximum efficiency, strength, flexibility, and endurance. If your bones were hard all the way through, you would have very limited motion, like a stiff robot. But if the bones were soft and flexible throughout, your frame would not hold up under the weight of your body. The careful balance of strength and flexibility in the composition of bones

is one of the amazing characteristics of the human skeleton, showing God's wisdom in His creation.

The outer shell of bone is constructed a lot like concrete. The "cement" part is a substance called apatite, a medium-hard mineral, with properties similar to marble. The apatite is supported by a kind of "rebar" called collagen. These fibres are connected in a kind of mesh grid that is actually harder to pull apart than steel, making the bones stronger and more flexible than concrete.

The insides of bones are made of spongy material that not only absorbs shocks, but also braces the outer shell. This material allows us to bend and twist more than if there was just the hard outer shell of bone. The spongy bone is made of columns of bone tissue with red bone marrow between. The bone marrow is soft, fatty tissue that produces blood cells and platelets that are essential for the body to function. Calcium and iron are stored inside the bones.

The bones of the skull serve as a shield to protect your brain. They play an important part in the shape of your facial features. The bones of the skull are separated during infancy and childhood, while the head is still growing. They slowly bind together as the body matures, providing added strength and support in adulthood.

About thirty-three individual bones, called vertebrae, make up the vertebral column supporting your neck, back, and lower torso. These small bones provide flexibility to the body, allowing you to turn your head, twist your body, or bend over to put on your shoes. They also protect the spinal cord, which is a delicate part of the central nervous system.

Twelve pairs of bones called ribs wrap around your chest, protecting the vital organs like the heart and lungs. The top seven ribs connect directly to the sternum or breast bone. While the ribs form a protective cage, they are also flexible, allowing the chest to expand for breathing.

The bones of the arms, wrists, and hands are wonderfully designed for precise and coordinated movements. Human

hands possess superior capabilities that are fundamentally distinct from those of any other creature. Scientists have tried to replicate the human hand using robotics, but their best efforts still fall short of the exquisite God-created design.

The bones of the legs, ankles, and feet are just as amazing as any other part of the body. They are specially designed to meet the demands of walking, jogging, running, balancing, or climbing. The arched shape of the foot acts as a spring to absorb the shock of walking.

God's Word declares: *"I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well"* (Psalm 139.14).

Adapted from Guide to the Human Body, The Institute for Creation Research, 2015

GATHERED BY THE WAY

William Hone was a writer and bookseller. He had been taught to read only from the Bible when he was young. Then he turned against the Word of God and earned a reputation as a leader of unbelievers. Remarkably, in later life he was convicted of his sins, humbled before God, and became a firm advocate of the faith he had so bitterly hated. The Lord used several circumstances to bring about this happy result. Among them was the following incident.

While riding through the country one day, he saw a little girl sitting at the door of a cottage. She was reading a book, which he noticed was the Bible. He stopped and said to the girl, "I suppose you are performing your required task."

"Required task?" she asked.

"Yes, I suppose your mother has given you so much to read," he answered. "I don't suppose you would read the Bible unless your mother had told you to do so; it is a task, isn't it?"

The girl then replied, "Oh no, sir, I only wish I could read it all the day long. It is my joy and delight when my work is done

to get a few minutes to read this lovely Book.”

This simple testimony touched the heart of the hardened unbeliever as nothing else had done. It was with William Hone as it had once been with Job when he said, “*God maketh my heart soft*” (Job 23.16). Before long he was brought out of darkness into God’s marvellous light. Later he wrote a tribute of praise to God, of which the following is the opening verse:

“The proudest heart that ever beat
Has been subdued in me;
The wildest will that ever rose
To scorn Thy cause or aid Thy foes
Is quelled, my God, by Thee.”

J. Whitecross

THE MINISTRY OF SINGING (2)

It is very interesting and instructive to mark the first time we read of a certain truth or activity in the Word of God. Do you know where we first read of God’s people singing praises unto Him? It was on the banks of the Red Sea. No doubt there was music before this, because we read in Genesis chapter four of a man named Jubal, who was the father of those who played the harp and organ.

In Exodus chapter fifteen we read: “*Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, ... saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.*”

They sang of God’s power: the power of His Word, the power of His right hand, and the power of His wind, which made a way for His people to pass through the sea. That same wind blew the waves over Pharaoh’s army and covered them, so there was not one left. What a deliverance for Israel from what they thought would be certain death!

On the Egyptian side of the Red Sea, the tongues of the Israelites had been filled with murmuring and sighing against

their God. However, in His mercy, God taught them a new song: A SONG OF PRAISE.

EARLY DAYS OF WILLIAM BOURNE

To all who fear the Lord, it is pleasant to observe the first budding forth of desires after eternal life. Desire is very quiet, yet it shows where the affections are set: *“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”* (Matthew 6.21). Yes, when the treasure is felt to be in heaven, thither will the desires, affections, and prayers be going, for *“so is every one that is born of the Spirit”* (John 3.8).

William Bourne was born near Appledore, in Kent, in 1858. His parents sought to instruct him, according to their ability, in the ways of the Lord, and their labour was not in vain. At the early age of four years, William became deeply concerned about the salvation of his soul. His sins became a heavy burden. He dreaded the thought of meeting that great and holy God of whom he had heard.

Not knowing Jesus Christ, the sinner’s only Refuge, he would sometimes think of hiding himself in the earth, in the sea, or in some secret place from the vengeance of God. But soon he learned to know the truth of that searching Scripture: *“The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good”* (Proverbs 15.3).

“God is in heaven. Can He see
When I am doing wrong?
Yes, that He can; He looks at me,
All day and all night long.”

Another thing that occupied and terrified the mind of little William was the thought of eternity. Often when only five or six years of age, he would ponder over this tremendous subject. He became lost in the thought that after hundreds and millions of years, eternity would be no nearer an end.

William's mother attended a Wesleyan chapel, while his father attended a chapel where the Gospel of sovereign grace was preached. Young as he was, he asked to be allowed to go with his father, because his convictions seemed deepened when he heard the truth preached by such ministers. When they spoke of the sinner's ruin and of God's judgment, they seemed to speak of him. The Word was with power. On one special occasion, he hid his face behind the seat, because he thought the minister would see that he was the sinner whose naughty ways were being described.

The Holy Spirit, who is the all-sufficient Teacher of God's elect, often hides these things from the wise and prudent and reveals them unto babes. The fear of God in the heart of young or old will make a conscience tender and be a check against all wrong speaking, doing, and thinking.

"This fear's the spirit of faith,
A confidence that's strong;
An unctuous light to all that's right,
A bar to all that's wrong."

We would think young William possessed this fear, although he did not always do right, neither was he yet brought to a clear knowledge of Jesus Christ. At about eight years of age he told a wilful untruth, but the fear of the Lord caused him to abhor himself on account of it and dread the wrath of a holy God. When passing through the fields from the Sabbath School, he feared lest the ground should open, and he should sink into the bottomless pit.

When he was nine years of age, he attended a Sabbath School where he heard that God wished all people to give Him their hearts. This he tried hard to do, but found to his sorrow that he had no might; the labour was in vain. He had yet to learn the truth of the words of the Lord Jesus, "*Without Me ye can do nothing*" (John 15.5), and his teachers had not yet learned this lesson for themselves. They were therefore unable to guide his feet into the way of peace.

Finding the impossibility of doing what he was told to do, he thought the better way would be to give up all efforts to be religious until he was thirty years of age. Then he thought he should be better able to understand, and God would be satisfied and pleased with his promise to serve Him. But God, Who is rich in mercy, did not allow him to remain in this state of ignorance. God taught him to feel more deeply the wickedness of his own heart, and he became more and more miserable under a sense of his lost and helpless condition. The terrors of God seemed to set themselves against him. He would then creep into a barn or other secret place to cry for mercy and to read the Scriptures. In his trouble he frequently turned to the seventh chapter of Romans, because he found in it some consolation for his soul.

At twelve years of age he lost his mother by death and had to move to a village where God's pure Gospel of salvation by grace alone was not preached. Young William, still not fully understanding the difference, decided to attend the Wesleyan chapel. Here he witnessed a scene of religious excitement and carnal zeal. At the close of the service one Lord's day evening, he was persuaded to attend the prayer meeting, after which one came to him and asked: "Do you want to get to heaven?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"Then you must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and that you are a sinner," he said.

"I understand what you say, but I cannot feel it as I wish to," replied William.

"You must come down to the front and kneel beside me," said the zealous worker. He went, and all present assembled around him, some praying and some trying to persuade him to believe he was saved, until he got into such confusion and fear that he scarcely knew where he was or what he said. At last, urged on with excitement and fear, to satisfy them he said he felt better and believed. Then they began to shout and praise God that they had another brother. When he escaped from

this God-dishonouring company, he found himself not only as dark as ever, but with the additional guilt of having told a lie.

Much darkness of mind, smarting of a guilty conscience, and misery followed. Those workers truly had zeal, *“but not according to knowledge”* (Romans 10.2). They were trying to do what the Holy Spirit alone could do. It is the work of the Spirit to bear witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. Had William been without the fear of God, these persons might have charmed him into the assurance and joy of a false hope, like that of the stony-ground hearer (Matthew 13.20,21), or the foolish virgins who were left to perish at last.

He was then persuaded to attend special meetings to help new believers. He tried to be as cheerful as he could when among them but groaned in secret before God when away from them. How his soul longed for a revelation of pardoning mercy! Yet it seemed to him that he had not repented enough to find mercy. In this way he went on for a few years, carrying his Testament in his pocket, reading it when he could, and crying to God for mercy.

God waits to be gracious. He waits His own time to show mercy. *“Blessed are they that mourn,”* said Jesus, *“for they shall be comforted”* (Matthew 6.4). One day in June 1876, when William was working in the fields, such a sweet hope sprang up in his soul as quite surprised him. He took his New Testament from his pocket and began to read. Light broke in upon his soul, and the love of God filled his heart. He rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Every precious promise of the Word seemed to be his own. All nature seemed changed; the trees and beasts seemed to praise the Lord. He at once saw and felt that he had an interest in the love of God and salvation through Jesus Christ alone.

“I could now see,” he says, “that I was not saved by works, sincerity, nor even by repentance.” This revelation of a Saviour’s love was by the Holy Spirit, according to the words of the Lord Jesus who said: *“When the Comforter is come, whom I*

will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me" (John 15.26).

Thomas Lawson
Friendly Companion 1963

TAUGHT OF GOD

George Whitefield was preaching in a certain place where a man had loaded his pockets with stones to throw at the minister. He waited with patience while Mr. Whitefield prayed, but when he named his text, the man pulled a stone out of his pocket. He held it in his hand, waiting for a good opportunity to throw it. But God sent a word to his heart, and the stone dropped from his hand. After the sermon he went to Mr. Whitefield and told him, "Sir, I came to hear you this day with a view to break your head, but the Spirit of God, through your ministry, has given me a broken heart."

The Banner of Truth

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

THE FAITH OF FAITHFUL ABRAHAM (2)

This month I would like to show you how the faith God gave to Abraham enabled him to forsake all and follow the Lord.

For many years Abraham lived in Ur of the Chaldees. Here, we assume, he was born and brought up, and had laboured. Here he would have been an idol worshipper, not knowing the Lord God Almighty.

But a day came when the Word of the Lord came to him and entered into his heart. The Lord told him that he must leave his home, his kindred, his father's house, his friends, and his false gods, and go to a land that the Lord would show him. What did Abraham do? He obeyed! One thing stands out in the life of Abraham: he obeyed God. I would like to say that he always obeyed God, but we know that on occasions, as a

sinner, he failed in this. However, it is noticeable that when God spoke to Abraham, He gave Abraham faith to believe His Word and to obey Him.

In Hebrews 11 verse 8 we read: *“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.”*

When I read these Biblical accounts, I try to imagine what it must have been like to be there and to put myself into those various situations. Abraham had to forsake all and follow the Lord, wherever the Lord would lead him. He was constrained to trust in God and not to lean upon his own understanding. He trusted that God would lead him forth by the right way to the right place, and would supply every need that he had along the way.

What we see in the case of Abraham is true with every child of God. In hearing the Lord's voice, who calls them by His almighty grace, they must also forsake all and follow Him. They must forsake all their own self-righteousness, all their own wisdom, and all their own thoughts. A hymn writer speaks of the followers of the Lord in this way: “Who leave the world's deceitful shore, and leave it to return no more.” In his book *The Pilgrim's Progress*, John Bunyan tells of Christian, who had to leave the City of Destruction to flee from the wrath to come and to seek the heavenly city. In 2 Corinthians 6 verses 17 and 18 we read: *“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.”*

The Lord works in the hearts of His people by His Holy Spirit. He teaches them the vanity of all things here below, the emptiness of this world, the wickedness of their own hearts, and the great need they have of salvation by grace. It is by His grace alone that they flee to a precious Jesus, the almighty Saviour, who alone can save them from all their sins and the

wrath to come. It is by faith wrought in their hearts that they strive to enter in at the strait gate and to be found in that narrow way which leads to eternal life. Faith has as its object the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. *"Wherefore ... , let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith"* (Hebrews 12.1,2).

There are too many who think that they do not need to forsake all, nor separate themselves from this world. They think that they do not need to suffer the innumerable trials of walking by faith as Abraham did, and yet they deceive themselves, believing that they will go to heaven. May the Lord save us from such a vain hope. The Lord Jesus said, *"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me"* (Matthew 16.24).

Like Abraham of old, if we are found amongst the Lord's dear people, we must by faith truly forsake all and follow Him. May faith be given to look to Him and trust in Him alone.

A. Pickett

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about COVETOUSNESS. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail. (See page 98 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. From the tenth commandment, write out a list of the six things belonging to our neighbour which are given as examples of the things we should not covet. (Exodus 20.17)
2. What did Achan covet? (Joshua 7.21)
3. Write out the warning Jesus spoke before beginning the parable of the rich man to whom God said, "Thou fool." (Luke 12.15)

4. The Apostle Paul writes of something which by coveting after some had “pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” What was it? (1 Timothy 6.10)
5. What did King Ahab covet, which belonged to his neighbour Naboth? (1 Kings 21.2)
6. What evil plan did Jezebel devise to obtain what Ahab could not lawfully have? (1 Kings 21)
7. Who coveted his neighbour’s wife, and ended up having her husband killed? (2 Samuel 11)
8. Why was it wrong for Achan to desire the things in question 2? (Joshua 6)
9. What other name does the Apostle Paul give to covetousness in Colossians 3?
10. In two cases in 1 Corinthians the word “covet” is used in another sense of “something good to be sought after.” Write down the things which *should* be coveted.

ANSWERS TO APRIL QUESTIONS

1. “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.”
 2. No work could be done on the Sabbath.
 3. He had been gathering sticks on the Sabbath.
 4. The seventh day was instituted as a day of rest because God rested from His work of creation on the seventh day.
 5. “It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days.”
 6. The men of Tyre were bringing fish and all manner of ware into the city of Jerusalem and selling it on the Sabbath. (Nehemiah 13.16)
 7. “Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day?” (Luke 14.5)
 8. A man with a withered hand, a woman bowed down for eighteen years, a man which had dropsy. (Luke 6.7-11; 13. 11-16; 14.1-6)
 9. The Sabbath was given by God for man’s good because He saw a regular day of rest was necessary.
 10. “It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High.” (Psalm 92.1)
-

YOU HATH HE QUICKENED

If there's one quickened sinner here,
You must remember well,
Once you were dead and loved the road
That leads to death and hell.

You know that this is all of grace,
In which you had no hand;
'Twas God that made thy dead soul live,
And 'tis by grace you stand.

"You hath He quickened," happy souls,
But has He quickened all?
How many are there here this night
Still dead in Adam's fall! –

And dead for ever will remain
Without God's special grace,
But if not born again, poor souls!
You'll never see His face,

O may the Lord for Jesus' sake
Our many sins forgive;
Come down, Almighty Spirit, come,
And make dead sinners live.

Daniel Herbert

The Friendly Companion



“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit
before a fall” (Proverbs 16.18)

June 2017

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE**By J.R. Rutt**

Dear Children and Young People,

As we address you this month, we would draw your attention to something that is very important: your immortal soul! The term 'immortal' means that it cannot be destroyed; it will live forever. When our soul leaves our body, we die. The soul, or spirit, returns to God who gave it. We all have an appointed time to die! Upon death, we must appear before the judgment seat of Christ. What a solemn appearing that will be! The Scriptures declare that: "... *it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment*" (Hebrews 9.27).

We take food and drink daily to nourish our bodies; we exercise our bodies to keep them fit and healthy; we read and study to exercise our minds. But what about our never-dying souls? Is your soul alive? You may say, "What a strange question to ask!" Nevertheless, it is an important question, because your soul needs to be given life by God. Our Lord Jesus Christ said: "*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*" (John 3.3). In our natural birth, as we are born to our parents, we are spiritually dead, as the Scriptures say: "*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me*" (Psalm 51.5). Because we are sinners, we must die, but O my dear young friends, are we ready to die? Have we been born again?

You may say to these questions, "How do I know?" If you have been born again by the Holy Spirit, you will have a spiritual appetite. You will know what it is to hunger and thirst spiritually. Just as you know what it is to hunger for food and thirst for drink, so you will know this spiritual appetite. This appetite will make you pray and seek and search for something for your soul. We read in Holy Scripture: "*And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live*

by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live” (Deuteronomy 8.3).

My dear young friends, have you been humbled to feel that you are a poor needy sinner? Has the Holy Spirit shown you that Jesus is the bread and water of life? Does the Holy Spirit lead you to search the Holy Scriptures that you may be enlightened in your darkness? Does He bring you to long for liberty in your soul? Never forget those precious words of Jesus Christ: *“And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”* An earthly father loves to give good gifts to his children, and Jesus says: *“... how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”* (Luke 11:9-13)

You cannot live spiritually by natural bread. Thus, may the Lord give you a true spiritual hunger and thirst after Himself.

OUR FRONT COVER

What enjoyment one can experience in flying a kite! What lessons one can learn as well! I remember reading of a boy whose kite rose to such a height that it was hardly visible. When asked by an elderly man how he knew his kite was still there, he replied, “I can feel its tug.” Likewise, those who seek the Lord cannot see Him, yet they feel a strange, mysterious pull that draws them after Him. He draws them with feelings of hunger and thirst. They hunger for the BREAD of LIFE and they thirst for the WATER of LIFE. He draws them with the strong band of love. Of course, the Holy Spirit is the author of this drawing.

One of our hymnwriters, Mr. John Newton, wrote a poem comparing the kite to our proud hearts. What a lesson is here! We hope that as you read it, you may receive the instruction given.

THE KITE; PRIDE MUST HAVE A FALL

Once on a time a paper kite
Was mounted to a wondrous height,
Where, giddy with its elevation,
It thus expressed self-admiration:
See how yon crowds of gazing people
Admire my flight above the steeple;
How would they wonder if they knew
All that a kite like me can do?
Were I but free, I'd take a flight,
And pierce the clouds beyond their sight,
But, ah! like a poor prisoner bound,
My string confines me near the ground:
I'd brave the eagle's towering wing,
Might I but fly without a string.
It tugged and pulled, while thus it spoke,
To break the string; at last it broke.
Deprived at once of all its stay,
In vain it tried to soar away;
Unable its own weight to bear,
It fluttered downward through the air;
Unable its own course to guide,
The winds soon plunged it in the tide.
Ah! foolish kite, thou hadst no wing,
How couldst thou fly without a string!
My heart replied, "O Lord, I see
How much this kite resembles me!
Forgetful that by Thee I stand,
Impatient of Thy ruling hand;
How oft I've wished to break the lines
Thy wisdom for my lot assigns!
How oft indulged a vain desire
For something more, or something higher!
And, but for grace and love divine,
A fall thus dreadful had been mine."

J. Newton

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**DAVID BUILDS AN ALTAR**

Thousands of men died in the pestilence that the LORD sent upon Israel. David saw the angel of the LORD with a sword “*stretched out over Jerusalem.*” He fell on his face and confessed his sin in counting the people. He prayed for the LORD to stop the plague in the land.

The LORD sent the prophet Gad to tell David to set up an altar in the place where Ornan was threshing wheat. David went to Ornan and asked to buy his threshing floor to build an altar unto the LORD. Ornan wanted to give it to him, but David insisted on paying the full price.

Then David built an altar and offered sacrifices and called upon the LORD. The LORD sent fire from heaven upon the altar to show that David’s offering was accepted. He commanded the angel to put his sword away, and the plague was ended.

When David saw how the LORD answered him, he continued to offer sacrifices in that place. He said: “*This is the house of the LORD God, and this is the altar ... for Israel.*” He believed it was the place where the temple should be built.

QUESTIONS:

1. What did David pray for the LORD to stop? (2 words)
2. What did Gad tell David to set up? (2 words)
3. What did the LORD send from heaven? (1 word)

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

ANSWERS TO MAY QUESTIONS

1. Count the people.
2. The LORD.
3. Pestilence.

*“And David
built there
an altar unto
the LORD ...”*

*1 Chronicles
21.26*

BIBLE LESSONS**CONVERSION OF THE PHILIPPIAN JAILOR**

After the evil spirit departed from the young maiden at Philippi, she was of no further use to her masters. They were greedy men who had no compassion for the poor girl, only using her to make money for themselves. When they saw she would no longer bring them profit, they were angry. They caught Paul and Silas and brought them to the rulers of the city.

They wanted these strangers to be punished, so they brought false charges against Paul and Silas. With indignation they told the rulers: *"These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans."*

The people of Philippi believed these words and rose up in anger against the apostles. The rulers, who were always looking for ways to please the people, tore off the clothes of Paul and Silas and commanded them to be beaten. So, with their backs exposed, they received severe beatings. Paul later wrote to the Thessalonian church of how they were shamefully treated at Philippi.

Bruised and bleeding, they were cast into prison. The beatings had left them with severe gashes in their flesh. Later Paul wrote to the Galatians: *"... for I bear in my body the marks [scars] of the Lord Jesus"* (Galatians 6.17).

The authorities commanded the jailor to make sure they could not escape. He must have thought they were very dangerous men, because he thrust them into the inner prison; the lowest and most secure part of the prison. He also put their feet in stocks. How unpleasant their situation was! The inner prison was a damp, dark and foul-smelling place.

As night came on, the city was quiet again. Even the jailor had fallen asleep. Yet, the wounded prisoners remained awake in the inner prison. Likely their pain kept them from sleeping. At midnight they prayed unto God. From that lowly prison cell came the voices of men singing. They were heard by all the prisoners. In spite of all their suffering and pain, Paul and Silas

sang praises unto God. How could they sing in such a place and condition? The love of Christ filled their hearts and enabled them to forget their pain.

As they sang, suddenly the foundations of the prison began to shake, and all the prison doors were opened. Likewise, all the bands or stocks that were holding the prisoners came loose. The Lord had sent a great earthquake!

The jailor awoke and was filled with alarm when he saw the prison doors were open. He thought the prisoners had all escaped. Since he was responsible for them, he would be put to death if any were missing. He was about to take his own life, when Paul cried out: *“Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.”*

Calling for a light, the jailor came trembling and fell down before Paul and Silas. The jailor experienced another awakening as he came before them. His soul was awakened to his solemn state before God.

Bringing the apostles out of the prison, he asked: *“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”* What a question! Do you and I long to know the same thing?

What answer did they give to his question? *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”* What a beautiful answer! Then they began to expound to him and all his house the Word of the Lord. Just as those in the house of Cornelius believed at the preaching of Peter, so those in the house of the jailor believed also.

What love the jailor felt to Paul and Silas! He tenderly washed their wounds. Then he and all those in his house were baptized the same hour of the night.

You can read about this in Acts chapter 16 verses 19 to 33.

QUESTIONS:

1. Where did the jailor put Paul and Silas?
2. What two things did Paul and Silas do at midnight?
3. What did the Lord send to open the prison doors?
4. What question did the jailor ask the apostles?
5. What answer did they give to him?

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

ANSWERS TO MAY QUESTIONS

1. A great door and effectual.
2. Philippi.
3. Opened it.
4. Attended unto the things which were spoken.
5. Servants of the most high God. The way of salvation.

A FIRST IMPRESSION

My first recollection of hearing the Lord's voice through the ministry was when I was eleven or twelve years old. At that time I was suffering cruel bullying from older boys at school, and it was badly affecting my whole life. One Lord's day afternoon, Mr. J.A. Short paused in his sermon and quoted the words: "*... who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the LORD thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?*" (Isaiah 51.12-13). I felt that I was the only one being spoken to, and felt reproved for forgetting God my Maker, and not looking to Him for deliverance. From that time, I did try to pray for deliverance, and the Lord did in mercy hear my prayers. The bullying stopped, and that which continued I was given strength to bear.

T.J. Pocock

A STRONG TEMPTATION

Mr. Jabez Field, pastor of Hope Chapel, Blackboys, was sent into the ministry in 1910 from the Dicker Chapel. He was invited to take the pastorate at Blackboys, but at the same time he received a call to take the pastorate at Hurstpierpoint Chapel. The chapel at Blackboys at this time had about twenty people, mainly hard-working farmers and farm workers. They could only offer him twelve shillings and six pence a week (that is 65 pence in today's money), plus the chapel house. The chapel at Hurstpierpoint was offering him £4 a week, plus a large chapel house. With a growing family of nine children on his mind, there was no question that Mr. Field would have great difficulty managing at Blackboys with the small house and the small wages.

Mr. Field was invited by the deacon at Hurstpierpoint to come to tea. When he arrived, the deacon asked him to come and look around the chapel. As they were walking up the chapel path, the words dropped with power into his heart: "*What doest thou here, Elijah?*" (1 Kings 19:9). He turned to the deacon and said, "I must go home."

The deacon answered, "Why, surely you will stay to tea."

He said, "No." He dared not stay in the place of temptation any longer. He returned home and accepted the pastorate at Blackboys.

It was a time of great prosperity at Blackboys. The church grew and the chapel filled. Those days are still remembered, the power and sweetness of the ministry. Some of the older friends have said that often on the Lord's day morning he preached the law and condemnation of sin, which was deeply solemn. But in the afternoon he preached Christ, and his face used to shine as he exalted a precious Christ.

In the latter days of his pastorate in 1951, there was much trouble in the church, which brought down his heart with sorrow. The last text he preached from was: "*He sent from above, He took me, He drew me out of many waters*" (Psalm 18:16). He died not long after this.

J.R. Rutt

RIDING ON A STORM

A Lord's day morning service had closed with the singing of William Cowper's beautiful hymn, "God moves in a mysterious way," containing the line, "And rides upon the storm." As the congregation left the chapel, one of the children was heard to say to his father, "Daddy, what does it mean, where it says God rides upon the storm?" Perhaps this is a question many children would like to know the answer to. The words "storm" and "ride" need explanation in order to understand the expression.

Most of us have been in a storm in which the rain poured down, the wind blew, the lightning flashed and the thunder rumbled. This is the literal meaning of the word "storm". But sometimes we use the word "storm" in another way, to mean a time in our lives in which everything seems to be going against us and we have a lot of trouble. And children can know such storms, perhaps from being bullied at school or treated unkindly by others. The Bible often uses the word "storm" to mean sorrow and trouble, such as in Psalm 55.8, when David says, *"I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest."*

The word "ride" likewise has two meanings. Sometimes it means that we are being carried or supported by something, such as going for a ride in a car. However, it can also mean that we are sitting on and controlling the movement of something, such as riding a horse or a bike. In the Bible, the word "ride" is often used in the second way, to refer to God being above and in control of all circumstances, using them for the good of His people. *"There is none like unto the God of Jesburun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in His excellency on the sky"* (Deuteronomy 33.26).

So how does God ride on a storm? When the hymn says God "rides upon the storm," it means that God is in control of all the trouble and difficulties in our lives and uses them to take Him just where He wants to go, in the fulfilling of His purpose to us. There have even been occasions when God has

“ridden” upon a literal storm to fulfil His own purpose. You can read of such accounts in 1 Samuel 7.8-12, John 6.16-21 and Luke 8.22-25.

Many people, including children, have had to pray to God that He would help them in their troubles and save them and bless them. This is just what God intends, that in answering their prayer they might know His blessing. May our young readers know what it is for God to ride upon the storms in their own lives.

Contributed

THE GIRL BEHIND THE DOOR

One evening in the early 1800s, a group of people had gathered to listen to a sermon. Mr. Arthur Triggs had just begun his ministry in Kingston, preaching in his own home to all those who would come to hear.

However, there was one listener that only the Lord could see. It was a young girl. She had come to the service all by herself, and she did not want anyone to know she was there. How could she keep her presence a secret? She decided to listen to the sermon from a strange place – behind the front door.

The girl's name was Sarah King, and the Lord was working in her heart. No one else in her family was interested in the things of God, so she continued to attend the services by herself, always standing behind the front door.

Soon afterwards, Sarah became very sick. It became clear that she could not live much longer. A couple of weeks before her death, she asked for Mr. Triggs to come and see her.

Mr. Triggs came right away, but he was not sure why she had asked for him. He had never seen her at any of his services. “Why have you sent for me?” he asked.

Sarah replied, “To tell you what the Lord has done for my soul.”

Mr. Triggs was so happy that he began to weep. Sarah was also happy, and they wept together for a while. But Mr. Triggs still did not know what had happened. He finally said, "Well, my dear child, do let me hear. How, and where, and when?"

Sarah said, "You never saw me at your house when you were preaching."

"No," he replied.

"I used to come down and get behind the front door, and stand there so no one would see me," she explained. "While I was there one night, the Lord brought His word with power into my heart, and I felt what I had never felt before – that I was a lost sinner. I was full of sadness for some time because of my sin and my lost state. But I was always at my post behind the door whenever you preached.

"One day, when you were speaking of the preciousness of the Lord Jesus, and what He had done for poor sinners in redeeming them from all iniquity, saving them from all their sins, I felt the truth of it with power and blessedness in my heart. All my sin and misery were removed, and Jesus was precious to my soul. You gave out that dear hymn after the sermon, 'Thou dear Redeemer, dying Lamb,' and I felt such love to my precious Christ, that I could sing aloud, 'He hath redeemed me!'"

Mr. Triggs was very moved. He and Sarah rejoiced together, praising the name of the Lord who had showed them so much mercy. Sarah added, "The Lord has manifested His mercy towards me in such a sovereign way. My father, mother, brothers, sisters and other relatives are still dead in sins. When I consider His mercy, I am lost in wonder, love and praise."

Sarah asked Mr. Triggs to read the Bible and pray. "But don't ask the dear Lord to give me health, or keep me here," she said. "If you do, He will not answer you, for I shall soon be with Him in glory."

After reading and praying, Mr. Triggs left. However, he continued to visit Sarah every morning and evening. He said later, "We enjoyed much of the Lord's presence, and the savour of His dear name."

Sarah had much suffering in her body, but the Lord helped her to bear it. She would say, "What are my sufferings compared with those of my dear Lord Jesus when He suffered for me?"

The Lord also helped Sarah to endure the darkness and temptations that she felt during her sickness. She said, "I shall soon be beyond all this, for nothing can rob me of my precious Jesus, who hath loved me, and given Himself for me."

On Mr. Trigg's last visit, Sarah made a strange request. She said, "I do not want you to pray by me tonight."

"Why not?" asked Mr. Triggs.

"I am above all prayer; it is all praise," Sarah replied. "I have all I want; I have nothing to ask."

Sarah seemed to have much joy in her soul. Looking upwards, she went on, "I have seen heaven opened, and my precious Lord Jesus standing to receive me."

Mr. Triggs was silent for a while. He was amazed at the Lord's mercy. When it was time to leave, he said, "I will come again in the morning."

However, Sarah knew she was about to die. "You can come," she replied, "but I shall never see you again on earth. I shall be with my precious Jesus."

By the next morning, Sarah's soul had fled to the mansions of eternal glory.

Happy the children who are gone
To live with Jesus Christ in peace;
Who stand around His glorious throne,
Redeemed by blood, and saved by grace.

The Saviour, whom they loved before,
Hath kindly wiped their tears away;
No sin, no sorrow, there they know,
But dwell in one eternal day.

The Little Gleaner 1940 – Adapted

THE MINISTRY OF SINGING (3)

There are many instances in the Word of God where singing was used at a particular time for an important purpose. A wonderful example of this was during the reign of King Jehoshaphat. He was one of the good kings of Judah, although he had a severe weakness in that he could so easily join forces with the ungodly kings of Israel.

Still, there were times when the grace of God shone brightly in him. One such occasion was when the children of Moab, the children of Ammon, and the children of Seir (Esau) joined forces to fight with Jehoshaphat and Judah. When Jehoshaphat heard that they were gathered against him, he *"set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah"* (2 Chronicles 20.3).

All Judah, along with their king, gathered in the temple to ask help of the LORD. As they prayed, they confessed before God: *"... we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee."*

The Spirit of God came upon Jahaziel, who prophesied to Jehoshaphat and his people: *"Be not afraid ... of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's. Tomorrow go ye down against them: ... Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, ... fear not, nor be dismayed; ... for the LORD will be with you."* When they heard that, Jehoshaphat and all the people bowed before the LORD with their faces to the ground and worshipped.

When the morning came, Jehoshaphat consulted with those who were over the singers as to what they should sing and who should lead the singing. As they went out before the army, they were to praise the beauty of holiness, and to say: *"Praise the LORD; for His mercy endureth for ever."*

What a sight it must have been to see the army of Judah that morning! At the head of the army there were no soldiers with swords and shields, but singers armed with songs of praise. The Bible tells us: *"And when they began to sing and to praise,*

the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, ... and they were smitten." The LORD caused the three nations to fight among themselves. By the time Judah came to the armies of Moab and Ammon and Seir, they were all dead men.

For three days the men of Judah gathered of the spoils. On the fourth day they assembled together in the valley of Berachah, which means "blessing", for there they blessed the LORD. Then they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, with King Jehoshaphat at the forefront. They came with psalteries and harps and trumpets unto the house of the LORD.

No doubt, in the chapel you attend, there are those who are called to take the lead in the singing. We should be very thankful for the gift they have been given. What a ministry it is! When Paul wrote the Epistle to the Corinthians, he reminded them of the diversities of gifts. Many different gifts are needed in the church of God: the gift of speaking, the gift of praying, the gift of discerning, and also the gift of singing.

A NARROW ESCAPE BY HUGUENOT CHILDREN

Huguenot was a name given to French Protestants or Calvinists, many of whom in the time of persecution fled to England.

Many interesting stories about the flight of the Huguenots have been preserved. One family saw there could be no peace in their own land and planned a way to escape. They first concealed their money, jewels and other valuables in quilted silk petticoats, secretly sewn by the lady and her daughter, and which they sent to England. The two eldest sons had already managed to leave the country; there remained the parents, a daughter aged sixteen, and two little boys aged four and six.

Just as they were all ready to leave, the father was betrayed and carried to prison. The wife and children quickly went to visit him. He urged them to flee to a place of safety, hoping that some day he would be able to join them again. Attended by a male servant, his wife went in disguise to a seaport and

arranged for passage to England for herself and three children. The eldest daughter dressed as a peasant girl and placed each of her young brothers in a pannier, or basket, which was slung across the back of a donkey. She completely covered the little boys with fruits and vegetables, and then on the top of all, she placed some poultry in a basket. The children had been warned that whatever happened by the way, they must not speak or move. We will soon see how bravely these little ones behaved in their trying condition!

The servant, who was dressed like a country farmer, went first. He rode on horseback a little ahead, as if he was unknown to the girl with the donkey. Yet, he was careful to keep her in sight as she rode along the road. The young refugee daughter travelled mostly at night, but as time was precious, the last part of the journey had to be taken by daylight. Her mind was filled with a mixture of hope and grief. Sometimes she thought of going to her mother and escaping to a land of liberty; other times she thought with sorrow of her father left behind in his dreary prison.

While on the road, she was alarmed at the sight of a group of soldiers on horseback, swiftly riding towards her. They fixed their eyes upon her and then at the panniers. "What is in those baskets?" they cried. Before she could give an answer, one of them drew his sword and thrust it into the pannier in which a young child was hid. No cry was heard; no resistance was made. The soldiers concluded that all was right, and turning round, galloped quickly down the road.

As soon as they were gone out of sight, the sister seized the pannier and threw off the upper part of the contents, expecting to find her little brother killed. As he lifted his arms towards his terrified sister, she saw that he was covered with blood from a severe cut on one of them. Hidden in his basket prison, the child had remained silent in the hour of danger. He knew that if he cried, his own life and the lives of his brother and sister would be lost. He bravely bore the pain in silence. The sister bound up the wound to the best of her ability and tenderly cared for him the rest of the way. She had

the joy of seeing his life spared, although he carried the scar from the wound for the rest of his life.

After a perilous journey, the refugees safely reached the seaside. They secretly got on board a ship, and in a few days they safely landed in England. But the father never followed them. Year after year passed by, and he remained a poor captive, unable to join those he loved. They never met again on earth.

E.A. Lewis in "Gathered Fragments"

WONDERS OF GOD'S CREATION

The Muscular System – Marvellously Designed to Move

It is fitting to look at the muscular system immediately after the skeletal system, as their functions are so intertwined. The two systems are amazingly designed to work together in the most intricate and flawless way. In fact, they are often studied together as the musculoskeletal system.

Muscles are divided into three distinct types: visceral, cardiac, and skeletal muscles. They are also referred to as voluntary or involuntary. Voluntary muscles are controlled by conscious thought, while involuntary muscles are controlled by the brain without any thought required. At this time we will focus on skeletal muscles, which compose all the voluntary muscles in the body.

Skeletal muscles are so named because they are attached to bones. There are about seven hundred of these muscles in the body, mainly in the trunk, arms, and legs. Skeletal muscles are also referred to as striated muscles because they appear to have striations, or stripes, throughout. There are two important filaments found in skeletal muscles: actin (a thin filament), and myosin (a thick filament). It is the action of these two filaments that allows muscles to contract and elongate (lengthen). There are many components involved in the process of muscle contraction; yet, each minute detail is

critically necessary and truly demonstrates the wisdom and handiwork of the Creator!

Skeletal muscles allow you to eat, breathe, write, sit, stand, walk, and run; they are involved in every motion of your body. Most of them attach to two different bones, allowing them to bring those bones together when they contract, such as when you bend your elbow. Skeletal muscles generally operate in groups: as one muscle contracts (or shortens), another lengthens. At the same time, other muscles help stabilize the body, to make movement more efficient. When you bend over to pick something up, the muscles in your front contract, while muscles in your back elongate, and muscles in your legs stabilize you in order to keep your balance. Each muscle has nerve spindles that send information to the brain. This allows the brain to process the information coming from each of the muscles. After the brain has processed the information, it sends signals back to the muscles through motor units that tell the muscles what to do. All of this takes place in less than a second.

The highly complex and beautiful design of the muscles, allow all the movements of the body to be smoothly coordinated. Without a doubt, our bodies are *“fearfully and wonderfully made.”*

Contributed

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

THE FAITH OF FAITHFUL ABRAHAM (3)

The Promise Given

After Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees, the Lord led him first to Haran and then to Canaan, where we read: *“And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him”* (Genesis 12.7). This was a promise given specifically to Abraham that he would have a child, and

eventually his seed (family) would possess the land of Canaan as an inheritance given by God Almighty.

Abraham was about 75 years old and his wife Sarah was about 65 years old at this time. To natural reason it was now impossible for Sarah to have a child. It was too late! Yet they must prove that wonderful word spoken by the Lord Jesus: *"The things which are impossible with men are possible with God"* (Luke 18.27).

We need to be very careful when considering the wonderful promises of God set forth in Holy Scripture. Through the deceitfulness of our own hearts, we may be left to claim various promises set forth in the Word of God, applying them to ourselves without the Holy Spirit. This is stealing from God's Word. May the Lord grant us that gracious spirit to discern His voice, to receive His word into our hearts, and to know that: *"I the LORD have spoken it"* (Ezekiel 36.36).

Whenever the Lord speaks to His people, and certainly when a promise is given, there will be a great humbling effect. When young Joseph and young David received promises from the Lord concerning their respective futures, perhaps pride began to work. How the Lord greatly humbled them both by leading them in a way so contrary to the promise: *"Before honour is humility"* (Proverbs 15.33).

There was a greater meaning to the promise given to Abraham, which he must yet be taught and shown. Out of Abraham's seed and from his direct lineage, the Messiah would come into the world. Really, the message was like that spoken to the serpent in the Garden of Eden: *"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed; It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel"* (Genesis 3.15). That was the first promise of a Saviour who would save His people from all their sins and from the power of the prince of this world. *"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil"* (1 John 3.8).

Abraham would, in time, be brought to understand the significance of that wonderful promise from God to him and to

his seed: a promised Saviour. We feel sure that the Lord must have given Abraham faith to believe in that exceeding great and precious promise. It may not have been great faith or strong faith at the time he first received the promise, but it was sufficient faith to believe what God had spoken. *"A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked"* (Psalm 37.16). A little faith is far better than no faith – for no faith is unbelief!

When some sweet promise warms our heart,
And cheers us under every care,
It is the Spirit's gracious part
To take that word and fix it there.

In Genesis 15 verse 3 we read that Abraham said to the Lord: *"Behold, to me Thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir"* (verse 3). It appears that Abraham, leaning upon his own understanding, thought that since God had not given him a child, perhaps one born in his house (of his servants) would be his heir. Then we read: *"And, behold, the Word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir"* (verse 4). The Lord took Abraham out under the starry night sky and caused him to look at the innumerable amount of stars. Then He told him: *"So shall thy seed be."* And Abraham *"believed in the LORD"* (verses 5 & 6).

May the Lord grant us His Holy Spirit that we might receive His Word into our hearts. May He give us that true and living faith that we might believe His precious Word and plead it before Him as Abraham did.

A.T. Pickett

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about SPIES. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by

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

1. Who accused his own brothers of being spies? (Genesis 42.9)
2. What did he tell his brothers to do, which would prove that they were not spies? (Genesis 42.34)
3. How many men did Moses send to spy out the land of Canaan? (Numbers 13.4-15)
4. What did the spies bring back with them which took two men to carry? (Numbers 13.23)
5. Which of these spies brought back a good report of the land? (Numbers 14.6-9)
6. Joshua sent two men to spy out Jericho. Where did they hide when the king of Jericho sent to find them? (Joshua 2)
7. How did the spies escape from Jericho while the gates of the city were shut? (Joshua 2)
8. Who sent messengers to comfort a man whose father had died, but the messengers were accused of being spies and shamefully treated? (1 Chronicles 19)
9. The chief priests and scribes sent out spies against the Lord Jesus. What were they trying to do? (Luke 20)
10. Who sent spies to find out where a prophet of the Lord was, and having found out, sent a great army to detain him? Who was the prophet and where was he found? (2 Kings 6)

ANSWERS TO MAY QUESTIONS

1. House, wife, manservant, maidservant, ox, ass.
2. "A goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight."
3. "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."
4. Money.
5. Naboth's vineyard.
6. Jezebel arranged for Naboth to be falsely accused and then stoned to death. (1 Kings 21.12-16)

7. King David. (2 Samuel 11.2-4)
 8. God had commanded that all the spoil from Jericho was to come into the treasury of the Lord. (Joshua 6.17-19)
 9. Idolatry. (Colossians 3.5)
 10. We should “covet earnestly the best gifts” (1 Corinthians 12.31) and “covet to prophesy” (1 Corinthians 14.39)
-

“PRAY ONE FOR ANOTHER”

James 5.16

I cannot tell why there should come to me
A thought of someone miles and miles away,
In swift insistence on the memory—
Unless there be a need that I should pray.

He goes his way; I mine; we seldom meet
To talk of plans, or changes day by day;
Of pain or pressure; burden or defeat;
Or cause why one should for the other pray.

We are too busy even to spare a thought,
For days together, of some friend away.
Perhaps God does it for us, and we ought
To catch His signal as a call to pray.

Perhaps, just then, my friend has a fierce fight,
Some overwhelming sorrow and decay
Of courage; darkness and lost sense of right;
And as he needs my prayer, I fain would pray.

Friend, do the same for me! if I unsought
Intrude upon you on some crowded day,
Give me a moment's prayer, in passing thought;
Be very sure I need it; therefore, pray.

Cheering Words, 1989

The Friendly Companion



A White Dove in Flight

“Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?” (Isaiah 60.8)

July 2017

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

By T.J. Pocock

Editor's. Note: Last month Mr. Rutt wrote in the Monthly Message on the importance of the new birth. This month Mr. Pocock has written on the same subject. Neither one knew what the other had written when they sent their pieces to me. Thus, we would point out how the Lord directed both of His servants to this vital truth: "YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN."

Dear Children and Young People,

Do you remember who Nicodemus was? He was the man who secretly came to Jesus by night, saying to Him: "*Rabbi, we know that Thou art a Teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him*" (John 3.2). Jesus knew Nicodemus, for He knows all men. But He knew Nicodemus in a special way. Jesus knew that Nicodemus was one of His people. He also knew that, although he had a lot of religion (he was a ruler of the Pharisees), at that time he was ignorant of the only way in which he could be saved. Jesus taught Nicodemus some vital things that night; He spoke of two things that "*must*" be done by God to save sinners.

This month we will write about the first "*must*" that is found in John 3.7: "*Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*" The Lord did not mean that a man needs to be born again like he was on the day of his birth. That could not save him. He was speaking of the work of the Holy Spirit of God upon him, so that he has a new spiritual nature put within him. Jesus explained why this was necessary: "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*" The "*flesh*" is our old nature, which cannot serve God. The new birth is entirely the work of God by His Spirit. We cannot do this ourselves, neither can any man do it for us. It is the sovereign gift of God and cannot be formed by the teachings of man.

The words “*born again*” show how great the work is. It makes people completely different from what they were before. Those who are born again do not know at the beginning what God is doing to them, yet they hear the “*sound*” of His Spirit upon them in a number of ways. As they still have their old nature, there are so many mysterious things that they do not understand. But at those times when the Spirit of God is powerfully working in them, the new birth shows itself in the following ways:

They are given new sight. They see God in His holiness as it is revealed in His holy law. They see their sins as they never saw them before. They cannot now say in their heart, “*There is no God*” (Psalm 14.1). They cannot go on carelessly sinning as before, for they now begin to know Him and tremble before Him. They realise that the Day of Judgment is coming.

These things create fears that they never had before. They fear death. They fear that they are not one of the Lord’s people. They fear that God will punish them for their sins.

They are given new feelings. They feel guilty before God and would cease from their sins if they could. They would repent of their sins and would believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, but find they cannot. They feel an emptiness in all natural things. They are brought to feel completely lost and helpless.

They are given new desires. Their greatest desire is to be saved. They desire to do what is right. They desire pardon.

They are given new hearing. They hear God’s voice in His Word and in their life. They listen to the preaching of the Word of God and the conversation of the Lord’s people with a hunger and thirst for food and water for their soul.

They are given new prayers. That was the Lord’s proof to Ananias to convince him that Saul of Tarsus was born again: “...*behold, be prayeth*” (Acts 9.11).

Their natural thought is that they must *do* something to be saved. That was what was in the Philippian jailor’s mind when he was born again. He cried out to Paul and Silas, “*What must*

I do to be saved?" (Acts 16.30). Now Paul and Silas knew the answer to his heart-broken cry. *"And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house"* (verse 31).

(The second half of Mr. Pocock's message will appear next month, the Lord willing.)

OUR FRONT COVER

The dove is a very beautiful bird, mentioned several times in the Scriptures. We are first introduced to the dove during the time of the flood. It was one of the two birds that Noah sent forth from the ark to know if the waters had receded from the earth. The Lord's people have often found comfort in reading that when the dove returned to the ark, weary and tired, Noah *"put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her ... into the ark"* (Genesis 8.9). How they long to be taken into Christ, the Ark of grace!

The dove was declared to be a clean bird unto the children of Israel. Thus, it could be used for sacrifices. If a family in Israel was poor and could not afford a lamb for a sacrifice, the Lord told them they could offer a pair of turtledoves. Do you remember how Mary brought this offering after the birth of her child Jesus?

Doves have no defence of themselves. They cannot fight with strong talons or beaks, such as the eagle can. However, they can fly swiftly with their wings. Thus Isaiah 60.8 says: *"Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows"* (homes in the rocky cliffs). David writes in the Psalms: *"Oh that I had wings, like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest"* (Psalm 55.6).

In the Bible the Holy Ghost is pictured by the dove. When Jesus was baptized by John, as He came up out of the water, the Spirit descended from heaven like a dove and abode upon Him.

On one occasion the Lord told His disciples that they should be as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves. They must never return evil for evil by taking their own revenge. How careful they should be, lest they cause the weak to stumble by their actions or wound the tender ones by their words.

THE MINISTRY OF SINGING (4)

What a dark and trying time it was when the children of Israel were taken captive to Babylon! Sadly, many of the Israelites settled down and learned the ways of the Babylonians. They soon forgot about the land of their fathers, the promised land.

However, those who feared the Lord God of Israel could not be happy in Babylon. The people of Babylon began to mock them, asking them to sing one of the *"songs of Zion."*

In Psalm 137 we are told that the people of God had hung their harps upon the willows. They asked each other: *"How shall we sing the LORD's song in a strange land?"* They could not forget Jerusalem any more than they could forget how to do the labour of their hands. How could they sing when they remembered that the Babylonians had burned their city with fire?

Those who are taught of God cannot sing the *"LORD's song"* when they feel the Lord has hidden His face from them, when they feel the guilt of their sins, or when they feel their hearts to be so hard and cold. *"The LORD's song"* is a song of praise for deliverance.

In Psalm 126 we read that: *"the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion ... The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad."* When the Lord removes the burden of sin, takes away the hardness of the heart, and turns the darkness into light, then the mouths of His people, who once

mourned and sighed, are filled with laughter. Their tongue is filled with SINGING.

A WONDERFUL PROVISION

Mr. Jabez Field was the pastor of Hope Chapel, Blackboys. The following story was related to me by one of his daughters. This event probably happened in the late 1920's or early 1930's, which were times of great poverty during the Great Depression.

Mr. and Mrs. Field had nine children, and they were often in great providential need. One morning their youngest daughter, Lois, was sent on an errand from the Chapel House. As she walked through a field, she heard a shotgun discharge fairly close by. A pheasant came over the hedge and landed dead at her feet. Lois picked it up and took it home to her mother. She told her what had happened, thinking what a wonderful thing it was that the Lord had supplied their needs.

However, her mother said to her, "Oh no, my dear, we cannot have that, as it belongs to the farmer. You take it up to the farmer's wife at the farmhouse, and give it to her. Tell her what happened." So off Lois went to the farmhouse. She gave the pheasant to the farmer's wife and told her what had happened. The farmer's wife took the pheasant and told her to wait at the door. Lois waited for quite some time. Finally, the farmer's wife returned with the pheasant plucked and drawn, ready for cooking. She said to Lois, "Now take that home to your mother."

We see in this little story the truth that when the Lord's people have need, His goodness will find out a way. We also see a wonderful example of the honesty and godliness of Mrs. Field. She would not take what did not belong to her, although they were in great need. *"Them that honour Me, I will honour."*

J.R. Rutt

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**SOLOMON BECOMES KING**

David had ruled Israel for almost forty years, and now he was an old man. The LORD had told David that Solomon his son would reign after him. But now one of his other sons, named Adonijah, said: *"I will be king."* He made a great feast and invited many people. He asked all the king's sons except Solomon. They planned to make Adonijah king at the feast.

Nathan the prophet heard what Adonijah was doing. He and Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, went to tell David. They asked him who should be the next king. David said that Solomon, whom the LORD had chosen, should be king. He ordered it to be done that same day.

Solomon rode to Gihon upon the king's mule. Then Zadok the priest anointed him with oil out of the tabernacle. They blew the trumpet, and all the people said: *"God save king Solomon."* With music and shouts of joy they returned to Jerusalem. Adonijah and those with him at his feast heard it. When they were told that Solomon had been anointed king, they quickly returned to their homes in fear. *"Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father..."*

QUESTIONS:

1. Which son of David said: *"I will be king"*?
2. Who did the LORD say would reign after David?
3. When did David order it to be done? (3 words)

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

ANSWERS TO JUNE QUESTIONS

1. The plague.
2. An altar.
3. Fire.

“... Solomon
sitteth on
the throne
of the
kingdom.”

1 Kings 1.46

BIBLE LESSONS**THE APOSTLES COME TO THESSALONICA**

What a remarkable night it had been: the apostles cast into the inner prison, songs in the night, a great earthquake, the jailor and those in his house converted, and then all of them baptized!

In the morning, the magistrates of the city sent word to the jailor to let Paul and Silas go. Perhaps they realised they had done wrong in beating them. How pleased the jailor was to bring this message to the apostles! Yet, Paul refused to go. He answered the jailor: *"They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans ... and now do they thrust us out privily? ... let them come themselves and fetch us out."*

When the rulers of the city heard this, they were filled with fear. No Roman citizen could be beaten without a trial. Had they not been told that these men were Jews? That was true, but they were Jews born in the Roman Empire and thus were also Romans. Quickly the magistrates went to the prison and brought them out. They begged Paul and Silas to depart out of the city.

The apostles went to the house of Lydia, where they rehearsed all that had taken place, to strengthen and comfort the brethren. Then they departed from Philippi. Later, Paul wrote a beautiful letter to the believers at Philippi. We call it the Epistle of Paul to the Philippians.

Next the apostles made their way to Thessalonica. Here Paul laboured day and night, making tents to provide for their daily needs (1 Thessalonians 2.9). There were many Jews in this city, and they had built a synagogue. For three Sabbath days Paul went to them and reasoned with them out of the Scriptures.

He spoke of all the events that had taken place in Jerusalem concerning the Lord Jesus. He told them how Jesus had suffered, was put to death, and rose from the dead, thus fulfilling all the Scriptures and showing that He was the promised Messiah. The Holy Spirit blessed the preaching to

the hearts of some of the Jews, so that they joined themselves to the apostles. An even greater number of the Greeks believed, along with some of the leading women of the city. This was the beginning of the church of God at Thessalonica.

Sadly, Satan was busy stirring up the unbelieving Jews. They were moved with envy and hatred. They could not bear to see so many seeking after and believing on Jesus of Nazareth. They found the very worst sort of men in the city to stir up a riot against the apostles.

Like Lydia at Philippi, a man named Jason had invited the apostles to stay with him at Thessalonica. The angry crowd moved down the street to his home. They beat on the door and forced it open. They searched the house for Paul and Silas but could not find them. Then they seized Jason and certain other believers and brought them to the rulers of the city. They cried out: *"These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another King, one Jesus."*

At these words, the rulers and the people were troubled and afraid. They asked Jason why Paul and Silas had come to them. We are not told what Jason said, but likely he eased their fears, assuring them that the apostles had not come to cause insurrection against Caesar.

You can read about this in Acts chapter 16 verses 34 to 40 and chapter 17 verses 1 to 9.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Paul refuse to leave the prison? (8 words)
2. What did Paul want the rulers of the city to do? (6 words)
3. To what city did the apostles go next?
4. Who received the apostles into his house?
5. What did the Jews say the apostles had done? (5 words)

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

ANSWERS TO JUNE QUESTIONS

1. In the inner prison.
 2. Prayed and sang praises.
 3. An earthquake.
 4. What must I do to be saved?
 5. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.
-

A TORN LEAF OF THE BIBLE

A young shop-keeper once took up a leaf of the Bible. He was about to tear it in pieces and use it for packing up a small item in the shop. A friend stopped him, saying, "Do not tear that: it contains the Word of eternal life."

Although he did not like this reproof, the young man folded up the leaf and put it in his pocket. A short time later, he said to himself, "Now I will see what kind of life it is that this leaf speaks about."

On unfolding the leaf, the first words that caught his eye were the last words in the Book of Daniel: "*But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.*" He immediately began to enquire what his lot would be at the end of the days. The solemn thoughts thus awakened by the power of the Spirit of God led to his conversion.

Little Gleaner 1943

ON HOLIDAY BY THE SEA

I wonder how many of you while on holiday will think of the wonders of creation as you look at the hills, trees and sea, and thank God for His kindness in enabling you to enjoy the time spent on holiday.

Recently I was favoured to spend some time in the south of Cornwall and learned many lessons from the scenery of that

rugged coast and the mighty breakers rolling in from the Atlantic Ocean.

One day, sitting on the sands watching those breakers and the incoming tide, I saw some boys and girls building a huge sand castle, with a wall of sand round it to try to keep the sea from washing over it. In the distance I also saw some rocks on which the waves broke with a mighty spray. Eventually the tide started to come in, and the rocks gradually disappeared under the mighty waves. Soon the sea was up to the wall of sand, but you know the wall of sand could not stop it. The wall was soon covered, and the sand castle was soon under the water. In time, the tide went out and I looked for our sand castle but could not see it. The sand was flat, and if I had not seen that castle before, I would never have known it had been there. I then looked for the rocks. Yes! they were still there; as firm as ever they had been. I walked over to look at them and found that with the continual pounding of the sea, most of their sharp edges had been made smooth. What did I think about?

I thought first of our sand castle. It reminded me of all of us as we are born into this world, dead in sins, without God. Although we might have learned about God in our heads (and this is right to do), without a saving knowledge of Him in our hearts and a trust in Him in times of trouble, our religion will be like our sand castle. It will all disappear.

I then thought of those rocks. They reminded me of those who know God in their hearts and who can say with the psalmist: *"But I have trusted in Thy mercy,"* even when trials and sorrows like those mighty breakers have come into their lives, and they may feel that all is too much for them to endure:

"But here's our point of rest;
Though hard the battle seem,
Our Captain stood the fiery test,
And we shall stand through Him."

But what had the constant breaking of the waves over those rocks done to them? They had worn away some of those rough

edges. So it is with God's people. They had "sharp edges" once, but by the dealings of God with them in their souls, most of those "sharp edges" have been made smooth. Perhaps this is something you do not at present understand, but may God teach you by His Spirit to know these things in your hearts.

One more thought about those rocks to consider. The thought was of the Rock Christ Jesus. All the billows of God's wrath for the sins of His people passed over Him, submerging Him, yet He endured all for His people's sake and is now exalted at the right hand of God in heaven. Mr. Hart so clearly describes with deep reverence what I cannot, in hymn 153.

May the Lord bless you each and teach you your need of Him.

D.F. Dickinson from Friendly Companion 1985

(First appeared in Tamworth Road, Croydon monthly Sunday School letter in 1983.)

TRUST IN GOD

Many years ago there was a great preacher in Germany, whose name was Paul Gerhardt. The ruler of Brandenburg, that part of the country where he lived, did not like him to preach the gospel. He sent word to Mr. Gerhardt that he must either give up preaching as he did or leave the country. Paul Gerhardt sent back a message, saying that it would be very hard for him to leave his country and friends and go among strangers, where he and his family would have no means of support. However, he would rather die than preach anything else than what the Bible taught him. So he was banished from that area, along with his wife and little children.

At the end of their first day's journey, they came into a wood and rested for the night at an inn. The little children were crying with hunger, but there was no food to give them and no money to buy any. The poor mother had tried to remain cheerful all day, but now she began to cry too. This gave Paul Gerhardt a very heavy heart. He went alone into the

dark wood to pray. It was a time of great trouble to him, and there was no one to whom he could go for help, but God.

While he was alone in the wood praying, a text of Scripture came into his mind. "*Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass*" (Psalm 37.5). This gave him great comfort. "Yes," he said to himself, "though I am banished from my home and friends, and do not know where to take my wife and children for a shelter, yet God, *my* God, sees me in this dark wood. He knows all about us. Now is the time to trust in Him. He will show me through; He will '*bring it to pass*.'"

He was so happy in thinking on this text, and so thankful to God for bringing it into his mind, that he walked up and down under the trees. He composed some verses on it, which were afterwards written down and printed. Each verse begins with two or three words of the text. When you have read through the hymn, you have the whole text. The verses are as follows:

Commit thy way, O weeper –
The cares that fret thy soul –
To thine Almighty Keeper,
Who makes the worlds to roll.

Unto the Lord, who quieteth
The wind, and cloud, and sea;
Oh, doubt not He provideth
A footpath, too, for thee.

Trust also, for 'tis useless
To murmur and forebode;
The almighty arm is doubtless
Full strong to bear thy load.

In Him hide all thy sorrow,
And bid thy fears goodnight;
He'll make a glorious morrow
To crown thy head with light.

And He shall bring it near thee,
The good thou long hast sought;

Though now it seems to fly thee,
Thou shalt, ere long, be brought

To pass from grief to gladness,
From night to clearest day;
When doubts, and fears and sadness
Shall all have passed away.

When he had finished composing these verses, he went back into the inn. He told his wife about the sweet text that had come into his mind and repeated to her the verses he had made upon it. She soon dried up her tears and began to be cheerful and to trust in God, as her husband did. The children were asleep in bed. The husband and wife knelt down together and prayed. They resolved to commit their way unto the Lord and leave it for Him to *“bring it to pass”* as He saw fit. After writing down his sweet verses, they went to bed.

Before they had fallen asleep, a great noise was heard at the door of the inn. It seemed as though some important person was knocking there. When the landlord opened the door, he saw a man on horseback, who said in a loud voice:

“I am a messenger. I come from Duke Christian of Meresburg, and I am trying to find a minister named Paul Gerhardt, who has just been banished from Brandenburg. Do you know whether he has passed this way?”

“Paul Gerhardt?” asked the landlord; “why, yes, he is in this house, but he has just gone to bed. I can’t disturb him now.”

“But you must,” said the messenger, “I have a very important letter for him from the duke; let me see him at once.” So the landlord went upstairs and told Gerhardt, who came down to see what all this was about.

The messenger handed him a large, sealed letter. To his great joy, he read that Duke Christian had heard of his intended banishment and had written to him, saying, “Come into my country, Paul Gerhardt, and you shall have a church, and people, and house, and home, and plenty to live on, and liberty to preach the gospel just as much as you please.”

Then the good minister went up and told his wife, and they praised God for His love. The next morning they started off with glad hearts and cheerful feet to their new home.

Hand and Heart, Little Gleaner 1879

SEVEN SOLEMN QUESTIONS WITHOUT ANSWERS

1. "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread; and your labour for that which satisfieth not?" (Isaiah 55.2)
2. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8.36,37)
3. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Hebrews 2.3)
4. "What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? ... where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Peter 4.17,18)
5. "For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Revelation 6.17)
6. "And why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6.46)
7. "But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" (Luke 12.20)

SEVEN QUESTIONS WITH THE ANSWERS

1. "Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" (Genesis 22.7)
Answer. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1.29)
2. "How should man be just with God?" (Job 9.2)
Answer. "A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." (Romans 3.28)
3. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?"
Answer. "By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word." (Psalm 119.9)
4. "Are there few that be saved?"

Answer. “Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” (Luke 13.23,24)

5. “What must I do to be saved?”

Answer. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” (Acts 16.30,31)

6. “Lovest thou ME?”

Answer. “Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee.” (John 21.17)

7. “What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?”

Answer. “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God ...” (Revelation 7.13-15)

The Gospel Echo

WONDERS OF GOD’S CREATION

The Muscular System – Designed by God

Last month, we learned about skeletal, or voluntary, muscles. These are the muscles that you consciously use to move your body around. For example, if something falls down, you consciously decide to pick it up. Then, you use your skeletal muscles to bend over, take hold of the object, and stand up again.

Imagine if you had consciously to remember to tell your heart to beat, or tell your stomach muscles to digest your food. How difficult that would be! It would be impossible to lead a productive life. Thankfully, God has created us with a different type of muscle to operate our heart, internal organs, and blood vessels. This is called involuntary muscle. Involuntary muscles work automatically to control your basic body functions.

The first type of involuntary muscle is called visceral muscle. It is also called smooth muscle, due to its smooth appearance under a microscope. Visceral muscles are primarily found in internal organs, including the stomach and intestines, as well

as blood vessels. This type of muscle is composed of bundles that contract and relax to create movement. In the digestive tract, where these muscles line the walls of the intestines, this movement allows food to pass through the tract. Visceral muscles do not have the powerful contractions seen in other types of muscles, but their incredible design allows them to perform their specific functions perfectly.

The second type of involuntary muscle is cardiac muscle, which is found in the heart. In fact, the majority of the heart is composed of muscle. Although one muscle cell is very weak on its own, the coordinated action of millions of these cells working together produces the powerful and regular contractions of the heart. Cardiac muscle cells also have branches, allowing them to connect to multiple other cells, creating a giant network of cells from one end of the heart to the other. Cardiac muscle cells have another unique feature. They have intercalated discs at the end of each cell, where several cells overlap. This creates very tight junctions between the cells, allowing them to hold up under the strain of pumping blood throughout the body over the course of a lifetime. It also allows for the very rapid exchange of electrochemical signals. Perhaps the most remarkable and unique feature of cardiac muscle is autorhythmicity, which is the ability of the heart to stimulate itself to contract. While the heart generally contracts under the regulation of the brain, it has pacemaker cells that are able to signal the other cardiac cells to contract. This means that the heart can continue to function even in the absence of brain function. Again, what a remarkable design!

Once the heart begins to beat, it will continue beating for a lifetime, without ever requiring thought. Recent studies have suggested that heart contractions may begin as early as two to three weeks after conception, which is an earlier stage of development than previously thought. Over the course of an average lifespan, the heart will faithfully beat over 2.5 billion

times! However, there comes a time when the heart fails to beat, marking the end of one's journey here on earth. That time will come for each of us: how important then it is to be prepared and to be given a new heart, formed by Christ, that will not fail through all eternity.

Contributed

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

THE FAITH OF FAITHFUL ABRAHAM (4)

The Promise Tried

Wherever the Lord gives faith to believe in Him, that faith will most certainly be tried, or tested, to prove it is real. When the Lord is graciously pleased to promise anything to His people, we may be absolutely sure that Almighty God will not fail to keep His promise: *"Hath He said, and shall He not do it?"* (Numbers 23.19) There is such a vast difference between God giving a promise and man giving a promise. Perhaps someone has promised to do something for you or offered to help you, only to prove they are unable to perform what they promised.

In Psalm 11 verse 5 we read: *"The LORD trieth the righteous."* There are so many instances in the Word of God where the Lord brings His people into situations or circumstances where their God-given faith is put to the test, tried, and proved. We think of Joseph in the prison: *"Until the time that his word came: the word of the LORD tried him"* (Psalm 105.19). Joseph received God's word to him in dreams of what would come to pass. Yet, what Joseph had to pass through and suffer was such a great trial to him. It stripped him of any natural reasoning as to how the Lord would perform His word. It humbled him, enabling him to make this confession to his brethren: *"But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good"* (Genesis 50.20). This case shows how the Lord, in His mercy and faithfulness, deals with His people. They are brought to put their trust in the Lord and then to wait

in humble dependence upon Him and Him alone. God must have all the honour and glory.

When God promised Abraham that one day he would have a son, God knew exactly when that son would be given. However, Abraham saw his wife Sarah getting older and older, with the months and years passing on, and still no son. Now Sarah came to that time when she was beyond child-bearing age, and still no son. What a great trial this must have been! Had God forgotten His word or changed His mind? No, never! Yet Abraham must be taught to look away from all natural thoughts, even his own interpretation of the word of God, and look unto the Lord alone, believing that in His time and way, He would perform His word. *“My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him”* (Psalm 62.5).

Often the Lord's people seem to have so many unanswered prayers, which tries them very much. Is God hearing me? Why isn't He answering me? Are my poor prayers, real prayers? Am I a child of God? Maybe Abraham had similar fears. The Lord Jesus speaks these most wonderful promises: *“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you”* (Matthew 7.7). What a great blessing if the Lord has caused you to hope in His Word, so that you venture to ask, seek, and knock: that is to ask for grace, to seek the Lord Jesus, and to knock upon the door of God's mercy. As time passes, and there are no answers (like Abraham of old), you may feel that you have prayed in vain and to no purpose. That awful temptation may come into your mind: what is the point of praying at all? But this is unbelief! When God pours in His Spirit of prayer, then prayer *will* be poured out unto God. The Lord Jesus also spoke of that widow woman in Luke 18. She not only had an adversary who afflicted her, but she also had to bring her case before an unjust judge. However, she kept going and kept going until he answered her. *“And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him? ... I tell you that He will avenge them speedily.”*

Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18.7,8).

Although the Lord does try His people, He does so for several reasons: first, that they might be humbled before Him, as they prove their own weakness and sinful inability to keep faith alive; second, that God might be glorified in the fulfilling of His Word, in spite of all impossibilities; third, that there might be a solemn witness to those around, as to the reality of the faith He has given. O for the Lord to give us each a true spirit of prayer. May He help and enable us to "*continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving*" (Colossians 4.2)

The Lord the righteous tries;
Yet we'll adore His name;
He never will their cause despise,
Nor put their hope to shame.

He brings them to the test,
And tries them by His law;
Then leads them to the promised rest,
From whence they comfort draw.

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about OVERHEARING. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail. (See page 146 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. A "certain man" found Joseph wandering in the field. What had he overheard Joseph's brothers say? (Genesis 37.15-17)
2. Sarah overheard three men telling Abraham that she would have a son. What did Sarah do? (Genesis 18.9-15)
3. Overhearing the children in the temple crying, "Hosanna to the Son of David," the chief priests and scribes were

- displeased. What Scripture did Jesus quote to them? (Matthew 21. 16)
4. "The Lord heard it" when Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses. What happened to Miriam? (Numbers 12)
 5. While Goliath defied the armies of Israel, David was speaking to some of the men; but someone overheard him and was angry. Who was it? (1 Samuel 17.28)
 6. A man told Joab that he had seen Absalom hanging in an oak, but he refused to touch him. What had he overheard David saying to Joab before the battle? (2 Samuel 18)
 7. Rebekah planned to deceive her own husband as a result of a conversation she had overheard. Who was the conversation between? (Genesis 27)
 8. Which godly king trusted that the Lord had overheard the blasphemous words of Rabshakeh? (Isaiah 37)
 9. Jesus once spoke to a fig tree, but His disciples overheard what He said. What happened to the fig tree? (Mark 11)
 10. The scribes and Pharisees questioned with the disciples why Jesus ate with publicans and sinners, but Jesus overheard. What did He say in answer? (Mark)

ANSWERS TO JUNE QUESTIONS

1. Joseph.
2. Joseph told his brothers to return home and bring Benjamin back with them.
3. Twelve.
4. A cluster of grapes from Eshcol.
5. Joshua and Caleb.
6. The spies hid among the stalks of flax on the roof of Rahab's house. (Joshua 2.6)
7. From a window of her house Rahab let the spies down the wall of Jericho by a cord. (Joshua 2.15)
8. David. (1 Chronicles 19.2-3)
9. The spies were trying to entangle the Lord Jesus in His talk so they would have something whereby He could be accused to the Roman governor. (Luke 20.20)
10. The king of Syria sent out spies to find Elisha the prophet who was in Dothan. (2 Kings 6.10-14)

Contributed

CHRIST'S SILENCE

HE answered not a word – what depths were stirred
In that long silence of unanswered word,
While still the mother cried and prayed in vain,
And every moment seemed an age of pain!
He had blessed others – were His blessings spent,
Or but for His own kin and country meant?
She knew not – only this she seemed to know,
Jesus was good – she would not let Him go!

O woman! by no silence turned aside,
Gathering fresh faith that would not be denied,
Now will I learn of thee to trust the Lord
When to my cry, He answers not a word;
Now will I learn of thee to hold Him fast,
Knowing that He will turn and bless at last
Because He loves me, though my only plea
Through life's mistakes and sins, is "Lord, help me!"
I cast upon Him all my weight of woe,
Jesus is good – I will not let Him go!

And I will hear His answer even here,
Perhaps the granted prayer, the hope so dear
Fulfilled at last – the shadows swept away,
"Great is thy faith – I will not say thee nay."
Or He Himself will come, and fears shall cease,
Howe'er it be, His blessing I **shall** know,
Jesus is good, I will not let Him go.

Mary Gorges, Cheering Words – 1990

The Friendly Companion



Grapes on a Vine

**“I am the true Vine, and my Father is the Husbandman.”
John 15.1**

August 2017

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

By T.J. Pocock

Dear Children and Young People,

Last month we looked at the words of Jesus to Nicodemus in John 3 verse 7: *“Ye must be born again.”* This month we will look at the second *“must”* in John 3 verses 14 and 15, where Jesus said to Nicodemus: *“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.”* The occasion Jesus referred to was when the Lord had sent fiery serpents to bite the Israelites because of their sin in murmuring against Him. They had complained about the difficulties. They hated the manna that God was giving them. Many people who were bitten by the serpents died. There was no remedy, so it appeared that all those that were bitten must soon die. But God began to have mercy upon them. He made them feel that they had sinned against Him. They came to Moses, confessing their sin and asking him to pray to the Lord for them. Moses did pray, and the Lord’s wonderful answer was: *“Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live”* (Numbers 21.8). Moses made a serpent of brass and set it on a pole. And so it was, that all those who had a serpent bite, when they looked upon the serpent of brass, they lived. It was a wonderful miracle of God that set forth an even more wonderful miracle. And that is why Jesus declared it to Nicodemus.

In Scripture, the serpent represents the curse of God’s broken law. That is why God used serpents to bite the murmurers. *“Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them”* (Galatians 3.10). Brass, in Scripture, represents God’s judgment for sin. It also speaks of durability. The grate of the altar in the tabernacle was made of brass, as it needed to endure the heat of many burnt offerings. All these things point to the Lord Jesus Christ. The curse of the law of God due to all

the sins of His people came upon Him. He was made a curse for His people. He so loved His people that He willingly endured that curse until it was consumed by His death. *“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree”* (Galatians 3 .13). This is what Jesus was speaking of when He said to Nicodemus: *“...even so must the Son of man be lifted up...”* The Lord Jesus was lifted up upon the cross at Calvary.

The only remedy for sin is the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus. None can say how great their need is; but His offering of Himself fully met that need. Nothing else is needed to cure sinners. There is no other remedy. He is the one Mediator between God and men. Jesus Christ is lifted up whenever the Holy Spirit preaches Him into sinners' hearts, through the written Word and through the preaching of that Word by God's ministers. He is preached as the one Saviour of sinners – able to save the very worst of sinners. His obedience even unto death is preached as God's own appointed way to save sinners.

In this way, the Holy Spirit finds out new-born sinners that feel their guilt and bids them look unto the lifted-up Son of man and trust only in Him. Now faith and repentance flow to them from Christ crucified. In looking unto Him, they receive from God the sentence of mercy through blood that delivers them from the sentence of death. Their hearts are softened in sorrow for what their Saviour suffered for their sins. This is powerfully felt and known in their hearts. The perishing sinners look and live. They look because the Lord Jesus Christ is lifted up before them.

It is God's way of salvation, not man's. It is Jesus doing His Father's work, not the sinners doing it. It is the Holy Spirit giving them faith; not the sinners believing of themselves. It is free salvation, bought with the blood of Jesus Christ; not bought with duties, tears, confessions, repentance, prayers, or

anything else, for all those things come short of the mark. In that wonderful word *'whosoever'* is the same truth as Jesus declared in John 6.37: *"...and him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out."* The sinners that venture their whole salvation upon Christ crucified shall not perish, but have eternal life.

The proof we have that Nicodemus himself was blessed with this faith in Jesus Christ is found in John 19.39, where we read that he brought an hundred pound weight of myrrh and aloes to anoint His body for burial. *"Unto you therefore which believe He is precious"* (1 Peter 2.7).

OUR FRONT COVER

You will notice this month that the Bible Questions are about vines and their fruit. Vines are weak plants that run along the ground unless they are propped up. The only purpose of the vine is to produce fruit. Do you remember the spies that Moses sent into the land of Canaan? They returned with a branch so full of grapes that it was carried on a pole between two men.

The Bible has many references to vines, both in the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament, the Lord speaks of the nation of Israel as a vine. In Psalm 80, Asaph writes: *"Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: Thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land."* Asaph went on to describe how the vine, Israel, thrived for a time.

In Isaiah 5, the prophet Isaiah tells us that God fenced His vineyard, or made a wall or hedge around it. That hedge was His holy law, which was given for their instruction and separated them from all the nations around them. He gathered the stones out of it. The stones were the wicked nations that had been in possession of the land for hundreds of years. What care He took with His ancient people! Having planted them as a choice vine, and blessed them with so many

advantages, God looked for the good grapes of righteousness, obedience, and justice. Yet, Israel brought forth wild grapes: the bitter grapes of rebellion, idolatry, and sinful pleasures.

The church of God is also compared to the vine. *"The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell ... Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes"* (Song of Solomon 2.13,15). She is set forth in a very flourishing state by the tender grapes which give a good smell. The Lord's people, like the tender grapes, are easily bruised by the little foxes of worldliness, carelessness, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life.

Every believer in Jesus is also said to be part of the vine. The Lord Jesus tells His people: *"I am the Vine, ye are the branches"* (John 15.5). Each one, as a branch, is expected to be fruitful. His Father, as the Husbandman, takes away the branches that have no fruit. What a fearful thing! He prunes, or afflicts, those branches that bear fruit, that they may bring forth more fruit. What lessons the grape vines picture for us!

WHO SENT THE DOG?

Many years ago, a minister told the following interesting story of God's watchful care. Perhaps it may encourage others to trust in the Lord, who neither slumbers nor sleeps, and controls the smallest circumstances in our lives.

With heaven and earth at His command,
He waits to answer prayer.

This minister usually rode to the chapel where he preached, but on one particular Sunday, he decided to walk both ways. Soon after he started out in the morning, he was joined by a large Newfoundland dog. He tried to drive it away, but without success. It continued to follow him. He did not know what he would do with it when he got to the chapel. However, the deacon finally agreed to take care of it for the day.

When the services were ended, and the minister was ready to go home, the dog was ready too. Off they went together. He tried time after time to drive it off, but it would not leave him. At last they reached home, and of course, the minister's wife was surprised to see the visitor. When she heard all about it, she decided that the dog must stay for the night. Perhaps the next day they could find the owner. So, they had their supper and gave the dog a good meal. Then they made a comfortable place for it to sleep. They locked up the house and retired to rest.

A few hours passed, and the dog began to howl in a loud and most dismal way. The howling went on and on. Finally, the minister got a light, went down, and petted the dog until it settled down quietly; then he returned to bed and slept peacefully until morning. When they came downstairs in the morning, they went to open the doors and windows. To their astonishment, they found signs that burglars had been trying to break in. Evidently, they had been frightened off when the dog howled. They called in a policeman, who told them they were lucky to have had the dog. However, the minister and his wife did not attribute it to luck, but to the watchful care of Him that neither slumbers nor sleeps. They could say with the hymn-writer:

The fictitious powers of chance
And fortune, I defy.
My life's minutest circumstance
Is subject to His eye.

M. J. The Little Gleaner 1941

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**SOLOMON ASKS FOR WISDOM**

After the death of his father David, Solomon went to Gibeon to sacrifice to the LORD. He offered a thousand burnt offerings. That same night the LORD appeared to him in a dream, saying: *"Ask what I shall give thee."*

Did Solomon ask for riches, a long life, or victory over his enemies? No. He felt like a little child before the great nation of Israel. He needed wisdom to be a good king. Solomon asked the LORD to give him *"an understanding heart."*

The LORD was pleased with the request of Solomon and told him: *"I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart."* The LORD also gave Solomon two things he did not ask for, both riches and honour, so there was no king like him.

Soon a hard cause was brought to Solomon, and he judged very wisely. The people of Israel heard about it, *"and they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment."*

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Solomon feel like before Israel? (3 words)
2. What did Solomon ask the LORD to give him?
(3 words)
3. What two things did the LORD also give Solomon?
(3 words)

Please send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail. (See page 170 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

ANSWERS TO JULY QUESTIONS

1. Adonijah.
2. Solomon.
3. That same day.

“Give me

now

wisdom and

knowledge ...”

2 Chronicles 1.10

BIBLE LESSONS**PAUL BROUGHT TO BEREA AND ATHENS**

Although the rulers of Thessalonica had released Jason, with whom Paul and Silas had been staying, the brethren feared that the unbelieving Jews would be more determined to harm the apostles. They quickly devised a plan to send them away in the night. Although Paul was forced to leave the city, he did not forget the church that was formed there. He later wrote two letters to the believers at Thessalonica.

Not far from Thessalonica was the city of Berea. The Jews had also built a synagogue in Berea. The apostles entered into this synagogue and preached Jesus unto them, explaining how He had fulfilled all that the prophets had written.

The Jews in Berea, along with the Gentiles who gathered with them, listened attentively to Paul and Silas and *“received the Word with all readiness of mind.”* They searched the Scriptures daily to see if what the apostles said was true. What a good example they have given for us, to search the Scriptures with a desire to know the truth! The Holy Spirit blessed their searching, for many of them believed, along with some very honourable Greek women, and a good number of men.

Soon, reports of the apostles’ preaching reached Thessalonica. The unbelieving Jews came at once to Berea to stir up the people and cause trouble for the apostles. What enmity they had against the gospel of the Lord Jesus! What hatred they had to the Apostle Paul!

The brethren at Berea acted quickly, fearing for Paul’s life. Leaving Silas and Timotheus in Berea to encourage and strengthen the new converts, they took Paul to the seaside. Some of the brethren accompanied Paul as he sailed from Macedonia to Greece.

Arriving in the city of Athens, they took leave of Paul and returned to Berea with a special message for Silas and Timotheus. He asked them *“to come to him with all speed.”* While Paul waited for Silas and Timotheus, he walked through the streets of Athens, observing their great buildings and

numerous temples. Everywhere Paul turned, there seemed to be an idol to one god or another. At one point he passed by an altar with the inscription: *"TO THE UNKNOWN GOD."*

Finding a synagogue of the Jews, Paul went and reasoned with them from the Scriptures about the gospel of Jesus. Every day Paul conversed with those who gathered in the open market places. The ancient Greek philosophers loved to debate their ideas in these market places. The Bible tells us: *"For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or hear some new thing."*

When the philosophers heard what Paul was saying, they said to each other: *"What will this babbler say?"* Others answered: *"He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods,"* because Paul preached of Jesus and the resurrection.

In the city of Athens was a place called Mars' Hill. Here the wisest judges would hear cases and rule on them. The philosophers brought Paul up to this place, saying: *"May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean."*

You can read about this in Acts chapter 17 verses 9 to 23.

QUESTIONS:

1. To what city was Paul brought after leaving Thessalonica?
2. How did the people of this city receive the Word that Paul preached? (5 words)
3. What did they do to prove what the apostle said was true? (4 words)
4. What inscription was given to one altar Paul passed by in Athens?
5. To what hill was Paul brought?

Please send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail. (See page 170 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

ANSWERS TO JULY QUESTIONS

1. "They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans."
 2. "... Come themselves and fetch us out."
 3. Thessalonica.
 4. Jason.
 5. Turned the world upside down.
-

TBS REFORMATION QUIZZES FOR CHILDREN

The Trinitarian Bible Society is offering two quizzes to promote interest in the Protestant Reformation amongst children and young people. There is one quiz for juniors (7-11 years) and another for seniors (12-16 years). Younger children are welcome to complete the junior quiz if they would like to. These quizzes have been designed to help encourage a better understanding of Martin Luther, the German monk whose ninety-five theses were posted to the church door at Wittenberg in 1517, and who served as a catalyst for the Reformation.

You can download the quizzes from the TBS website (www.tbsbibles.org), and then carry out your own research, although some resources are suggested. Your completed quiz should be posted to your nearest TBS office (for addresses see www.tbsbibles.org) and upon receipt of a correct set of answers, a hardback Commemorative Reformation Bible will be sent to you. This offer remains open until 31st December 2017.

PRECIPICE WALK

By L.S.B. Hyde

Many people, when they think of holidays, think only of pleasure, relaxation, doing what they like – in a word, pleasing themselves, and alas! in many cases forgetting about God altogether, except to be very rebellious and upset if He should send anything that upsets their pleasure. However, there are

occasions when some holidays are made special because God makes them so.

A few years ago we were on holiday in North Wales. One day my family picked out a place to visit because it included a very interesting walk – Precipice Walk. We arrived at the spot, and there was a notice warning people who were nervous or afraid of heights (as far as I can remember) not to attempt it. Inwardly I felt very fearful, but my young family was keen to go. So we walked along a little way on rising ground to the beginning of this apparently dangerous walk, I tending to lag behind a little.

We now came to some more instructions, which told us that we should find certain places marked with red paint on posts. If these were observed, we would be following a safe route. How my heart changed and leapt for joy. Why? Because of the red paint seen on the posts? No, but because upon my heart fell two sentences, one from the Holy Bible and another from Gadsby's hymnbook:

1. *"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way..."* (Hebrews 10.19,20)

2. "And, lest we should mistake the way, He lines it out with blood."

I saw no longer, in one sense, the red paint, but my faith saw the blood of Jesus and all that means to poor, sinful people. This became my meditation as I walked along that way; in parts, on the left the earth face rose nearly sheer upwards and on the right nearly sheer downwards, a narrow path going between. The psalmist, David, said: *"The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"* (Psalm 27.1) Every post I came to with the red paint inspired a humble confidence in the Lord God, so that I felt calm and safe, even in the midst of danger. *"For the LORD shall be thy confidence,*

and shall keep thy foot from being taken” (Proverbs 3.26).
“But safety is of the LORD” (Proverbs 21.31).

In many things the way to heaven is very dangerous, just as this walk was, but the people of God are safe in the everlasting arms of Jesus. How cheering when the faith that their Lord has given them fixes itself upon the blood of Jesus (and how dangerous the path seems when the guilt of sin is felt) and secondly, brings them nigh unto Jesus when they fear that sin has separated them from their God.

How is it with you? Are you bound for heaven? Do you find the way dangerous? Are you fearful? Are you tempted to turn back because of the heights of sin and depths of guilt? May the Lord enable you to press on, *“looking unto Jesus”* (Hebrews 12.2), thinking upon the hymns:

No heights of guilt, nor depths of sin,
 Where His redeemed have ever been,
 But sovereign grace was underneath,
 And love eternal, strong as death. (87 second part)

In that dread moment, O to hide
 Beneath His sheltering blood!
 ’Twill Jordan’s icy waves divide,
 And land my soul with God. (1093)

“So He bringeth them unto their desired haven” (Psalm 107.30).

The Friendly Companion 1985

THE APOCRYPHA

What is the Apocrypha? Why do we not have it in our Bibles?

The word Apocrypha means “Hidden” and is used to describe a number of books which were mainly written in the period between the end of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament. Among the best known of the books of the Apocrypha are the Book of Tobit, the Book of

Judith, the Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, the Story of the Three Holy Children, and 1 and 2 Maccabees.

The Roman Catholic Church in 1526 decreed that the apocryphal books are part of Holy Scripture. Protestants have rejected this claim. This is not to say they are all untruthful (the Church of England reckons them worthy of being read for instruction, and the Maccabees gives us useful historical information), but we do not accept them as inspired.

What grounds have we for this? Well, it would seem that some of the material is not reliable, containing anachronisms, and most of it is of a different standard from that of the Word of God. In places, the writers themselves seem to disclaim inspiration. But, especially:

1. The books of the Apocrypha are not found in the Hebrew Old Testament. The famous Jewish historian Josephus (c. 37-95) speaks of the canon of the Old Testament which the Jewish nations possessed. His list is the same as our Old Testament, the Apocrypha excluded.

This Old Testament canon was accepted by the Jews when the Lord Jesus was here on earth. Many, many of the faults and traditions of the Jewish people He reprov'd, but never their view of what should be included in Holy Scripture.

2. The Lord Jesus continually quoted from the Old Testament but never from the Apocrypha. Likewise the New Testament writers. It is said that there are 263 direct quotations from the Old Testament; none from the Apocrypha. Of the 370 or more allusions to the Old Testament in the New, all appear to be to our Old Testament books; none to the Apocrypha.

The Friendly Companion 1985

(Editor's note: We were recently asked the same questions as those at the top of this article. At the same time, we came upon this piece by Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom. We thought it might be of help to others.)

THE MINISTRY OF SINGING (5)

The Lord's people will experience different seasons for singing His praises. The life of Hezekiah shows us an example of some of those seasons. When Hezekiah became king over Judah, the temple of God was in disrepair through the neglect of his own father. For a long time, the doors of the temple had not been opened. The lamps had been put out, the burnt incense had not been presented, and no burnt offerings were made. The Levites had not been sanctified (set apart) for their holy office. Hezekiah encouraged the priests and the Levites to prepare themselves and the temple for the worship of God. When all was ready, *"he set the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: for so was the commandment of the LORD by His prophets."* Hezekiah further *"commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the LORD with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped."* What a joyous season when the temple was again used as the place of worship!

Many years after this, Hezekiah came into a heavy trial. He was very sick and death seemed near. The enemy was threatening to destroy Jerusalem. While in this state, God sent the prophet Isaiah to the king with a solemn message: *"Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live."* How hopeless everything appeared! Yet, Hezekiah prayed unto the Lord and wept sore before Him. The LORD sent Isaiah back to Hezekiah to tell him: *"I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee. ... And I will add unto thy days fifteen years."*

As soon as his health and strength were restored, Hezekiah went up to the temple and worshipped God, saying: *"The Lord was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the Lord."* What a lesson there is in the experience of Hezekiah!

WONDERS OF GOD'S CREATION

The Circulatory System

Have you gone outside when it is very cold without wearing gloves? Perhaps you have noticed that within a few minutes your fingers started to become numb. That is a result of your circulatory system. The circulatory, or cardiovascular, system consists of the heart and blood vessels. While its primary function is to deliver blood throughout the body and return it to the heart, it also helps regulate temperature, fight disease, and transport hormones to maintain a constant state within the body. Did you know that if you were to lay all the blood vessels in your body from end to end, they would stretch over 60,000 miles? That is enough to circle the earth at the equator more than twice! What a remarkable testament to efficiency and design by God, the Creator!

The heart includes four chambers: the left and right atrium, and the left and right ventricle. The left side of your heart is separated from the right side of your heart to prevent oxygen-rich blood from mixing with oxygen-poor blood. Blood enters the heart through the right atrium and is pumped into the right ventricle. From there it is pumped to the lungs via the pulmonary arteries to receive oxygen. Once the blood has picked up oxygen, it travels back to the heart through the pulmonary veins to the left atrium and on to the left ventricle. The blood is pumped out from the left ventricle to be dispersed to the rest of the body.

Valves separate the atrium from the ventricle on each side of the heart. Valves also direct the flow of blood from the right ventricle into the pulmonary artery and from the left ventricle into the aorta. The valves function like doors, in that they open only one way, which keeps the blood flowing in the right direction. What an amazing design this is! If a valve fails to close fully, or if the timing of the valves opening and closing is not coordinated correctly, the heart is unable to perform its job. Once again, we see how every part of the circulatory system must have been present in its exact place, with the

correct sequencing from the very beginning, in order for the heart to function properly. This did not come about by chance, but by careful design!

Arteries are thick, large-diameter blood vessels that carry blood away from the heart. The walls of arteries need to be thick and elastic in order to be able to withstand higher pressure as blood is pumped from the heart. All arteries, except the pulmonary artery, carry oxygen-rich blood to every part of the body. As the arteries form branches to the most distant parts of the body, they become smaller and smaller. Arteries branch into arterioles, which then branch into capillaries. Capillaries have very thin membranes, or walls, which allow for the easy exchange of oxygen and nutrients with the tissues they supply.

Capillaries serve as the connection between the arteries and veins. They allow for the efficient exchange of carbon dioxide and waste from the tissues to the blood. As blood flows back to the heart, it travels from capillaries to venules, and then to the larger veins. Veins are thinner and less elastic blood vessels, since the pressure in the veins is not as great as in arteries. Both arteries and veins rely on contractions of smooth muscles that line their walls to help move the blood forward. However, veins also have a unique feature, in that they have valves periodically along them. Like the valves in the heart, they only open when pushed from one direction, which helps keep the blood flowing toward the heart and prevents it from back-flowing.

Physically, many things that are vital for life come from the heart. How important it is to have a healthy heart! But how much more so spiritually, to have a heart that is right with God. If our physical heart does not deliver the oxygen and nutrients that are necessary for life, our body will soon fail and die. So it is spiritually. Scripture tells us that *“out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries”* and every evil thing (Matthew 15:19). Every part of our being is corrupted by the

evil that comes from our heart by nature. Unless we are given a new heart by grace, the result must be eternal death. How vital it is to experience a new creation, wherein a new heart is given, through which we may have fellowship with God. As the body is sustained physically by the natural heart, so the soul of a believer is sustained by the Spirit dwelling in the new heart.

Contributed

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

THE FAITH OF FAITHFUL ABRAHAM (5)

A Terrible Mistake

Everyone born into this world is born a sinner. *“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me”* (Psalm 51.5). Even the most godly, gracious person, who fears the Lord greatly, is still a sinner. Yet how few there are who feel their sin and confess it before God. One of our hymnwriters says:

Though all are sinners in God’s sight,
There are but few so in their own.

Do we know ourselves as sinners? Anyone can say that they are a sinner, but it is only as the Holy Spirit makes us alive to spiritual things and convicts us of our sins that we feel we are sinners and grieve over that sin. Abraham was a sinner, yet one who had found grace in the sight of the Lord. By the grace of God, he sought to please the Lord and to walk humbly before Him in obedience and submission. However, like every child of God, he still had the sinful nature that he was born with. We have already considered how the Lord gave Abraham faith to believe His word, to trust in Him, to follow and obey Him, and how the Lord promised Abraham that he would have a son born to him who would be his heir. And yet, when year after year passed, and there was no sign of God’s promise being fulfilled, Abraham and Sarah tried to hasten the matter.

The Word of God says: *“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding”* (Proverbs 3.4). Sadly and very solemnly, Abraham (and Sarah) did lean to their own understanding. They thought it was now impossible for Sarah to have a child. What was to be done? *“And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold, now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai”* (Genesis 16. 2). We do not read that Abraham asked counsel of the Lord and made it a matter of prayer. It appears that he listened to Sarah and thought it a “good idea” and went ahead with what she had suggested. Really, they were taking matters into their own hands. God had not yet given them the child He had promised, but they thought they could see another way in which God meant it to happen. A son was born, called Ishmael, but he was a cause of much trouble and sorrow to Abraham, and the descendants of Ishmael have ever since been antagonistic to the Jews. Ishmael was not the son God had promised.

How often we may be tempted to lean upon our own understanding, rather than to believe the Word of God. David did this when he said, *“I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines”* (1 Samuel 27. 1). God had anointed David to be the next king over Israel, but because David felt his life was constantly in danger, he ran away into the enemy’s land. This also proved to be a terrible mistake and caused David much sorrow.

An example of how man, by nature, will lean to his own understanding (or the understanding of another man) rather than believe the Word of God, is found in the false theory of evolution against the true teaching of creation. Man trusts his own intelligence, believing that these cunningly-devised theories must be facts. *“Let God be true, and every man a liar.”* How favoured we are, if we are blessed with those who truly believe that: *“Through **faith** we understand that the*

worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Hebrews 11.3).

Of all the sins we commit, perhaps the very greatest is the sin of unbelief. Unbelief is the very opposite of faith. Faith believes the Word of God; unbelief does not. And though Abraham’s faith is commended in the Word of God, yet it is evident that in trying to hasten the fulfilment of God’s promise, there was unbelief mixed with his faith. What great need we have to be found in that word: “*Who are **kept** by the power of God **through faith** unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time*” (1 Peter 1.5).

If we try to reason things out or interpret circumstances according to our own wisdom and understanding, we are also in grave danger of making terrible mistakes in our lives. We will have to suffer the consequences of so doing. Although Ishmael was born and Abraham was the father, this was not of faith. Abraham must have grieved God the Holy Spirit. It appears that for thirteen long and weary years, God did not communicate with Abraham. God was hiding His face. Compare Genesis 16 verse 16 and the very next verse Genesis 17 verse 1. God-given faith will be tried. That is, it will be tested and proved. The trying of faith, which is “more precious than gold,” may for a time seem to burn up all that we thought we had. Yet, in the end, that faith will be found “*unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ*” (1 Peter 1.7). The Lord will appear! And Abraham proved God’s word was true when Isaac was born.

Like Abram and Sarah, have I
Endeavoured with reason and wit,
Some blessing to get and enjoy
Much sooner than God promised it;
Like them too, I’ve proved in the end,
My labour brought bondage and pain;
And yet (O how faithful’s my Friend!)
In due time the true blessing came.

A.T. Pickett

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about VINES AND GRAPES. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail. (See page 170 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. Who had a dream about a vine with three branches which "brought forth ripe grapes"? (Genesis 40.10)
2. Which animals does the Bible say "...spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes"? (Song of Solomon 2.15)
3. A tree is known by its fruit. On which bush would you not expect to find grapes (Luke 6.44), and what would you not expect to find on a vine? (James 3.12)
4. Jesus said, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." What happens to branches which do not bear fruit? (John 15.2,5,6)
5. Why are vines pruned, or "purged" as in John 15.2?
6. Isaiah 18 mentions a time of pruning of vines. When did this happen?
7. Vines are grown for their grapes, and without fruit, they are of no use. In emphasising this, Ezekiel 15 gives examples of two things a vine could not be used for. What are they?
8. Who was the first person we read of in the Bible who planted a vineyard? In what way was it a snare to him? (Genesis 9)
9. Who spoke the parable in which the vine said, "Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?" (Judges 9)
10. "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge." In which two places in the Bible is this proverb mentioned?

ANSWERS TO JULY QUESTIONS

1. "Let us go to Dothan."
2. Sarah "laughed within herself."
3. "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise."

4. Miriam became "leprous, white as snow."
5. David's eldest brother, Eliab.
6. "Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom" (2 Samuel 18.5,12)
7. Isaac and Esau. (Genesis 27.1-5)
8. Hezekiah. (Isaiah 37.4)
9. The fig tree dried up from the roots and withered away. (Mark 11.12-14,20,21)
10. "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Matthew 9.12, Mark 2.17, Luke 5.31)

Contributed

A CHILD'S MESSAGE

A mason, or brick-layer, came into the room where relatives and friends had gathered to mourn the death of a dear little boy. Tears rolled down the cheeks of the mason, as he said, "Perhaps you wonder that I care so much, but your little boy was a messenger of God to me. One time, I was coming down a long ladder from a very high roof. Your little boy was standing close beside me when I reached the ground. He looked up into my face with childish wonder and asked a question in his simple way.

"Weren't you afraid of falling when you were up so high?"

"Before I had time to answer, he said, 'Oh, I know why you were not afraid! You said your prayers this morning before you began your work.'

"I had not prayed; but I never forgot to pray from that day to this, and, by God's blessing, I never will."

Cheering Words 1993

ALL

Two friends were one day talking about a rich man who had died. One of them said, "Do you know how much he has left?" The other replied soberly, "ALL."

There was once a poor lad, very ignorant and shabby; he had a dull brain that would not do its work properly. But he had learned the hardest lesson in his own simple way – "This poor sinner is nothing at all, but Jesus Christ is ALL in ALL."

Where is your ALL – on earth, in your home? Or are you by God's grace laying up treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through or steal?

Cheering Words 1993

THE BIBLE

Where else could man for comfort go,
When sin he feels and grief does know,
Than to the Book inspired by God,
That precious powerful living Word?

For in the Bible, words there are
Which do not change from year to year,
And many for their souls find food
Within this powerful Word of God.

For truths are here which bring delight,
Though not beheld by earthly sight,
And joys these pages still afford
To those who love this powerful Word.

And O may I those blessings prove
And in my heart that Word much love;
Then blessed I'll be through truths there stored
From this most powerful Word of God.

Ray Chaplin, Cheering Words 1993

The Friendly Companion



“Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever” (Psalm 45.6).

September 2017

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

The month of September is a month of change. Many of you will begin a new grade or level at school, which is often a significant change. For some of you, it may mean a change in the school building you attend. Such a change may fill you with anxiety. There will be new teachers to meet, along with new classmates. All this can be very intimidating!

September also brings a change in the weather. In September the earth reaches the autumnal equinox, when day and night are of the same length all over the earth. For those in the northern hemisphere, there is a change from the very warm and humid days of summer to the crisp, cool mornings and evenings of autumn.

Amidst these changes, we are reminded of those things which cannot change. Firstly, God's promise concerning the seasons does not change. In the days of Noah He declared: *"While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease"* (Genesis 8.22). From that time up to the present day, the seasons have come and gone without fail. All the sins of mankind through the years have not and will not keep this promise from being fulfilled. The Lord gives the reason in Malachi 3.6: *"For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."*

Secondly, the Word of the Lord does not change. The Lord's message to all the inhabitants of the earth is the same in our day as in every former age. The law of God never changes in its demands of perfect obedience. The promises of God never change: *"For all the promises of God in Him [Jesus] are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God ..."* (2 Corinthians 1.20). That means they are sure and certain.

Thirdly, the Lord Jesus Himself never changes. *"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever"* (Hebrews 13.8). He never changes in His thoughts, His love, His compassion, and His mercy towards His people! The Apostle James gave witness to this beautiful truth when he wrote: *"Every good gift*

and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness [change], neither shadow of turning” (James 1.17).

Fourthly, the gospel of the Lord Jesus never changes, for it is called the everlasting gospel that is to be preached to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.

We conclude with some lines found in a well-known hymn of Mr. Henry Francis Lyte:

Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.

What a suitable prayer for us day by day!
With loving wishes from the Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER

Some of you will quickly recognise the picture on the front cover as a throne. Those friends who live in countries with kings and queens have a better understanding of what a throne may signify. A throne represents power, authority, and exaltation. In former centuries kings ruled supreme. Their word became the law of the land. Their decisions were final. Today most kings and queens reign as figureheads, with a body of parliament (elected officials) making the laws.

The Word of God speaks of distinct thrones. The “*throne of David*” was one such throne (2 Samuel 3.10). It speaks of kingship, which David received, along with those who descended from him. Of course, David and each of his descendants died and left the throne empty, until the coming of the Lord Jesus. Coming from the line of David, He received a throne. It was written of Him: “*the LORD sitteth King for ever*” (Psalm 29.10). Thus, He is called the King of kings.

The Bible also speaks of the “*throne of iniquity*” (Psalm 94.20). There are many of these thrones in the world today. They may be places of business, which promote sinful pleasures for their own profit. They may also be seats of

government, where legislators enact laws to legalise dangerous drugs, abort babies in the womb, and promote unions which the Word of God condemns. These thrones are found in the nations of the world and even some places of worship. The Bible tells us that they frame mischief by a law. There is another throne of iniquity which works far more havoc than all the rest, and that is the heart of man; your heart and my heart. The Lord tells us that out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, pride, covetousness, murders, and all manner of evils (Matthew 15.19 and Mark 7.21-23).

Then, there is the *"throne of grace,"* where God holds fellowship with poor, guilty sinners. Of course, this throne of grace represents the Lord Jesus Christ, where sinners obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. It might well be called *"A GLORIOUS HIGH THRONE"* (Jeremiah 17.12).

The Bible especially speaks of the *"throne of God."* It is the throne of judgment. It is called the throne of God and the Lamb. It is an eternal throne. *"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever"* (Psalm 45.6). Regarding this throne, the Lord Jesus has promised: *"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne"* (Revelation 3.21).

AN UNBELIEVER SILENCED

There was a certain infidel, or unbeliever, who was considered very wise by the world. He scorned all those who believed in God and mocked them when he could. On one occasion, he came into the company of a person of weak intellect, but a real Christian. Supposing that he would confuse him and display his own wit, he asked the following question: "I understand, sir, that you expect to go to heaven when you die; can you tell me what sort of a place heaven is?"

"Yes, sir," replied the Christian. "Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people; and if your soul is not prepared for it, with all your boasted wisdom, you will never enter there!"

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**SOLOMON BUILDS THE TEMPLE**

When he had been king four years, Solomon began to build the house of the LORD. He asked Hiram, the king of Tyre, to send him cedar trees and fir trees from the forest of Lebanon. Great and costly stones were also used. The stones and the timber were cut before bringing them, *“so ... neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron was heard in the house, while it was in building.”*

Solomon was seven years in building the temple. Two large pillars stood before it. The walls were carved with cherubims and palm trees and open flowers. Everything was covered with pure gold and garnished *“with precious stones for beauty.”*

In the first room were a golden altar for incense, ten golden candlesticks, and ten golden tables. In the most holy place, Solomon made two large cherubims covered with gold. They stood with their wings stretched out, and under them the ark would be placed. *“And he made the vail of blue, and purple, and crimson, and fine linen, and wrought cherubims thereon.”* How beautiful the temple was that Solomon built for the LORD!

QUESTIONS:

1. How many years was Solomon in building the temple?
2. What was everything covered with? (2 words)
3. What did Solomon make in the most holy place?

Please send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail. (See page 194 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

ANSWERS TO AUGUST QUESTIONS

1. A little child.
2. An understanding heart.
3. Riches and honour.

*“So Solomon
built the
house, and
finished it.”*

1 Kings 6.14

BIBLE LESSONS**PAUL PREACHES TO THE ATHENIANS**

Paul stood alone before the great philosophers of Athens. What a crowd had gathered! It must have been noisy, as they talked together in anticipation of hearing what the new visitor to their city would say. You may wonder if Paul felt a little afraid or intimidated as he faced the Athenians. We are told that *“his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.”*

He knew that the philosophers of Greece, with all their education, and the people of Athens, with all their idols, were under the power of Satan. They were in great darkness, just as he had been as a Pharisee.

As he began to speak, a great hush came over the people. As we noticed last month, the Athenians and their visitors spent all their time in telling or hearing of something new.

First, Paul charged them with being too superstitious. He meant that they believed in and had reverence for things which should not be objects of worship. You may remember that he saw one of their altars with the inscription: *“TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.”* From this observation, Paul began his address, saying, *“Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you.”* He told them of the God that made the world and all things in it. He told them that this God is Lord of heaven and earth and does not dwell in temples made by men.

This was indeed a new thing which they had never heard before. What a privilege you and I have, for many of us have heard of this God all our lives. Because we have heard of Him so much, perhaps we have hardened our hearts against Him. Thus, we are not filled with wonder and awe at who God is and what He has done.

Paul continued his address by declaring that God had made from one blood (one man) all nations of the earth and set the bounds of their habitation.

What Paul said next must have seemed even more strange and wonderful. His heart was full as he boldly declared: *“That*

they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring."

Paul reasoned that as God had made man in His own image, He must not be compared to images of stone, such things as are cut and graven and formed by the hand of men. For many years, God had left these Gentiles in their ignorance. Now in the days of the gospel, He exhorts all men everywhere to repent and turn from their wicked ways.

Paul went on to say that God had appointed a day of judgment. The whole world would be judged by Jesus, whom God raised from the dead.

The people listened intently until Paul spoke of the resurrection of the dead. Then some began to mock. They thought that such talk was foolishness. They laughed and made light of it. How many do the same today! Others said that they would like to hear him speak again about these things.

Were there any who believed Paul's preaching? Yes, certain men stuck close to the apostle. One was an Areopagite named Dionysius. Another was a woman named Damaris. Perhaps these were two very influential persons and were thus named. However, a number of others also believed the words of Paul.

You can read about this in Acts chapter 17 verses 21 to 34.

QUESTIONS:

1. How did the Athenians spend their days? (8 words)
2. What did God make from one blood? (5 words)
3. What three things did Paul say we do in Him?
4. What did Paul say that God exhorts all men everywhere to do? (7 words)
5. What did Paul say that God had appointed? (4 words)

Please send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail. (See page 194 for the addresses). Remember

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

ANSWERS TO AUGUST QUESTIONS

1. Berea.
2. With all readiness of mind.
3. Searched the Scriptures daily.
4. To the unknown god.
5. Mars Hill.

THE CALLING OF SAMUEL

We read in 1 Samuel 3 that *“Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child”* (1 Samuel 3.8). There are several lessons to be learned in this.

1. Samuel was surrounded by worship at the tabernacle in Shiloh, and had, no doubt, been instructed by Eli about the many things pertaining to that worship. But we read: *“Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him”* (1 Samuel 3.7). This shows us that while a godly upbringing is a great blessing in many ways, it can only bring salvation when it is used by God for our conversion.

2. The LORD called Samuel three times audibly, before Eli and ultimately Samuel (the fourth time), knew that it was the voice of God. This shows us how patient God is in calling sinners, and in Samuel’s case how gentle, and on our part how slow we are to learn!

3. The first effect of the call of Samuel was to bring forth prayer. *“Speak, for Thy servant heareth”* (1 Samuel 3.10). It is interesting to note that Samuel left out the word LORD from the prayer that Eli had instructed him. Perhaps he felt the word was too holy for him, a child, to pronounce.

4. Samuel’s prayer implied an ear to listen and a heart to obey what God had told him. Often children may hear something a parent says, and yet not want to obey, so they pretend they have not heard! This is the reason why the Lord

Jesus said, *“Take heed what ye hear,”* and *“Take heed how ye hear.”* And again: *“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”*

5. The call of Samuel made him honest. The LORD had told him very sad tidings about Eli and his family, upon whom the LORD was about to pour out His wrath. When Eli charged him to tell everything, we read: *“Samuel told him every whit”* (1 Samuel 3.18). The fear of the Lord has that effect in the heart and life of sinners called by grace. It makes them honest before God and man.

6. Although Eli was so much older than Samuel, yet when the young lad was called by God, they became brothers in the family of God. Eli showed great grace and humility in receiving such a sermon of reproof from such a young minister!

7. The whole chapter shows that none are too young for God to call by His grace, and that when He does call, it is an effectual and permanent call. It also shows us that God’s way of calling sinners is sovereign. Some are very gently led into the truth, while others are driven to it by God’s severe judgments. In Samuel’s case, the words of Jeremiah in Lamentations were fulfilled: *“It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth”* (Lamentations 3.27).

G.D. Buss

A SWEARER ALONE WITH GOD

Many years ago, an employer heard one of his workers swearing dreadfully at his horses. The employer was a carrier in a large town in Yorkshire, who hired others to transport his goods. This carrier was a man who feared God. He spent his Lord’s days as a teacher in the Sunday School and tried to promote the spiritual good of his fellow-creatures. He was shocked at the terrible oaths that could be heard through the yard. He went up to the young man, who was just setting off with his cart for Manchester, and warned him about the serious nature of his sin. Then he added, “If you insist on swearing,

stop till you get through the turnpike on the moor, where none but God and yourself can hear.”

The young man cracked his whip and continued on his journey; but he could not get over his master’s words. Sometime after, his employer observed him in the yard and was very much surprised to see him so altered. There was a seriousness and quietness about him, which he had never seen before. He often seemed as if he had something to say that he could not get out. At last, the employer was so struck with his manner that he asked the young man if he needed something.

The young man said, “Do you remember what you said to me about swearing? I was thunderstruck. I went on the road, and I got through the turnpike and reached the moor. There I thought that, although I was alone, yet God was with me. I trembled to think how He had been with me, and He had known all my sins and follies all my life long. My sins came to my remembrance, and I was afraid that He would strike me dead. I thank God that I have been aroused to seek after the salvation of my poor soul.”

The employer, as may be supposed, was overjoyed to hear the young man’s confession. His subsequent conduct gave proof that he had ceased to be a slave to sin. A word spoken in due season, how good it is!

The Christian’s Monthly Record 1888

“I DO NOT KNOW THE TUNE”

In the year 1814, the late Mr. and Mrs. Foster were acquainted with three sisters living in London. Two of them were godly, gracious women; the third was worldly and irreligious. They were all elderly, which made the lightness of the third less becoming, and also made her more inclined to take offence at any remarks made about her behaviour. She hated the spirit of her sisters, and was often spiteful and petty towards them, though they tried to bear with her.

One night, towards the end of the year 1814, she had been out at a ball very late. The next morning, at breakfast, she was acting so differently from usual, that her sisters feared that she was either unwell, or that something had gone wrong. Instead of her usual chatter about what she had done the night before, she sat sullen and silent, taken up with her own thoughts. As she would eat nothing, her sisters asked if she was ill.

"No."

"What is the matter?"

"Nothing."

They were afraid something had upset her, but she told them that her matters were not their concern.

She spent the whole morning alone in her room, and at dinner time, the same scene recurred as in the morning. She scarcely ate anything and never spoke, except to answer unwillingly what she was asked, but with obvious depression and obstinacy that spread its influence over her sisters. The next morning saw no change.

"Anna, are you not well? Does your head hurt?"

"I am well, and I have no pain."

"Then you have something on your mind. Why will you not tell us? We are family, and we love you and want the best for you. We would like to help you if you are feeling sad."

"Oh, you have enough superstitions of your own, without mine being added. I shall not tell you what is bothering me, so you do not need to worry about it. I am sure you would be delighted to know, for you would think it some spiritual triumph or other. But I laugh at those things. I am not quite old enough yet to be the victim of dreams and visions."

"Anna, we don't believe in dreams and visions."

She answered sharply, "No; nor would I like you to!"

The second day passed like the first, and on the third she again began the day looking deeply troubled. As her sisters looked at her, one of them suddenly said, "Anna, what was your dream?"

She flinched and laughed wildly. “Ha, what was it indeed? You would give the world to know, but I shall not tell you. I thought you did not believe in dreams?”

“Normally we do not. They are often random thoughts and images that do not make sense, and we soon forget about them. But no doubt there are dreams which are not sent in vain, any more than afflictions or any other warning. There is a verse in the Bible which mentions God as speaking to man in a dream *‘in the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon man.’*”

She laughed again, and said, “You have verses in the Bible for everything that suits you; but I do not choose to be warned in such a way. I have no doubt I shall get it out of my head in a day or two.”

“Anna, we would really like you to tell us. If you really have had a dream from heaven, you surely would not wish to forget it; and if not, we can help you to stop thinking about it.”

Half sulkily, she answered, “Well I suppose if you must know it, you must. It was very extraordinary, no doubt. I should have thought it the effects of the ball, but I never saw anywhere anything in the least resembling it. And you must not suppose that you understand what I am about to relate, for you never saw, and can never imagine, anything like it.

“I thought that I was walking in a wide street of the city. Many other people were walking there, but there was something about them which struck me. They were thoughtful and cheerful, neither occupied with business or with pleasure, but having about them such dignity of repose, such high and settled purpose, such peace and such purity, as never were stamped on human brow.

“The light of the city was also strange. It was not like the sun, for there was nothing to dazzle. It was not the moon, for all was clear as day. It seemed an atmosphere of light – calm, lovely, changeless.

“As I looked at the buildings, they seemed like palaces, but not like palaces of earth. The pavement that I walked on, and the houses I saw, were made of gold. It was indeed a place to

which hope might lead – where love might dwell. I could not help crying out, ‘Surely these are the habitations of righteousness and truth.’

“I could not tell why I would not have wanted to stay in this place forever, and yet its very purity oppressed me. I saw nothing congenial, though looks of kindness met me in every face of that happy throng. I felt nothing responsive. I returned in silence their friendly greetings, and walked on, oppressed and sad.

“I saw that they all went one way, and I followed, wondering at the reason. At length I saw them all cross over to a building, much larger than the rest. I saw them ascend its massive steps, and enter beneath its ample porch. I felt no desire to go with them, but approached as far as the foot of the steps from curiosity. I saw people dressed in costumes of all nations, but they disappeared within the porch, and then I saw them cross the hall. It was not marble, it was not gold; but light, pure light, consolidated into form. It was the moon without her coldness; it was the sun without its dazzling ray. It was indeed beautiful, but it made me shudder, and turn away.

“As I turned, I saw one upon the lower step, looking at me with an interest so intense, that I stopped to hear what he said. He asked me in a voice like liquid music, ‘Why do you turn away? Is there peace elsewhere? Is there pleasure in the works of darkness?’

“I stood silent, and neither answered nor moved. Suddenly he disappeared, and another took his place, with the same look and the same manner. I got weary and angry, and said, ‘I will not enter. I do not like your clothing, and I am oppressed with your whiteness.’

“He sighed and was gone. Many passed by me, and looked at me with mingled pity and kindness. One young, bright messenger entreated me to enter with a voice and manner I could not resist. ‘Do not turn,’ he said. ‘Where canst thou go? Do not linger, for why should you weary yourself for naught? Enter here and taste of happiness. Do not all go in? Are any

rejected? Do not all tribes and all colours press into that hall? Are they not washed, and clothed, and comforted?"

"He gave me his hand, and I entered along with him. I know not how I mounted the bright stairs by his side. Oh, what a sight burst upon me when I reached their summit. But mortal words cannot describe, nor mortal imagination in any way conceive. I sank down, overpowered and wretched. I crept into a corner, and tried to hide myself, for I saw that I had nothing in common with the blessed residents of such a place. Their songs and looks of gratitude shone forth in their appearances. At length I saw One taller than the rest, and in every way more fair, more dazzling, more majestic, surpassing human thought. To Him each eye was turned, and in His face each face was brightened. The song was in His honour, and all seemed to drink from Him their life and joy. As I gazed, in speechless and trembling amazement, one who saw me left the company, and came to where I stood.

"‘Why are you so silent?’ he asked me. ‘Come quickly and join in the song.’ I felt sudden anger in my heart, and I answered with sharpness, ‘I will not join in your song, for I do not know the tune.’ What could it be that put such feelings into my heart?

"At length, the Lord of that glorious company came to speak to me. My every pulse was thrilled with awe. I felt my blood curdle and the flesh upon me tremble, and yet my heart grew harder and harder, and my voice was bold. He spoke, and deep-toned music seemed to issue from His lips. ‘Why sittest thou so still, when all around thee are glad? I have triumphed! Come, join the song, for now My people reign.’

"Love, ineffable, unutterable, seemed to beam upon me, as though it would have melted a heart of stone, but I melted not. I gazed one instant and said again, ‘I will not join the song, for I do not know the tune.’

"His look was as lightning; in a voice louder than thunder, He said to me, ‘What doest thou here?’

"The floor beneath me opened, and I sank into flames. With the fright I awoke."

There was a momentary silence, for the two sisters were shocked and distressed, and neither thought the dream was the effects of natural causes.

“Anna,” they said, “we cannot wish to help you to forget such a dream. Your description of the holy city may be an impression from much the same description as in the Revelation. All who enter must put off their own righteousness and be clothed with the imputed righteousness of Christ. They come up out of great tribulation and wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb. They cease not to praise Him, and they sing a new song known only to the redeemed. Wisdom waits daily at the steps to call to the sons of men. Ministers are appointed to preach the gospel. Oh, Anna, you know something of the way! Hearken to this fearful warning.”

Anna’s brow darkened, and she answered, “I do not want you to preach to me; I shall do as I please.”

She continued in this state until the end of that week, and was found dead in her bed. None knew the cause of her death. She died without disease and without spiritual change.

From The Sower 1887, also Friendly Companion 1972

WONDERS OF GOD’S CREATION

The Blood

Last month we learned about the circulatory system, our heart and the blood vessels that carry blood to and from the heart. This month we hope to look specifically at blood. Blood is that precious, vital substance, created by God and often spoken about in His Word. Blood is necessary for human life. The Bible says: “*For the life of the flesh is in the blood*” (Leviticus 17.11). There are about 5 litres or 1.3 gallons of blood in the average human body, all of which is pumped through the heart in about one minute.

Blood is primarily made of blood cells and plasma. Plasma is a liquid that easily transports many vital substances through

the body. Plasma makes up about half of the blood, while the other half is made of red cells, white cells, and platelets.

Red cells are the most abundant type of blood cells. They have a specific protein, called haemoglobin, that gives blood its red colour. Haemoglobin binds to oxygen, allowing the red cells to carry it to different parts of the body. They also carry carbon dioxide back to the lungs to be exhaled.

There are several types of white blood cells. They make up only a small part of the blood, but they serve a very important purpose in fighting infections in the body.

The last type of blood cell is called platelets, which are actually made up of cell fragments. They help form clots by sticking together along an injured blood vessel, preventing blood from leaking out. You may have seen this when you have had a cut in your skin. At first, the blood seemed to be rushing out, but before long, it began to slow and eventually stopped. While platelets helped stop the bleeding, white blood cells were also busy working below the surface to protect you from any harmful germs that may have entered through the cut.

Blood is necessary to sustain life physically, and it is also vital spiritually. From the time that sin entered the world, blood became necessary for redemption; for *“without shedding of blood is no remission”* of sin (Hebrews 9.22). God showed this to Adam and Eve after they sinned, by clothing them with coats of skins. It is solemn that the first time we read of blood in the Bible is when the life of Abel was taken (Genesis 4.10). Think of all the blood that was shed by the Israelites as they offered their sacrifices to God. Yet, it could not satisfy God’s wrath against sin nor pay the price of redemption. How awful sin must be, that only the perfect and pure blood of His beloved Son could atone for His people. Just as blood is vital for natural life, it is vital to be under the saving blood of Christ spiritually: *“... the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin”* (1 John 1.7)

Contributed

THE FAITH OF FAITHFUL ABRAHAM (6)**The Lord performs His Word**

There were thirteen long, weary years, when it seems the Lord did not speak to Abraham concerning the promise of an heir. Both Abraham and Sarah were getting older, and Ishmael, who was not the true heir, was growing up. Then the Lord suddenly spoke again to Abraham: *"And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect. And I will make My covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly"* (Genesis 17.1,2). It was at this time that the Lord confirmed His word by way of a covenant, or agreement. God informed Abraham that not only would he have an heir, but also his descendants would multiply exceedingly. They would become many nations, and some would become kings.

It is concerning this we read of Abraham: *"Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness"* (Romans 4.18-22). What a wonderful thing is faith, which enables one to look away from everything natural, everything of the flesh, everything that is of our own common sense or understanding, and look to the Lord and believe in Him and His Word!

However, when Sarah heard that she would have a child, she laughed in an unbelieving way. *"And the Lord said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?"* (Genesis 18.13) She put a question mark against the Word of God. May the Lord keep us

from also questioning what His Word says in an unbelieving way. The Lord then said: *"Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son"* (Genesis 18.14).

As we live our lives, we have to prove that many things are too hard for us. At school, college, university, or in the work place, those things come which we find we are not able to do, because they are just too hard. If the Lord has taught us anything of our need of salvation, we will also prove that we cannot save ourselves from our sins – it is too hard; or bring forth a righteousness which is acceptable unto God – it is too hard; we are unable to do it. But O, for that God-given faith that looks alone to the Lord Jesus Christ, to His holy Word and those gracious, precious promises. That faith will enable us to believe in Him, to venture to Him and cast the care of our never-dying souls upon Him, and to prove that He is able to save and His blood is able to atone. *"Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them"* (Hebrews 7.25).

"And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him" (Genesis 21.1,2). Because God is faithful, and nothing is too hard for Him! As Abraham held his baby son, Isaac, he would have remembered all that the Lord had spoken to him. The promise of this son had been greatly tried; Abraham was called to wait many years for the fulfilment of God's promise, and at times he might have given up hope. Still, he saw the Lord's goodness and faithfulness, and he would have given all the glory unto God. The Lord often brings His people into circumstances where they are brought away from all hope in and of themselves, wherein they are taught of the Spirit to look to the Lord, to depend upon Him to manage everything, and to wait patiently for Him. In this way, the Lord will bring forth glory unto His own name, and His

people will be humbled before Him and ascribe all the praise to Him alone.

Much of modern-day religion seeks to rob God of His glory. Man, being proud by nature, likes to think he can do or say things that look good in the eyes and ears of those around him, so that he might glory in what he has done. They are like the seed in the parable of the sower, which fell into the stony ground and shot up so quickly, as if to be seen by all around. Yet, having no root, it soon withered and died away. The Lord will always have His people rooted and built up in Him. Hence, where true faith is given, that faith will be tried; yet being tried, it will endure and bring forth fruit to God's honour and glory. So we see that Abraham could not glory in anything that he had done, but was brought to ascribe all glory to God.

He'll ne'er thee forsake, but surely perform
His word, though He take his way in the storm;
Yea, oft in the clouds of dejection He'll ride,
For He has determined His grace shall be tried.

A. Pickett

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about COMMON EXPRESSIONS FROM THE BIBLE. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail. (See page 194 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. What happens when "the blind lead the blind"? (Matthew 15.14)
2. What are "as a drop of a bucket"? (Isaiah 40.15)
3. When shall the watchmen "see eye to eye"? (Isaiah 52.8)
4. Who was "weighed in the balances and ... found wanting"? (Daniel 5.27)
5. Who said, "I have learned by experience..."? (Genesis 30.27)

6. What will happen “in the twinkling of an eye”? (1 Corinthians 15)
7. What did Job imply his friends should not do, “seeing the root of the matter” was found in him? (Job 19)
8. “So ... put the words in her mouth.” Who put the words in whose mouth? (2 Samuel 14)
9. We sometimes hear the expression, “go the extra mile.” What does the Bible actually say? (Matthew 5)
10. Who used the expression “the powers that be” and to whom was he writing?

ANSWERS TO AUGUST QUESTIONS

1. Pharaoh's chief butler.
2. The little foxes.
3. Bramble, figs.
4. They are taken away and burnt.
5. Vines are pruned “that they may bring forth more fruit”.
6. “Afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening in the flower.” (Isaiah 18.5)
7. You cannot use the vine wood for any work, or make a pin from it to hang anything on it. (Ezekiel 15.3)
8. Noah; he made wine from the grapes and became drunk. (Genesis 9. 20-21)
9. Jotham. (Judges 9.7,13)
10. Jeremiah 31.29; Ezekiel 18.2.

Contributed

HIS KINGDOM

'Tis to Thee we owe allegiance,
God our Saviour and our King.
May we render true obedience;
Every day our tribute bring;
And with rapture
Of Thy love and glory sing.

May we bow to Thy dominion,
Yielding to Thy righteous sway;
Careless of the world's opinion,
May we all Thy will obey.
Saviour, lead us,
Lead us in the perfect way.

Thine is greatness never wasting,
High Thou art, with glory crowned;
Thine a kingdom everlasting,
Grace and truth Thy throne surround;
While all others
Vanish and no more are found.

Happy they whom Thou dost govern;
Great their peace, their honour great;
Thee beholding, Thee their sovereign,
Thee enthroned in royal state;
Happy people!
Who before Thee ever wait.

Young People's Hymnal

The Friendly Companion



The Imperial State Crown – Crown Jewels, London

“... valiant for the Truth ...” (Jeremiah 9.3).

October 2017

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Throughout the history of the world, religious freedom has been the exception rather than the general practice. Religious freedom, such as God's people are blessed with and enjoy in some parts of the world, has come by small steps, through great sacrifices and hard labour. It is right for us to remember those individuals whom God raised up through the centuries to bring it about. They were given grace and wisdom to stand against great errors and powerful rulers, both religious and political. The progress toward religious freedom seemed very slow at times.

Since religious freedom is still not allowed in many countries of the world, we should be very thankful to God for it and very diligent in the practice of it. When you go up to the house of the Lord for worship, do you feel grateful to the Lord for the privilege you have?

In the fourth century (300), a sect called the Arians boldly asserted that only God the Father was divine. Thus, they denied that the Son and the Holy Ghost were equally God with the Father. With this error rapidly spreading, God raised up a man named Athanasius, who stood in defence of the doctrine of the Trinity.

The centuries that followed have very aptly been called the Dark Ages. They were called "dark" because of a lack of learning during this period. However, this period was especially marked by great spiritual darkness. Very few people had access to a Bible. Most of the religious leaders were themselves ignorant of the vital teaching of the Scriptures.

The Church of Rome thrived during these ages. Superstition, idolatry, and immorality prevailed among the people and the priests. The power of the Church of Rome increased, as it strove for world control and great wealth. One of the popes sent men, called friars, throughout Europe to sell indulgences. An indulgence was a paper claiming to give the pardon of sin. It could be purchased for a certain sum of money. If a man had committed murder or robbed someone,

he could purchase his pardon by paying money to the Church of Rome. The friars found that young students at the universities were ready to follow them in their teachings and practices.

During these dark times, God raised up leaders to oppose the common teaching and to enlighten the ignorance of the people. One of the first of these opponents was John Wycliffe. He is often called the “morning star” of the Reformation. John Huss, of Prague, also became an opponent through his writings. Both of these men were soon crushed by the persecuting power of the Church of Rome. Yet their writings and their teachings were one of the first steps towards religious freedom.

That brings us to another step. The end of this month marks the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther taking his bold stand against the sinful practices of the Church of Rome. No doubt you have heard or read of his ninety-five theses, which he nailed to the church door in the city of Wittenberg. In these theses, Martin Luther exposed the many errors of the Church of Rome.

Having lived as a monk in a monastery, Martin Luther had tried with all his might to please God by his own works. There was no task too menial for him to gladly perform. However, he found that all his works could not take away his guilt or give the pardon of his sins. His superiors in the church told him that he must work harder to appease the justice of God. Still, he found his heart was so evil that it never could do a work to please a holy God.

Martin Luther lay in his monastery cell weeping, unable to eat or drink or sleep because of the terrors of God. It was said that at times he would cry out with shrieks under a sense of God’s holiness and his own vileness.

He found an old Latin Bible in the monastery library and went quietly day after day to read and study. How the devil assaulted him with temptations! His own conscience roared

with accusations, until it pleased God to open his understanding. He read the words in Romans 3.24-26, *“Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; ... that He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”* The Holy Spirit blessed these words to his soul. The light of God shone into his dark heart and mind. He believed that the Word of God was the supreme authority. Martin Luther found that popes, priests, and rulers were all fallen sinners, just as he had found himself to be. It was this belief that led to his writing the ninety-five theses.

Four years after nailing his theses to the church door, Luther was summoned to appear at Worms before the Emperor, Charles V, and his archduke and lesser dukes. Officials from the Church of Rome, archbishops, bishops, and abbots were gathered with them, as one great company, to question Luther. Before this imposing assembly, Martin Luther stood alone. When asked if he would recant or revoke what he had written, he stood firm and defended it all. As Luther came to a conclusion, he boldly stated: “Here I stand. I can do no other. So help me God.”

The stranglehold of the Church of Rome over the masses of the people was broken. Exposing her errors was one of the steps towards religious freedom: A MONUMENTAL STEP.

With loving wishes from the Editor.

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**THE CLOUD FILLS THE TEMPLE**

After the temple was built, Solomon called all the leaders of Israel to Jerusalem. They offered sacrifices to the LORD, more than could be counted. Priests brought the ark into the most holy place under the wings of the cherubims. Many Levites dressed in white linen stood beside the altar. Some sang, and others played trumpets and instruments of music to praise the LORD. When the priests came out of the temple, it was *“filled with a cloud.”* It was the sign of God’s holy presence.

Solomon made a platform before the altar and stood upon it. He blessed the congregation of Israel. Then he kneeled down before the people and spread forth his hands to heaven. He asked the Lord to hear the prayers that were offered toward the temple. When the people would be in any kind of trouble and turn to the Lord for help, Solomon prayed: *“Then hear Thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of Thy people Israel.”*

When Solomon ended his prayer, *“fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house.”*

QUESTIONS:

1. What filled the temple when the priests came out?
 2. What did Solomon do before the people? (2 words)
 3. What came down from heaven upon the offering?
- Please send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail. (See page 218 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.*

ANSWERS TO SEPTEMBER QUESTIONS

1. Seven.
2. Pure Gold.
3. Two cherubims.

“... and the
glory of the
LORD filled
the house.”

2 Chronicles 7.1

BIBLE LESSONS**PAUL ARRIVES IN CORINTH**

What an eventful time it had been for Paul at Athens! Yet he was not permitted to stay there. We are not told if a church was formed in Athens, although some think there was. After leaving Athens, Paul made his way to Corinth, one of the chief cities in Greece.

In Corinth, he met a Jew named Aquila and his wife Priscilla. They had recently come from Rome, because Claudius, the ruler of Rome, had commanded that all the Jews must leave that city.

Aquila and Priscilla made their living by making tents. What a wonderful provision this was for the apostle, as he had learned the same craft. Thus he could earn his own living while staying with them.

Every Sabbath day, Paul went into the synagogue and preached the gospel to the Jews and Gentiles who gathered there. At times Paul must have been very discouraged, because the greater part of the Jews opposed his teaching.

One day there was a special surprise for Paul. Silas and Timothy had finally arrived from Macedonia. The spirit of Paul was stirred by their coming. Feeling strengthened and emboldened, Paul more earnestly testified to the Jews that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ. The Jews hardened their hearts against the truth. They blasphemed the Word, speaking vile things against the Lord and His Word.

Paul could endure the reproach of the Jews against himself, but he could not bear their blasphemy of the Lord Jesus. Paul had once been a blasphemer himself, so his heart was very tender regarding such language.

With great disgust, he shook his raiment hard, as if to shake even the dust of their city off of him. He then declared a solemn charge against them: *"Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from thenceforth I will go unto the Gentiles."*

While most of the Jews rejected Paul's preaching, "*Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house.*" The greater part of those that believed were Gentiles. One was a man named Justus, whose house was next to the synagogue. When Paul went out of the synagogue, he entered his house and preached unto the people. The Bible tells us that many of the Corinthians believed and were baptized.

One night as Paul was wondering where he should go, the Lord appeared to him in a vision, saying: "*Be not afraid, but speak, and bold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city.*" For a year and a half, Paul laboured fervently to teach the Corinthians the Word of God.

While the church at Corinth was blessed with many converts, it was also very weak, with many errors in practice and doctrine. There were also divisions, which prevented unity among the believers. Some declared that they were followers of Paul, while others said that they were followers of a very eloquent man, named Apollos. Still others said they were followers of Peter.

Paul later wrote two different letters to the believers at Corinth to correct the many errors in that church. We know them as the First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians.

The unbelieving Jews were angry to see so many Gentiles believing the gospel that Paul preached. They made a great uproar and brought Paul before the deputy judge, saying: "*This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.*"

Before Paul could answer in his own defense, the deputy judge, whose name was Gallio, told the Jews that if the matter was a trespass against Roman law, he would listen to them. However, if it was only regarding names and doctrines of the Jewish laws, he would not be a judge over such matters.

You can read about this in Acts chapter 18 verses 1 to 15.

QUESTIONS:

1. To what city did Paul go from Athens?

2. What was the name of the Jew he stayed with, and his wife's name?
3. What did the Lord tell Paul to do in a vision of the night? (10 words)
4. Why did the Lord tell him to do this? (8 words)
5. What charge did the Jews bring against Paul? (11 words)

Please send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail (See page 218 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

ANSWERS TO SEPTEMBER QUESTIONS

1. In telling or hearing of something new.
 2. All nations of the earth.
 3. Live, and move, and have our being.
 4. Repent and turn from their wicked ways.
 5. A day of judgment.
-

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

Last month we had a picture of a throne, and we noticed the various thrones that are mentioned in the Bible. This month's picture is that of a crown. Usually when someone sits on a throne, a crown is set upon their head. However, not all crowns are worn by those who sit upon thrones.

Aaron, who was Israel's first high priest, was crowned with a mitre upon his head. It was a white linen crown, with a plate of pure gold tied to the front with a blue lace. The words "*HOLINESS TO THE LORD*" were engraved upon it (Exodus 39.30,31). Aaron wore this crown as he went about his official business of making an offering for the people. How beautiful that crown must have appeared to those Israelites who felt the guilt of their sins.

In the Book of Revelation, we read that the Lord Jesus was crowned with many crowns, and He is worthy of them all. Yet there is one crown that His people especially see great

beauty in, even though it was meant by His enemies to bring reproach and shame upon Him. It was the crown of thorns that the cruel soldiers made and put upon His sacred head. But how could there be any beauty in a crown of thorns? When His people are given faith to see the crown of thorns as their sins that were laid upon Him, it becomes such a wonder to them. The hymnwriter, Isaac Watts, described it so beautifully:

See! from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

The book of Proverbs tells us that: "*The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness*" (Proverbs 16.31). This refers to the gray or white hair that is often found upon the elderly. In the book of Leviticus we are told: "*Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God*" (Leviticus 19.32). David prayed that God would not forsake him when he was old and gray-headed, that he might show forth the strength and power of God to the next generations. The old saints in the church are a crown of glory when they manifest the tender fear of God and their conversation is heavenly.

We have mentioned a few earthly crowns, but the Scriptures also tell of spiritual crowns. For the Lord's dear people, there is laid up a "*crown of righteousness*" (2 Timothy 4.8), a "*crown of life*" (James 1.12), and a "*crown of glory*" (1 Peter 5.4).

AN INCIDENT CONNECTED WITH THE REFORMATION

In the 16th century, God raised up men whom He taught by His Holy Spirit to publish His Word and protest against the errors and practices of Rome. Although some of them were scholars and doctors, such as Luther, Calvin, and others, yet God also used some little-known people. The work was great

and the labourers few, but the cause was God's cause, and He used what instruments He pleased.

William Farel, a bold, undaunted preacher, had a young friend and helper named Anthony Fromant. Although poor, he was intelligent and sincere. Farel wanted to send him to Geneva to preach and teach the gospel. Farel had spent some months there himself and had witnessed several cases of conversion. However, through the enmity of the priests, he had been obliged to leave that city. Anthony Fromant was obscure and unknown as a Reformer, and for this reason, Farel urged him to go. Fromant was reluctant, wondering how he could face those enemies from whom Farel had been compelled to flee. Farel continued his entreaties, saying, "Fear nothing, but begin as I began, as a schoolmaster."

Fromant eventually consented, and Farel assured him that God would be his Guide. Fromant felt very humbled. He fell on his knees and prayed, "O God, I trust in no human power, but place myself entirely in Thy hands! To Thee I commit my cause, for it is Thy cause."

He did not pray alone; the little flock with Farel joined in, "O God, give him grace to be useful for the advancement of Thy Word!" They then embraced each other, and Fromant departed for Geneva. It was 1st November, 1532.

When he arrived, nothing appeared favourable. Even the few Christians Farel had directed him to, treated him coldly. When not one door opened to him, he became disheartened and was on the point of returning. He had only gone a few paces, when he felt convinced he was doing wrong. The promise, "I will guide thee in the way thou shouldest go," sounded in his heart. Farel's words also came to his mind: "Turn schoolmaster." He turned again to his lodgings, took up his pen, and wrote a prospectus [advertisement] as follows: "A man has just arrived in this city, who engages to teach reading and writing in one month to all who will come, young or old, even such as have never been to school. If they cannot read

within the said month, he asks nothing for his trouble. Many diseases are also cured, gratis [free].”

When this became known, the room he had taken was soon filled with boys and girls. Before dismissing them, he would read a few verses from the Testament and explain them in an interesting manner. The children ran home and told their parents all about it. The mothers stopped to listen; the fathers made them tell it over again. Some of the boys and girls were continually talking about what their schoolmaster taught them. They even stopped men and women in the streets, inviting them to come and “hear that man.” In a short time, the city was talking about the schoolmaster who taught and spoke French so well. But the priests and devout Roman Catholics were much irritated. “He is a devil,” said a priest. “He enchants all who go near him.”

In the course of his lessons, Fromant read at one time a story from the Old Testament; at another, one of our Lord’s sermons, giving the Scriptures as the Word of the living God. He explained and applied the doctrine affectionately to his hearers. They were much astonished, for they had never heard such things. In truth, a most astonishing work was going on in Geneva.

Paula, the wife of John Levett, had become very zealous for the Word. This lady had received instruction, and faith too, through the teaching of the preceding Evangelists, Farel and others. She earnestly desired to bring her sister-in-law, Claudine, to hear the gospel.

One day, when Paula was entreating Claudine to come and hear the schoolmaster, the latter said, “I have so great a horror of him, for fear of being bewitched, I will neither see nor hear him.” After much contention between the two women, Paula urged her sister-in-law to hear him at least once. At last, Claudine yielded to her entreaties. However, she hung crosses and rosaries around her neck in an attempt to shield herself from Fromant’s “enchantments.”

Claudine entered the hall and sat down in front of the speaker, with mockery and derision. Fromant appeared with a Book in his hand. He mounted a table and began his discourse, opening and applying the treasures of the gospel. Claudine, wishing to make her Roman Catholicism known, crossed herself several times, and also repeated several prayers. Fromant continued to unfold the Scriptures, and Claudine at length raised her eyes, astonished at what she heard. She listened, and before long, there was not a more attentive hearer in the congregation. Fromant's voice alone would have been wasted, had not the Spirit of God enlightened the woman's understanding by His convincing power. She drank in the Reformer's words. Yet, a sharp struggle was going on within her, for she wondered if this doctrine could really be true. As she looked at the minister's Book, it seemed full of life.

The sermon concluded, and the people went out. Claudine remained in her place. She looked at the teacher, and finally asked if what he said was true. Fromant assured her that he spoke from a genuine New Testament and that it was all true. Taking courage, she asked him to lend it to her, and she placed it carefully under her cloak.

As Claudine returned home, she did not talk much. She went straight to her room, taking nothing but the Book with her. She desired only light and teaching on the great subject which her conscience was burdened with: "On which side is truth – at Wittenberg or at Rome?" Having told her family that she must not be disturbed, she remained apart for three days and three nights, without eating or drinking, but with prayers and supplications.

The Book lay open before her. She read it constantly, and falling on her knees, asked for the divine light to be shed abroad in her heart. At length she heard and understood that divine word, "Daughter, thy sins are forgiven thee." Oh, wonderful! This salvation did not puff her up. She discovered

that the grace of God trickled slowly into her heart, and the least drop, coming from the Holy Spirit, seemed like a well that never dried up.

Now she desired to see the man who had been the means of leading her to the truth. When Fromant entered, Claudine rose in emotion, and, being unable to speak, burst into tears – she had no other language. When she recovered, she told Fromant how God had enlightened her and opened to her the door of heaven.

Such a conversion must have had a great effect in Geneva. An excellent church was to spring from this tiny root. There were also practical proofs of the change in Claudine. She had formerly been fond of costly attire. Now she wore a plain and becoming dress and sold her costly robes. The money was given to the poor, who had been banished from their homes on account of the truth. For the rest of her life, she loved to receive refugees into her house. She did more – she loved to speak frankly and freely of the precious truth she had received, and to scatter it wherever she happened to be in the city.

Banner of Truth 1972

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

The year 2017 marks the 500th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. It was in October of 1517 that a man called Martin Luther nailed a document to the door of his local Catholic church. This document contained 95 theses that challenged the doctrine of the predominant Church of Rome. This action was to rock the Roman Catholic Church to its very foundation, setting in motion a chain of events which, under God, led to the deliverance from the yoke of Rome of many nations in Europe.

The Times

Before the Protestant Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church held religious and political power almost universally in

Europe. It had strayed far from the pure teaching of the New Testament Church of the apostles, substituting a religion which had nothing to do with Christ's honour or the salvation of souls.

The papacy was the source of many of the Church of Rome's errors. This was the teaching that the pope, the man who headed the church, was infallible. Even today, the pope wears a triple crown, meaning that to Roman Catholics he is the father of kings, governor of nations, and vicar of Christ. Whatever the pope says is given as much weight as the Bible itself.

How does the Roman Catholic Church justify giving such great power to one man? They base this teaching on a false interpretation of the Lord's words to Peter in Matthew 16. When Peter confessed, "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God,*" the Lord Jesus said in His reply, "*... thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*" The words "this Rock" refer to Peter's confession of Christ as the Son of God. Jesus Christ is the Rock upon which the church is built. However, the Roman Catholic Church says that "this Rock" refers to Peter himself. Therefore, they claim that Peter was the first pope and that all of the succeeding popes are successors to Peter. They believe the popes hold supreme authority over the church.

Of course, ordinary Roman Catholic church members did not have contact with the pope himself. Instead, they would go to their local priest, who acted on behalf of the pope. The priests performed the church's sacraments, including infant baptism, confession, marriage, the mass, and extreme unction (mass for the dying). It was thought that grace was conveyed through these sacraments, rather than through the work of the Holy Spirit. You can imagine the power and influence that the priests had. Sadly, the priests were often corrupt, and they abused their power over the people.

What was the sacrament of the mass? The mass is the Roman Catholic version of the Lord's Supper, during which they claim that the bread and wine are miraculously transformed into the actual body and blood of the Lord Jesus. This doctrine is called transubstantiation, and it turns the Lord's Supper into a re-enactment, rather than a remembrance, of the Lord's sacrifice on Calvary.

The Church also taught that prayers should be made, not to God alone, but to Mary, the mother of Jesus, and to the saints. The people would ask Mary or a certain saint to intercede for them with God, rather than praying for Jesus' sake. Mary, in particular, was elevated to such a status that she was actually worshipped along with Christ.

Roman Catholics were encouraged to pray for the dead, as well as the living. Why would they pray for someone who was already dead? The church taught that after death, souls went to a place called purgatory, where they would suffer until they were purified to enter heaven. The prayers of devout family members could shorten this time of suffering.

None of these doctrines are supported by the Bible, and you may wonder why no one questioned them. But very few Roman Catholic church members, or anyone else, had access to the Word of God. Many of them could not read, and even if they could, the Scriptures had not been translated into the languages spoken by the common people. So, they were prevented from reading or hearing anything that would contradict the teachings of the Catholic Church. They continued to believe that the only way to receive salvation and go to heaven was through works of obedience to the Church.

However, things began to come to a head when the Church introduced another erroneous doctrine: indulgences. Indulgences were papers that supposedly granted pardons for sin or released souls from purgatory, and they could be purchased with money. The selling of indulgences was clearly designed to raise money for the Roman Catholic Church. A

man named Tetzels, in particular, began to travel around Germany with the sole purpose of marketing indulgences to raise money for the pope. Some of the money was used to pay for a large new church, St. Peter's Basilica, but much of it was also needed to pay for huge debts that the Church had built up through corruption.

With the aggressive promotion of indulgences, the Catholic Church had reached new levels of corruption. It was at this time that the Lord began to raise up men who would speak out against the heresy, idolatry, and corruption that had taken over the Church.

*Adapted from a lecture given by G.D. Buss
(To be continued)*

WONDERS OF GOD'S CREATION

The New Baby

When parents look on their new baby, they are looking at a wonder of God's creation. The new baby has a precious soul that will live forever! What a great wonder and mystery this is!

Then, there is the wonder of reproduction and the mystery of life. Before them, in small compass, lies a miracle of complicated systems and varied materials. The breath of life has been given,

This small infant has a heart, whose beat will not stop as long as it lives. It has a respiratory system, whose pump will continue for a lifetime. There is the vital circulation of blood, and a nervous system with a highly complex brain. Then there is the skeletal system, with bones and joints, the muscular system, so necessary for movement, the glandular system, and the digestive system that completely transforms food so it can be used for energy and growth.

Then think of the many materials used, not one of which can be made by man: skin, flesh, bones, and all the internal organs. Think of the eyes for seeing, ears for hearing, nose for

smelling, and mouth for speaking. Think of the tiny fingers and toes, as well as the soft hair, eyebrows, and eyelashes.

What a miracle of God's creation, when the baby is born with all its faculties! If just one part is faulty, what anxiety the parents are in! What consultations take place, and what medical care must follow! Sometimes this is successful, and sometimes it is not. Perhaps the weakness or disability must be carried through life.

But there is more. Out of reach of eye or microscope, this little baby contains a personality and hereditary traits of character. And are these perfect, even in the loveliest child? Alas, no. A fatal flaw lies hidden there. Although its character may be moulded carefully, its traits controlled, and its soul prayed for continuously, it will carry a deformity in its being throughout life – the deformity of original sin. Is this hard to believe? Not when we look around us. The seeds of sin quickly germinate and reveal themselves, even in young children. Where then can we turn for help against **this** deformity? Only to the One who created the dear baby, who built up those intricate systems, who wrought those wonderful materials, and formed the soul – to the Lord Himself.

Most of us have met the mother of a dear child that has needed years of medical treatment. Have we not admired how that mother arranges all her household affairs to ensure her child receives all the care and attention possible? So, in the greater matter of the soul's deformity, should not parents arrange their household matters so as to enable them to call upon the great Physician, for their own souls and also that of their children? Show Him new symptoms as they emerge and beg for help in dealing with them? How very important it is to have prayer in our homes! There we can seek the Lord in His Word, and then bring our family cares to Him, letting the little ones hear it from their infancy. If you feel the child only half understands, never mind: he would only half understand your talk with his doctor, but it would all be for his good. He would

thus know the name of his parents' God and how you approach Him. Perhaps one day he may be taught to trust Him, as one who is ill trusts his doctor.

J.H.B.

Adapted from Friendly Companion 1968

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

THE FAITH OF FAITHFUL ABRAHAM (7)

A Great Trial of Faith

"And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt [try or test] Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" (Genesis 22.1,2).

Abraham would have fully understood what God was saying to him. No doubt, many times Abraham had offered up a sacrifice of oxen, lambs and such like; but now God commanded Abraham to offer up his own son – the promised son, the son for whom he had waited so many years, and the promised heir. What did it all mean?

One thing was very clear to Abraham. It was the voice of the Lord, the Lord whom he served, worshipped, trusted in, and obeyed. Abraham must obey the voice of the Lord. He had learned to lay aside his own feelings and thoughts, all of his natural reasoning, and not to question God's commands. So Abraham obeyed, taking his journey with Isaac and two of his young men to the land of Moriah.

We are living in times when there is such an emphasis on questioning everything. Many think they can question the Word of God. When it does not agree with their own carnal reasoning, they reject it and cast aspersions upon it. May the Lord, in mercy, deliver us from this unbelief which dishonours God's holy Word of truth.

“And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together” (Genesis 22.7, 8).

We can understand Isaac wondering why his father brought all that was required for a sacrifice, but no lamb. But Abraham was helped to look beyond all those natural things. The Lord had taught Abraham, concerning the birth of Isaac, to trust in Him alone, despite all seeming impossibilities; and Abraham had witnessed the fulfilment of God’s promise. So now, under further divine teaching, as his faith was tried yet more and more, Abraham was brought to leave everything in the Lord’s gracious hands.

We also notice the humble submission given to Isaac when his father bound him and laid him on the altar upon the wood. We do not read that either of them spoke a word. Isaac must have known what was about to happen. Would his father, who loved him so dearly, really slay him, in offering him as a burnt sacrifice unto God? We cannot imagine the natural feelings of Abraham’s heart at this time. Would God indeed provide Himself a lamb?

We are told in Hebrews 11 that it was *“by faith”* that Abraham obeyed the Lord, even right down to the point of taking the knife in his hand to slay his son. His faith was also seen in that he believed that God was able to resurrect Isaac from the dead: *“Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure”* (Hebrews 11.19).

But just as Abraham was about to slay his son, the Angel of the Lord called unto him and said, *“Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me.”* As Abraham lifted up his eyes, he saw

behind him, *“a ram caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son”* (Genesis 22.12,13). In taking the ram and slaying it as a substitute for his son Isaac, Abraham saw by faith Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God who would save His people from all their sins by dying as their substitute, and would rise again from the dead. The Lord Jesus emphasised this many years later, when He said, *“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad”* (John 8:56). The ram was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, as He was brought to be sacrificed. Abraham was given saving grace to look beyond the sacrifice being offered, towards God’s great plan of salvation.

When the Law of God was given at Sinai many years later, Moses, by the direction of God, instituted the burnt sacrifice as an offering for sin. Sin must be punished by Almighty God. The beast that was offered up had to be without any blemish. It was viewed as a substitute for the person who brought the offering. The sinner was spared, but the beast that was sacrificed for him died.

The life of the Lord Jesus upon this earth was one of absolute obedience to the will of His Father. *“Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered”* (Hebrews 5.8). He obeyed the law of God in every part, and thus He wrought out that spotless robe of righteousness. When He died upon the cross at Calvary, He died to save His people from all their sins. He, who knew no sin, became the substitute for His people, bearing all their sins, so they might be set free. *“But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God”* (Hebrews 10.12).

He knew how wicked men had been,
And knew that God must punish sin,
So for His people, Jesus said,
He’d bear the punishment instead.

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about THE TEN PLAGUES. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail. (See page 218 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope. References are from the Book of Exodus.

1. When Moses first went to Pharaoh after returning from Midian, what did he ask for? (5.3)
2. How did Pharaoh make the burdens of the children of Israel even more unbearable? (5.7,8)
3. What was the first plague which God brought upon the Egyptians? (7.20,21)
4. In which plague did God first put a difference between the Egyptians and the Israelites? (8. 21-23)
5. Before the tenth plague, the Israelites had to slay the Passover lamb. What did they do with the blood? (12.7)
6. The Egyptian magicians tried to oppose Moses and prove that they could bring forth the same plagues. But in which plague were they compelled to say, "This is the finger of God"? (8)
7. The magicians still appeared to oppose Moses, but at which plague could they not stand before him, themselves suffering because of the plague? (9)
8. Before which plague did God speak the solemn words quoted in Romans 9.17? (9)
9. After which plague did Pharaoh say, "I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous"; yet still remain obstinately hardened? (9)
10. Which of the enemies of Israel, many years later, said among themselves, "Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts?"

ANSWERS TO SEPTEMBER QUESTIONS

1. Both fall into the ditch.
2. The nations (of the earth).
3. "When the Lord shall bring again Zion."

4. Belshazzar.
5. Laban.
6. We shall be changed "at the last trump" "and the dead shall be raised." (1 Corinthians 15.52)
7. Job's friends should not have persecuted him. (Job 19.28)
8. Joab "put the words in the mouth" of the wise woman of Tekoa (2 Samuel 14.3)
9. "And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." (Matthew 5.41)
10. Paul used the expression in writing to the Romans. (Romans 13.1)

GOD'S UNCHANGEABLE WORD

For feelings come and feelings go,
And feelings are deceiving;
My warrant is the Word of God,
Naught else is worth believing.

Though all my heart should feel condemned
For want of some sweet token,
There is One greater than my heart,
Whose Word cannot be broken.

I'll trust in God's unchanging Word,
Till soul and body sever;
For though all things shall pass away,
His Word shall stand for ever.

Martin Luther

The Friendly Companion



Inscription by the Bridge across the River Thurso, Halkirk, Caithness

“Thou art the God that doest wonders: Thou hast
declared Thy strength among the people”
(Psalm 77.14).

November 2017

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

If someone asked you who Solomon was, what answer would you give? Some might say he was a king of Israel. Others might answer that he was the son of David. He was also the author of three books of the Bible: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon.

The Bible tells us that Solomon loved the Lord and walked in His statutes. But what are the statutes that he walked in? His father, David, gives us the answer in the exhortation he gave Solomon: *"Keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest"* (1 Kings 23). The Lord teaches His people to love Him and to show it by following in His ways.

Solomon's love to God was not because his father or his mother loved the Lord. There was a much better cause than that. Nehemiah tells us that, *"Among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel"* (Nehemiah 13.26). What a wonder it is to be "beloved" of God.

Do you ever wonder how God can love sinners, who by nature rebel against Him and reject Him? He loves them in and through His dear Son, the Lord Jesus.

The Lord manifests His love to His people in various ways. He showed great love to Solomon when He appeared in the night, saying: *"Ask what I shall give thee."* There are some very important points to remember when the Lord bids one to ask anything of Him. The first point is that nothing is too hard or impossible with God. Second, the things asked for must be things that God is pleased with. Third, they must be things that will glorify God. Fourth, they ought to be things that will benefit others, as well as ourselves. When Solomon asked for wisdom, it was to judge and rule the people well. Fifth, it is especially good when the things we ask for, are those which come down from God to bless our souls.

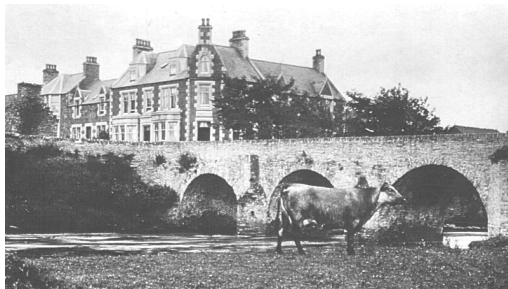
Solomon asked for understanding to discern between good and bad. May the Lord help us to follow his example and ask for such understanding. We need wisdom to discern between good and bad company. There are good and bad places to decide between. We need wisdom from God to: *“Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good”* (Romans 12.9).

“And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore” (1 Kings 4.29). Solomon was given the ability to understand many things, to receive much instruction, and to handle matters wisely. He also gave much instruction to the people. He spoke three thousand proverbs, which are wise sayings about all aspects of life. He composed over one thousand songs, of which the Song of Solomon was the chief. It was the most spiritual, being inspired by the Holy Ghost. How much wisdom was given to Solomon when he asked for an understanding heart! May God help us each to ask for such a heart.

With loving wishes from the Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

The small town of Halkirk is found right up in the far north of Scotland in Caithness. It is not far from the beautiful Castle of Mey, which the late Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother,



owned as one of her residences. For many years there was no crossing over the River Thurso, which passes through the town on its way to its estuary in the

Pentland Firth. This meant a circuitous journey for many, especially shoppers and traders. So a certain landowner, John

Sinclair, who was a public-spirited man, decided to build a bridge for the convenience of his tenants who lived either side of the river. He gave a large sum of money to his son and successor, another John, to expedite this work. However, he was greatly hindered by a series of accidents, 'so called.' This second John gave further instructions to his son, yet another John, who had the work finished in 1731.

It is evident that at least one of these Sinclair's knew the Scriptures well. We would hope that he was not without grace, for he had inscribed in the stone, as a lasting witness to the truth, the following words:

*"Thou shalt not put a stumbling block before the blind, but thou shalt fear thy God, for I am the LORD" (Leviticus 19.4).
"Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished, but he that gathereth by labour shall increase" (Proverbs 13.11).*

The first quotation, no doubt, was to give the reason for providing a crossing. The second was to encourage his tenants to use it well, now that they had it! The name of the mason who built the bridge was William Shearer, and although the bridge was replaced in 1970, the inscription remains on the new one. His labours have left a lasting witness to the truth, which has borne its testimony for the greater part of three hundred years.

G.D. Buss

FOG LIFTED IN ANSWER TO PRAYER

The captain of a steamer, who made voyages across the Atlantic, related the following incident. It made a deep and lasting impression upon him.

On one voyage, George Muller of Bristol was on board. He was the well-known founder of an orphanage in Bristol, England, and remarkable for his strong faith in God to provide for all his needs, both small and great.

"We had been sailing under a dense fog. I had been on the bridge of the ship for twenty-four hours and never left it. When we were off the coast of Newfoundland, I was startled by

someone tapping me on the shoulder. It was George Muller. He had come to tell me that he must be in Quebec on the Saturday afternoon. 'It is impossible,' I said. This took place on Wednesday.

"Very well, if your ship cannot take me, God will find some other way. I have never broken an engagement for fifty-seven years.'

"I would willingly help you,' I replied, 'but how can I? I am helpless.'

"He said, 'Let us go down into the chart room and pray.'

"I had never heard of such a thing and answered, 'Mr. Muller, do you know how dense this fog is?'

"No,' he replied, 'my eye is not on the density of the fog, but on the living God, who controls every circumstance of my life.' He knelt down and prayed one of the most simple prayers. He told the Lord of the appointment He had made for him in Quebec for Saturday, and he asked that if it was consistent with His will, He would please remove the fog in five minutes. When he had finished, I was going to pray, but he put his hand on my shoulder and told me not to pray! 'First, you do not believe God will do it; and second, I believe He has done it. And there is no need whatever for you to pray about it.'

"I looked at him, and George Muller said, 'Captain, I have known my Lord for fifty-seven years, and there has never been a single day that I have failed to get an audience with the King. Get up, Captain, and open the door, and you will find the fog is gone.'

"I got up, and the fog was indeed gone."

On Saturday afternoon, George Muller was in Quebec for his engagement.

The Gospel Echo 1915

ALL CLEAR UP HERE!

At this time of year, we can sometimes see fog low on the ground, with the treetops sticking out above in the morning sunshine. It is a lovely sight, and it reminds us of a story some

years ago in the days before radar, when sea travel was still something of an ordeal. A liner was making her way across the Atlantic. For some time during the voyage, the fog was very heavy. The captain, however, seemingly oblivious to it, did not order the ship's speed to be reduced but continued at full speed. At first the passengers did not complain, but as time went on their anxiety increased. They feared that at any moment they might be rammed by another ship. At length they sent a delegation to the captain on the bridge, asking him if he would agree to decrease the speed of the ship and to put a double watch fore and aft.

"Tell the passengers," the captain said, "not to be concerned. Everything is all right. It is all clear up here."

And indeed it was! The fog, though exceedingly dense, hung very low. But on the bridge of the ship there was clear visibility on every side.

And it is all clear to the Captain of our souls. As dark as things appear to be here on earth, He is able to see all. He knew, even before the world was, all that would take place in it. The mists of uncertainty, trial and heartache may enshroud us, but with Him all is clear. He will guide us safely through to the journey's end. *"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee"* (Isaiah 26.3).

Cheering Words - 1989

"MY MOUTH SHALL PRAISE THEE WITH JOYFUL LIPS"

Psalm 63.5

A blind girl in France read her embossed Bible for many years by using her fingertips. Sadly, she suffered a partial paralysis, and the sense of touch in her fingers was lost. Her agony of mind was great, for her Bible was very precious to her. In a moment of despair, she picked up her Bible. As she bent and kissed the open page by way of a farewell gesture, much to her surprise and pleasure, she could feel the letters distinctly with her lips. From that moment on, she read her Bible in such a manner.

Treasured Tales

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**THE QUEEN OF SHEBA COMES**

In a far-off land, the queen of Sheba heard of the wisdom of Solomon and the name of the LORD. She came to ask him very hard questions. It was a long journey to Jerusalem, and she came with many servants and a great number of camels. She brought Solomon costly gifts of spices and gold and precious stones.

Solomon talked with the queen of Sheba and answered all her hard questions. She saw the wonderful palace where he lived, the food of his table, and the servants that waited upon him. She also saw the beautiful temple that Solomon built. As she watched him go up to worship at the house of the LORD, *“there was no more spirit in her.”*

All she had been told of the wisdom and riches and works of Solomon was true. However, she had not believed the report until she came and saw it for herself. Now she said: *“Behold, the half was not told me.”*

Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba *“all her desire.”* Whatever she asked for, he gave out of his royal bounty. Then she returned to her own land with her servants.

QUESTIONS:

1. Who heard of the wisdom of Solomon? (4 words)
2. What did Solomon answer for her? (2 words)
3. What did he give to her? (3 words)

Please send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail. (See page 242 for the addresses.) Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

ANSWERS TO OCTOBER QUESTIONS

1. A cloud.
2. Kneeled down.
3. Fire.

*“... behold,
a greater
than
Solomon
is here.”*

Matthew 12.42

Luke 11.31

BIBLE LESSONS**PAUL LEAVES CORINTH – APOLLOS COMES**

The Jews were disappointed when Gallio refused to hear their charges against Paul and drove them from the judgment seat. The Greeks then took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue and possibly the chief accuser of Paul, and beat him before the judgment seat. However, Gallio took no notice of such things.

You might think that Paul would quickly leave Corinth, as he had done in other cities where the Jews threatened him. But the Bible tells us that he tarried there for quite some time. Why was it different at Corinth? Well, it was the word which God spoke when he first arrived: *“Be not afraid, ... for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.”*

When Paul left Corinth, his friends Aquila and Priscilla went with him. Sailing to Asia Minor, they came to the great city of Ephesus. Although this city was full of idol worshippers, Paul found a synagogue of the Jews. Here he reasoned with them from the Scriptures. Those who heard him, hoped he would remain with them for a while. However, Paul was determined to go to Jerusalem to keep a feast. He also wanted to report to the church at Antioch all that had taken place since he left them. He told the believers at Ephesus: *“I will return again unto you, if God will.”*

Paul left Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus. Then he went to Jerusalem and also returned to Antioch. What a long time it had been since he was last there! During his long missionary journey, many deliverances had been given and many new churches set up.

While Aquila and Priscilla waited for Paul at Ephesus, a certain Jew named Apollos arrived in the city. The Bible tell us that he was *“an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures.”* He had great understanding of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Lord Jesus. He also had a great zeal for the truth, which he had learned of John the Baptist, especially the

need for repentance and faith and the forgiveness of sins in order to be baptized.

Apollos began to preach boldly in the synagogue. Aquila and Priscilla rejoiced when they heard him, although they noticed something was lacking in his doctrine. While they were in Corinth, they had invited Paul to stay with them. They must have received much instruction from him during that time.

Now, they took Apollos aside into their house, *“and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.”* They were very thoughtful in the way they did this. They did not want him to feel ashamed in the synagogue or cause a stumbling block for new believers. They were gentle in all their words and actions. What an example for those in the church of God!

Apollos also manifested a gracious spirit in listening to them. Although he had a good knowledge of the Scriptures, he realised there were things in which he needed instruction. It is a good thing when ministers, who are called to preach the Word of God, can accept counsel from their hearers.

While Apollos stayed with Aquila and Priscilla, they must have told him what happened at Corinth and how Paul's preaching had been blessed to so many. Apollos felt led of the Holy Spirit to visit the church there. The believers at Ephesus wrote letters to those in Achaia, Corinth being the chief city, exhorting them to receive Apollos.

The Bible tells us that *“he mightily convinced the Jews ... by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.”* Those who had believed Paul's preaching, through the grace of God, were now greatly helped and established by the preaching of Apollos. When Paul wrote letters to the believers at Corinth, he reminded them that he had planted, and Apollos had watered, but God gave the increase.

You can read about this in Acts chapter 18 verses 16 to 28.

QUESTIONS:

1. Who went with Paul when he left Corinth?
2. What two things does the Bible tell us that Apollos was? (8 words)
3. What did Aquila and Priscilla do for Apollos? (9 words)
4. What had Paul done at Corinth? What had Apollos done?
5. What did God give? (2 words)

Please send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail (See page 242 for the addresses.) Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

ANSWERS TO OCTOBER QUESTIONS

1. Corinth.
2. Aquila. Priscilla.
3. Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace.
4. For I have much people in this city.
5. This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

(Continued from page 234)

The Man

Peter Waldo (a Waldensian leader), John Huss and John Wycliffe were some of the early forerunners of the Reformation. Erasmus pointed out many of the faults of the Roman Catholic church, although he was not fully reformed. However, it was the Lord's will to use Martin Luther to release Europe from the iron grip of the Roman Catholic church.

Martin Luther was born on November 10th, 1483. Since the following day was the feast of St. Martin, a Roman Catholic saint, he was named after him. His parents were peasants, who brought their children up strictly but fairly and wished the best for each of them. They recognised early on that Martin was an intelligent child and sent him to school. The first school he

attended was one where fear ruled. On one memorable morning, Martin was whipped no fewer than fifteen times! Later he was sent to a school in Eisenach, where he began to excel. By the age of eighteen he entered the University of Erfurt, where he was a distinguished scholar. It was here that Martin read the Bible for the first time. This would have been the Latin Bible, called the Vulgate. Martin was deeply moved as he read the story of Hannah and Samuel.

It was not until he was twenty-two that the great turning point came in his life. One of his friends was killed in a student brawl. Then Martin Luther accidentally severed a main artery in one of his legs. As his wound was bound up, he called on the Virgin Mary for help. Another time, a terrible thunderstorm broke over his head. Stricken with fear, he cried out: "Help Anna, beloved saint, and I will become a monk." Through these strange providences, though yet in darkness and superstition, the Lord was preparing him for that time when he would become such a powerful voice for the truth.

Martin kept his vow, much to the annoyance of his father, who wanted him to be a lawyer. It was in the secluded environment of the monastery that Martin first realised his great need of peace with God. To attain this, he followed the strictest regime of the order, undergoing penances and fasts, literally torturing his body. He cried to twenty-two different saints, rising at three in the morning. Despite this and even more punishments, he did not receive the peace he longed for.

At times, a man called John von Staupitz, (head of the Augustinian order), visited the Erfurt monastery. This man seemed to have some light on the truth, for he pointed Martin to Christ and His wounds for sinners, saying that we cannot understand God outside of Christ. Martin still did not fully discern the way of salvation, until the Holy Ghost powerfully directed him to those words: "*The just shall live by faith*" (Romans 1.17) At last, he ceased from his own works and cast

himself at the foot of the cross, finding peace with God in Christ Jesus.

Two things gradually followed this revelation: First, he realised there was no merit for salvation in all the prescribed methods of the Roman Catholic church that he had been vainly following. Second, the Word of God became a Book of life to him. In other words, Martin became reformed in the true sense. However, he had yet to be shown that the Roman Catholic church was not the true church of Christ.

Martin Luther was now a professor of theology at Wittenburg, but he still lived in a monastery. In 1511 he was commissioned to go to Rome on behalf of his monastic order, the Augustinian. Martin was filled with great anticipation. Was not Rome a holy city, and was not the pope, Julius II, Christ's vicar on earth? He was terribly disillusioned. He found the city was full of corruption, and the pope often turned a blind eye to the blatant immorality of the priests and higher officers of the church. Still, Luther held to some of the requirements of the church. He continued to say masses for his departed relatives, whom he wanted to be released from purgatory. However, the Lord finally met with him on Pilate's staircase. It was claimed that Christ had stood before Pilate on these stairs, and they had been miraculously transported to Rome. The church maintained that whoever climbed these stairs on their bare hands and knees, while repeating the Lord's prayer (in Latin) on each step, would receive forgiveness of sins. Part way up the stairs, Martin was arrested by the words: "*The just shall live by faith.*" By this he was effectually cured of this madness!

The one event which finally turned Martin, was the actions of a monk called Tetzl. He went around the country begging for money to pay for the St. Peter's Basilica and to release the pope from huge debts he had incurred. Tetzl told the ignorant peasants that as soon as they dropped a coin into his box, a soul would be released from purgatory. Thus, he worked on the emotions of those who desired to have loved

ones released from the fires of purgatory. Money poured into the coffers of the church, and the people were solemnly deceived.

At last, Martin concluded that the church was so thoroughly corrupt, that a completely fresh start was needed. Thus, on an October morning in 1517, after much prayer and inward agony, he nailed a paper containing 95 theses to the door of Wittenburg Cathedral. The theses were propositions against the Roman Catholic church and for the Scripture. This essentially was the catalyst for the Protestant Reformation. It should be remembered that the Church of Rome was (and still is) a political force, as well as a religious one. As the movement spread, the repercussions were bound to have international dimensions. Rome would not easily give up her throne. Many conflicts, both doctrinally and physically, were fought in the succeeding decades, spreading as far as our beloved land.

One other thing must be remembered. With the invention of the printing press, very soon Martin's theses were found throughout Europe, challenging both the doctrine and authority of the Roman Catholic church. He was "the monk that shook the world."

Martin Luther also wrote works on: *Justification by Faith*, *The Bondage of the Will*, and an *Exposition of the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians*.

Three times the church leaders tried to silence him: at Heidelberg, Augsburg and Leipzig. But he would not be silenced. Having infuriated the established church, Luther was in great danger of being arrested and indeed martyred. To prevent this, his friends kidnapped him and took him to a safe hideout in Wartburg Castle. Here he translated the New Testament from the original Greek, and later the Old Testament from the original Hebrew. He translated the Psalms into poetic form to be sung as a Psalter. He greatly loved singing and composed several well-known hymns. His

paraphrase of Psalm 46, "A Mighty Fortress is our God," is the most well-known. This he often sang with his friend, Philip Melancthon, when the opposition grew hot.

*Adapted from a lecture by G.D. Buss
(To be continued)*

MR. ROGERS AND THE LITTLE GIRL

Many years ago, ministers could be punished for preaching outside of a country's established church. Sometimes they were even imprisoned or put to death for their beliefs. In England, those who separated from the Church of England were called Dissenters. This story tells how the Lord used a little girl to preserve one of the Dissenters during this time, and how the little girl herself was later called by grace.

There was once a justice of the peace named Sir Richard Craddock. He hated the Dissenters and did his best to enforce all of the laws against them. He happened to live near Mr. Rogers, a gracious old minister who was a Dissenter. Sir Richard greatly disliked Mr. Rogers, so he very much wanted to get him in trouble with the law.

One day, Sir Richard heard that Mr. Rogers was going to preach not far away. He decided that this was the perfect opportunity to accomplish his plan. Two of his men went to the service as spies, bringing a list of the hearers back to Sir Richard.

Sir Richard immediately ordered all of the hearers on the list to appear before him, as well as Mr. Rogers himself. Mr. Rogers and the hearers came reluctantly and fearfully. They knew what kind of man Sir Richard was, and they were afraid of what he might do.

Sir Richard had a favourite granddaughter who lived with him. She was so spoiled that if she did not get her way, she would throw fits, threatening to harm herself if she did not get what she wanted. As Mr. Rogers waited in the great hall, Sir Richard's granddaughter came in. She looked curiously at

Mr. Rogers. Mr. Rogers loved children. When he saw the little girl looking at him, he called her over and took her on his knee.

After they had waited a long time in the great hall, a servant came in. "One of the witnesses has been taken ill," he said. "He is not able to come. You will have to come back another day."

Mr. Rogers and his companions went home and returned at the appointed time. This time, the witnesses were ready. Mr. Rogers and his hearers were all convicted of breaking the law. The justice ordered for them to be sent to prison. Filled with fear and sadness, the little group sat in Sir Richard's great hall, waiting for the order to be written to send them to prison.

Expecting to see the little girl again, Mr. Rogers had brought some candy (sweets) to give her. As soon as she saw him, she came running up to him. She climbed onto his knee and began eating the candy. Looking up earnestly at him, she asked, "What are you here for, sir?"

Mr. Rogers answered, "I believe your grandfather is going to send me to prison."

"To prison? Why? What have you done?"

"Why, I did nothing but preach at a certain place, and my friends here did nothing but hear me."

"But my grandfather shall not send you to prison!"

"My dear, I believe he is even now writing the order to send us there."

Upon hearing this, the little girl became very upset and ran up to the room where Sir Richard was. She began to throw one of her fits, knocking and kicking at the door. When she was finally let in, she ran up to her grandfather. "What are you going to do with the good old gentleman downstairs in the hall?"

"That's not your business," responded her grandfather.

"He tells me you are going to send him and his friends to prison," she said angrily. "If you send them to prison, I'll drown myself in the pond! I really will!"

Sir Richard did not like to see his granddaughter so upset. He sighed. Was it really so important to send these men to prison?

Taking the prison order in his hand, he went down into the hall where the men were waiting. He said to Mr. Rogers, "I had written out the order to send you all to prison, as you deserve. But at my grandchild's request, I will drop the prosecution, and set you all free."

The whole group of people bowed and thanked Sir Richard. But Mr. Rogers had another person in mind. Going over to the child, he laid his hand on her head. Lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, "God bless you, my dear child. May the blessing of that God whose cause you did now plead, though as yet you do not know Him, be upon you in life, at death, and to all eternity." Dropping his hand, he turned and left the hall with his friends.

(To be continued)

THE PATH OF HONESTY

The path of honesty is a safe path. An old proverb says: "Honesty is the best policy." One day a man came to buy a quantity of corn at a mill. The owner sent a young man whom he employed to go with the customer to obtain the corn. As he was doing so, the customer said, "I will take two gallons instead of one."

After he was gone, the young man returned to his employer. Suddenly a wicked thought sprang up: "You need not tell him that the man ordered two gallons; give him the money for the one gallon he knows the man ordered, and keep the rest."

It is sad to say that the young man gave heed to this sinful thought. He put the extra money in his pocket, and gave the other to his employer. But a voice kept speaking in his conscience: "Thief, thief!" He could not rest, nor spend the money that he had taken. At length he went and confessed his guilt and sin to the owner of the mill, who forgave him.

Instead of ending his employment, from that day on, the owner trusted the young man with many responsible tasks.

Eventually the young man became an honoured minister of the gospel. In his old age, he enjoyed the esteem and love of many as a useful servant of God.

May the Lord give you upright principles, my dear young friends, and lead you in the safe path of honesty.

Herbert Dawson, Ears for Little Gleaners

“THEM THAT HONOUR ME I WILL HONOUR”

Some years ago, a godly couple opened a little shop in a village. They were people who desired to trust in God and honour Him. Two or three different people had owned that shop before and had all gone bankrupt. Then these two people came and opened up again. They seemed to keep on going and living there. It became a topic of conversation in the village, as to how these two old people could keep going in that shop and show no signs of going bankrupt.

At last, one villager felt he must have some information about it, and he made it his business to ask the godly couple. When he was in the shop on one occasion, he asked if they would tell him if they had a big company standing behind them, helping them to run the shop. They replied, “Yes, that is how we carry on. We have indeed a big company behind us and we can keep going while we have that company to stand by us and to look to.” The villager said that he thought there must be a company behind them, or they would have gone bankrupt, just as everybody else had done in this business.

“Aye,” said the old man, “before you go, let me tell you who this company is, and you can tell the other folk in the village. It is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The blessed Trinity whom we trust, is behind us, and according to His promise, we shall never, no never, go bankrupt, because He is Jehoveh-Jireh, ‘The Lord will provide.’”

Selected – Friendly Companion 1994

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

JEHOVAH-JIREH

"In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen."

We have been following the life of Abraham, with special reference to the faith that the Lord gave him, and to the trial of his faith to prove that it was genuine. One of the most wonderful things Abraham proved was that the Lord sees all the needs of His people, and He most graciously provides for every need.

"And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-Jireh; as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen" (Genesis 22.14). If you have a marginal reference in your Bible, you will notice that there are two meanings of *"Jehovah-Jireh"*: "The LORD will see" and "The LORD will provide."

God knew that His people would be completely unable to do anything towards saving themselves or to bring forth anything acceptable to Him. So, in His great plan of salvation, He sent forth His only-begotten Son into the world to save them from all their sins and become their Saviour. He also knew that, as sinners, they would lack spiritual life. So God provided His blessed Spirit, to quicken (awaken) them into spiritual life and to give them faith to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are many things that we need in our lives. However, there is a vast difference between what we think we need and what God sees we really need. The Lord Jesus taught that *"one thing is needful,"* and that is faith to believe in Himself for the salvation of our never-dying souls. That is what Abraham was taught on Mount Moriah: that God would provide Himself a Lamb to take away the sins of His people. Abraham was given faith to believe. *"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad"* (John 8.56).

The Lord Jesus said: *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you"* (Matthew 6.33). He was speaking of all the things

we need during our lives, like food and clothing. The Lord God, who sees and provides for the spiritual needs of His people, will also see and provide for all their providential needs. Our providential needs are many, and at times very pressing. We may wonder however we shall manage. But the Lord sees every need of His people. Nothing escapes His notice; there is nothing He is unaware of. He is able to give wisdom, strength, ability, patience, employment, and any other thing that is needed. *"But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 4.19).

The Lord has a wonderful way of providing for His people, especially when it is in answer to their prayers. *"Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them"* (Ezekiel 36.37). In Acts chapter 16, we read of the Apostle Paul needing divine guidance as to where he should go. The churches in Macedonia also needed the Lord to help them, by sending a minister of the gospel. We see how the Lord provided for both of them. The apostle was prevented from going where he may have desired to go. No doubt, this had the gracious effect of stirring up his heart in prayer to know where the Lord would have him go. At the same time, those in Macedonia were stirred up in prayer for the Lord to provide a minister to teach them. *"And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them"* (Acts 16.9,10). Each of them would clearly see the Lord's hand in this great matter. Each of them would be able to rejoice in Jehovah-Jireh, the LORD will provide.

May we also be helped to remember Jehovah-Jireh when we come into various needs. May we be stirred up in prayer to the

Lord who sees exactly what we need, and prove that He will graciously provide.

No more, my soul, let unbelief
Thy joy and peace devour,
Jehovah-Jireh sends relief
For every trying hour.

Dangers stand thick through all my way,
And foes on every side;
Yet all is well – I'll watch and pray,
Jehovah will provide.

A.T. Pickett

THE ONE WAY STREET

If you are driving a car in our towns and cities, you will sometimes come to a sign which says, "ONE WAY STREET." You cannot return down that street. Life is like that. There is only one way and no returning.

H. Dawson – Friendly Companion 1994

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about DELIVERANCES. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail. (See page 242 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. Write out the words of David beginning, "The Lord that delivered me out of ..." (1 Samuel 17.37)
2. Who said, "Is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee...", and to whom was he speaking? (Daniel 6.20)
3. What gracious promise does God give to those who call upon Him in the day of trouble? (Psalm 50.15)

4. In the Lord's Prayer, what did Jesus say we should pray to be delivered from? (Matthew 6.13)
5. The children of Israel were at the Red sea, with their enemies the Egyptians behind them, and no way of escape. How did God deliver the children of Israel? (Exodus 14.21,22)
6. Jacob prayed, "Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau" (Genesis 32). What had he heard that made him afraid?
7. Who said, "God sent me before you ... to save your lives by a great deliverance"? (Genesis 45)
8. Who said, "Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod...", and how was he delivered? (Acts 12)
9. Hezekiah was deeply distressed because of the Assyrian army which threatened to destroy Jerusalem. How did God deliver him? (Isaiah 37)
10. David in the Psalms many times prays for deliverance from his enemies. But sometimes he prays to be delivered from things which relate to himself. What does he pray to be delivered from in Psalms 39, 51 and 56?

ANSWERS TO OCTOBER QUESTIONS

1. Moses asked for the children of Israel to go three days' journey into the desert to sacrifice unto the Lord.
 2. Pharaoh refused to give the Israelites straw to make bricks, yet still demanded that they make the same number of bricks as before.
 3. The water of the river of Egypt was turned into blood.
 4. Flies.
 5. The blood had to be struck upon the upper door post (the lintel) and the two side posts of the houses.
 6. Lice. (Exodus 8.19)
 7. Boils. (Exodus 9.11)
 8. Hail. (Exodus 9.16)
 9. Hail. (Exodus 9.27)
 10. The Philistines. (1 Samuel 6.6)
-

HYMN OF THANKSGIVING

Thanks to God for my Redeemer,
Thanks for all Thou dost provide!
Thanks for times now but a memory,
Thanks for Jesus by my side!
Thanks for pleasant, balmy springtime,
Thanks for dark and dreary fall!
Thanks for tears by now forgotten,
Thanks for peace within my soul!

Thanks for prayers that Thou hast answered,
Thanks for what Thou dost deny!
Thanks for storms that I have weathered,
Thanks for all Thou dost supply!
Thanks for pain and thanks for pleasure,
Thanks for comfort in despair!
Thanks for grace that none can measure,
Thanks for love beyond compare!

Thanks for roses by the wayside,
Thanks for thorns their stems contain!
Thanks for homes and thanks for fireside,
Thanks for hope, that sweet refrain!
Thanks for joy and thanks for sorrow,
Thanks for heavenly peace with Thee!
Thanks for hope in the tomorrow,
Thanks through all eternity!

Hymns for Special Times and Seasons

The Friendly Companion



A Shepherd leading his Sheep in the Holy Land

“For unto you is born ... a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2.11).

December 2017

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

THE END! These words are often found at the end of a story or a book. They simply tell us that there is nothing more to follow. The word “end” may have different meanings or applications. For instance, in the United States, when our property is not fenced around, people may ask: “What is the end or boundary of your property?” Sometimes the word “end” refers to the termination of something. A politician has a certain time that he serves and then comes to the end of his term. Other times the word “end” may refer to the purpose or end result that one is aiming for. Such were the parables of Jesus. They were earthly or natural stories with a heavenly or spiritual meaning.

THE END! The end of this month will bring an end to 2017. Many changes have taken place in the twelve months since the beginning of the year. Perhaps some have been favoured with many providential blessings, and thus reflect with joy over the events of the past year. Others may have a bitter trial that goes on and on, and there seems to be no end to it. The end of the year does not mean there will be an end of their trial. To the Israelites it must have seemed that their captivity in Egypt would never end. Yet, at the end of four hundred and thirty years, in the same night they were brought out. *“Surely there is an end”* (Proverbs 23.18).

THE END! We read in Lamentations 4.18: *“Our end is near, our days are fulfilled; for our end is come.”* It speaks of the day of death. Balaam knew that such a day would come to him when he said: *“Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!”* (Numbers 23.10). Sadly, Balaam’s desire was never granted, because he did not live the life of the righteous. How different it was for Daniel when God said to him: *“Thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days”* (Daniel 12.13). Daniel’s lot was the portion or inheritance of the righteous. David felt the need to be prepared for the day of his death when he prayed: *“Lord, make*

me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am" (Psalm 39.4).

THE END! But really, death is not the end, for there is something that follows. We are told that after death is the judgment. *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ"* (2 Corinthians 5.10). When Moses wrote his final words to the children of Israel, he expressed his loving concern for them: *"O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!"* (Deuteronomy 32.29).

THE END! One day the world itself will have an end. I wonder if you ever think of that? The Lord told His disciples that the harvest, the gathering up of all His people as grain into the barn, is the end of the world. Yet, *"of His kingdom there shall be NO END"* (Luke 1.33).

May the Lord teach us each to pray with the hymnwriter:

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

With loving wishes from the Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

The birth of Jesus, as recorded in the gospel of Luke, is one of the best-loved and most eloquently-written accounts in the Bible. Of all the stories surrounding His birth, from Zacharias and Elisabeth, to Simeon and Anna, the account of the shepherds is most endearing to young and old alike.

Perhaps we feel encouraged that the Lord condescended unto the lowly shepherds, passing over the ruling class and religious leaders of the day. Although the shepherds were poor and despised, they were the ones chosen to hear of this wonderful event.

What a striking contrast when the darkness of night was driven away by the glory of the heavenly hosts. The shepherds were filled with fear!

Shepherds on their flocks attending,
Shepherds, that in night-time watched,
Saw the messenger descending,
From the court of heaven dispatched,
Beams of glory decked his mission,
Bursting through the veil of night;
Fear possessed them at the vision;
Sinners tremble at the light.

The angel of the Lord brought a message from heaven to those lowly shepherds. He declared that a Saviour was born unto them. It must have seemed all too wonderful for such as they. Most amazing to them was the humble place where He lay – in a manger! A place that they had access to, a place they were acquainted with.

When the angels departed, the darkness of night settled upon them again. Yet the hope, the joy, the love that filled their heart, constrained their feet, so they came with haste to the place where Jesus was.

Their visit to the manger was an exceeding precious experience. To report the words of the angel to Mary, Joseph, and others who had gathered, was a great honour. The moments must have passed all too quickly. Then they returned to the fields and to their sheep. The darkness no longer seemed so dreary. Their way no longer seemed so difficult. Their hearts no longer seemed so dead. No! They returned to their flocks *“glorifying and praising God”* for all He had shown them.

May the Lord grant that we may each experience something of the message sent to the shepherds.

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**SOLOMON TURNS FROM GOD**

Solomon loved and served the Lord during the first part of his reign. The Lord made him greater than all the kings of the earth for wisdom and riches. Solomon became a friend of the king of Egypt, and he took Pharaoh's daughter to be his wife.

Later, Solomon began to love many women from other nations. He took a great number of heathen wives, which was against the law of God. When Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart, and he did evil. He even built places for them to worship their idol gods.

"And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel." The Lord said the kingdom would be taken from the family of Solomon and given to his servant. His son would rule over the tribe of Judah, but another would rule over the other ten tribes of Israel. The Lord also stirred up enemies against Solomon.

QUESTIONS:

1. Whom did Solomon take to be his wife? (2 words)
2. What did his wives do when he was old? (4 words)
3. What would be taken from the family of Solomon?

Please send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail. (See page 266 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

ANSWERS TO NOVEMBER QUESTIONS

1. The queen of Sheba.
2. Hard questions.
3. All her desire.

*“but he
kept not
that which
the LORD
commanded.”*

1 Kings 11.10

*BIBLE LESSONS***PAUL BEGINS HIS THIRD JOURNEY**

While Paul was in Antioch rehearsing all that God had done among the Gentiles, his spirit was stirred so that he could not stay long. Once again, he bid farewell to the church that had first sent him out and began his third journey, not knowing whether he would ever see them again.

Following the route of his second journey, he visited the churches he had already established in Galatia, strengthening the believers in their profession of Christ. They listened to Paul with great joy and received him as an angel of God. However, after Paul left, the Jews came and told the believers that they must follow the Jewish laws and ceremonies in order to be saved. They soon turned away from Paul's teaching. He later wrote a letter to the Galatians, in which he sharply reproved them for turning from the gospel of Christ to a perverted gospel of the Jews.

Paul continued his journey through Phrygia and came to the great city of Ephesus, where he had left Aquila and Priscilla. The Holy Ghost had prevented Paul from going to Ephesus on his second missionary journey, except to sail from Ephesus to Jerusalem at the end of that journey. Now on his third journey, he was permitted to come and stay with them.

Arriving at Ephesus, he first went into the synagogue of the Jews. For three months, he laboured to teach them the things concerning the kingdom of God. Sadly, many hardened their hearts and did not believe. They began to speak evil of Paul and of the gospel he preached to all who gathered to hear.

Paul then separated the disciples from the unbelieving Jews, and finding a schoolroom to use, for two years he preached Jesus to many people who came from all over Asia. Paul later wrote how a great door had been opened to him, but there were many adversaries.

God wrought great miracles through Paul. If a handkerchief or piece of cloth was brought from Paul's hand and laid upon

those who were diseased or possessed by evil spirits, they were healed.

There were certain Jews at Ephesus, who claimed to have power to cast out evil spirits through the name of Jesus, whom Paul preached. Sceva, the chief of the priests, had seven sons who pretended to have such powers. When they commanded an evil spirit to come out of a man, the evil spirit answered: *"Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?"* Then the man with the evil spirit leaped upon them and beat them, so that they fled from the house naked and wounded. The news of this spread to all the Jews and Greeks at Ephesus, and great fear fell upon them. As a result, the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

The great power of God was displayed, for the Bible tells us: *"And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds."* You may wonder how they could show their deeds. We are told that *"many of them also which used curious arts [magic, witchcraft, sorcery, and such things] brought their books together, and burned them before all men."* When they counted the value of the books that were burned, it amounted to fifty thousand pieces of silver. They could say with the Apostle Paul: *"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. ... I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: ... and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ"* (Philippians 3.7,8).

The Holy Spirit sums up the whole scene at Ephesus by telling us: *"So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed."* You can read about this in Acts chapter 19 verses 1 to 20.

QUESTIONS:

1. For how many years did Paul use a schoolroom at Ephesus?
2. What did the evil spirit say to the sons of Sceva? (11 words)
3. By what deed did the believers at Ephesus show their repentance? (10 words)
4. What was the value of them?

5. What did the Holy Spirit say grew mightily?

Please send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail. (See page 266 for the addresses.) Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

ANSWERS TO NOVEMBER QUESTIONS

1. Aquila and Priscilla.
2. An eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures.
3. Expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.
4. Planted. Watered.
5. The increase.

PARABLES FROM SHETLAND

My wife and I have just returned from a holiday in Shetland, the most northerly part of the British Isles. Being on holiday gives us more time to look around and think about what we see, than we have when we are busy at school, college or work. I will share with you three things that we saw, and what they made me think of.

In one museum, we saw a number of very interesting photographs. Years ago, most of the men in Shetland were fishermen and often away at sea. This meant that the women and children had to do a lot of heavy manual work at home. One photograph showed a group of women with very heavy baskets of peat on their backs. Peat is a type of soil which can be used as fuel for a fire. It had to be dug out of the hill sides. Around their waist, each of the women had a leather belt, called a “makkin.” This contained their knitting needles and wool.

Even while they were carrying such heavy loads on their backs, these women would walk along knitting jumpers [sweaters], socks, and other clothing. Today we might call it “multi-tasking” – being so busy that we have to work on more than one thing at a time. It made me think of Ephesians 5.6:

“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” This means that we should make the best use of our time, because there is so much trouble or evil around us. These women were certainly making the maximum possible use of their time. This does not mean we can never have a rest, but do we work hard at our tasks, not wasting our time on things that are not profitable?

There was another photograph that showed a man working with animals to plough a field. What was unusual was that he had a horse and an ox yoked together pulling the plough. I do not know how this would have worked, the horse being much taller and having a longer stride. This made me think of 2 Corinthians 6. 14: *“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.”* This means that people who believe in God should not join themselves together with people who do not have the same beliefs. Joining together with unbelievers is likely to draw them into things they should not be involved with, perhaps going to places they should not, and so on. The Bible says that those who fear God should be separate from unbelievers whenever they have the choice. Sometimes they cannot be separate, such as at school or work, but so far as possible they should seek the company of fellow believers.

[After the Sunday School lesson, it was mentioned to me that the yoking together of an ass with an ox was actually forbidden in the Bible. The reference is Deuteronomy 22.10: *“Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together.”* Perhaps there would be an unequal strain, which would be harmful to the weaker animal. The Bible is very clear that a farmer must care for his beasts.]

We also saw a number of boats that were specially made in Shetland for fishing in deep waters. The open ocean is called the “haaf” in the Shetland dialect. A deep sea fisherman was called a “haaf man.” The boats were called “sixareens,” meaning that they were propelled by six oars, one man per oar. They were mainly used for fishing cod and ling, which

generally live far out to sea. The fishing trips would often take three days and take the men up to forty miles off shore. The sixareens had no cabins or shelter for the men whatsoever. They were completely open to the weather. Around Shetland the weather is very often stormy, and many men (and boys, from around twelve years old upwards) lost their lives. In one storm on 16 July 1832, seventeen such boats and 105 men were lost at sea. They were nearly all from one small village on the tiny island of Yell. This made me think of Psalm 107.23–31. This speaks of God's control of storms and the way He can bring His people safely through all sorts of troubles, not only literal storms, but also the storms of life.

We should remember to praise God and give thanks for our own deliverances. In general, we live much more comfortable and easy lives than the people that lived in Shetland 150 years ago. We should always be thankful to God for His many blessings to us. *"Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits"* (Psalm 103.1,2).

(Swavesey Sunday School Address: 28 May 2017

C. P. Warboys)

THE DOCTOR'S VISIT

"They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5.31,32).

It was quite early one Lord's day morning when there was a ring at the door. Quickly we ran to open it as it was unusual to have callers at such a time. There at the door stood a large, swarthy (dark-skinned) man we had never seen before. For a moment we looked at one another and neither spoke. At last the stranger broke the silence.

"You want doctor!"

"No," I answered in amazement. "I do not want a doctor."

“You sent for doctor!” answered the man, almost impatiently.

Obviously there was some mistake. At last we came to understand that the man was a doctor, that he had been called out to someone ill, and that he must have got the wrong address.

How this called to mind the text: “*They that are whole need not a physician*”! Had one of the children been ill, how eagerly the doctor’s visit would have been awaited and our ears straining to hear any knock or ring at the door! And how welcome his visit would have been!

As it was, the doctor’s visit meant nothing at all to us. We did not need him. His visit was almost a nuisance.

So it is with the preaching of the gospel. To most it means nothing. Why? They have no need, no malady to be healed. To hear the truth is to them almost a nuisance. But what a difference if we feel our great need as sinners, if we realise the malady of sin! Then how delightful it is to hear the gospel, and how we long for a visit from “the good Physician”!

B.A. Ramsbottom – The Friendly Companion 1985

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

(Continued from page 256)

The Doctrine

What then were the doctrines which shook the world? Two of the most important ones were “sola scriptura” and “sola fide.”

Sola scriptura means “Scripture alone,” the doctrine that the Word of God is the only foundation of truth. This took away at a stroke the contention that only the church could interpret Scripture, and that the church’s teachings superseded the Word of God. Martin Luther said: “No greater mischief can happen to a Christian people than to have God’s Word taken from them, or falsified, so that they no longer have it pure and

clear. God grant that we and our descendants be not witnesses of such a calamity.”

Sola fide means “faith alone,” the doctrine that sinners are saved by faith in Jesus Christ alone. This took away the doctrine of works for salvation, in which sinners must perform certain works in order to be saved. The Roman Catholic doctrines prescribed the sacraments of infant baptism and the mass as essential for salvation; no one could be saved outside of the Church of Rome. In reality, works are the fruit of salvation. They come as a result of faith in Jesus Christ.

Upon a life I did not live,
Upon a death I did not die,
Another's life, Another's death,
I hang my whole eternity.

These two doctrines had far-reaching effects. Inevitably, they struck at the very heart of the power of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Word of God was no longer to be hidden. Before this time, the Bible only existed in Greek, Hebrew, and Latin, the languages written and spoken by scholars and clergy. Now, translations of the Scriptures began to appear in vernacular languages (those spoken by the ordinary people). No longer was Latin the only language of worship. People were to be given the freedom to read and understand for themselves. This took power and authority from the Church and returned it to the Word of God.

The power of the Roman Catholic Church as the one and only source of salvation, through its sacraments, was also demolished. The Lord Jesus Christ was to be acknowledged as the Head of the Church. No other name, no other blood, no other righteousness is our hope of salvation. His Word was to be the one and only standard of our behaviour and source of our knowledge of God.

Since Rome was a political entity as well as a religious one, Luther's attack had tremendous consequences throughout

Europe. The printing press meant that these things could no longer be hidden from the general populace. Thus, the Reformation took hold throughout Europe. Satan's kingdom was disturbed, and he raised many severe conflicts to stem the growing tide. Martyrs were burned at the stake, wars were fought, and many were exiled. Bonfires were lit to destroy the spreading truth, but as Gamaliel said: "*If it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God*" (Acts 5.39).

The freedoms upon which this nation has been built (now sadly threatened) are a direct fruit of the Reformation. We should be thankful for the grace and strength given to men such as Martin Luther and the noble army of reformers who followed.

Adapted from a lecture given by G.D. Buss

EDITOR'S POST-BAG

*First answers to the monthly questions have been received from: **GEORGE BARNETT, GEORGE LUCAS, JAMES MERCER, AMY PLAYFOOT, JACK ROSIER, and CHLOE SAUNDERS.***

MR. ROGERS AND THE LITTLE GIRL

(Continued from page 258)

As the years went by, Mr. Rogers often told the story of how he had been preserved from prison. His children remembered it well. One evening, Mr. Rogers' grown son was having dinner with another minister in the home of an eminent, godly lady, Mrs. Tooly. He began to tell the story of how the Lord had used a spoiled little girl to keep his father from going to prison. As Mr. Rogers' son told the story, he noticed that Mrs. Tooly was paying very close attention. When he finished, she asked, "Are you that Mr. Rogers' son?"

"Yes, I am," he replied.

"Well," she responded, "I never knew you were Mr. Rogers' son. Now I will tell you something you do not know. I am the very girl that your father blessed in the story you just told, and his blessing made an impression on me that I could never forget."

Mr. Rogers and the other minister were very surprised to hear this. How was it possible that such a godly person had grown up in a home like Sir Richard's? How had she become serious about religion?

Mrs. Tooley saw his surprise, and she began to tell them how her life had changed since she had been a little girl.

When Sir Richard died, she became the sole heiress to his estate, making her very wealthy. She had no one to control her, and she pursued all the pleasures of the world without any restraint. But deep down, she always felt dissatisfied.

After a brief illness, she decided to travel to Bath, both for pleasure and for her health. In providence, she was led to consult a doctor who was a deeply-religious man. He asked her to describe her health problems. She answered, "Doctor, it is not so much my body that bothers me. I have an uneasy mind that I cannot get rid of."

"I was the same way," he replied, "until I came across a certain book, and that cured me."

"Books," she said dismissively. "I get all the books I can lay my hands on – plays, novels, romances – but after I read them, my uneasiness is the same."

"That doesn't surprise me," he said. "But this Book is different from any other book. I never get tired of reading it. When I read it again, it is as if I have never read it before. I always see something new."

"What book is that?" she asked.

"That is not something I tell everyone," he replied.

"But can't I see it?" she persisted. "I'll give you anything you'd like."

"If you promise me one thing, I'll bring it to you," he said. "Promise that you will read it over carefully, and if you do not see much in it at first, that you will give it a second reading."

"I promise," she said.

To raise her curiosity, the doctor waited for some time to bring the book. Finally, after a few more visits, he brought the book along in his pocket. He pulled it out and gave it to her. It was the New Testament.

She rolled her eyes. "I could get that book anytime!"

"So you might," the doctor said, "but remember, I have your solemn promise that you will read it carefully."

"Well," she said, "I've never read it before, but I suppose I can give it a reading."

She did begin to read the New Testament, and it held her attention, giving her a deep concern for her soul. But she had been hoping to get rid of her uneasiness, and now her mind was more uneasy than ever. Not knowing what to do, she soon returned to London, thinking that the activities and entertainment there might help her feel better. Yet nothing worked.

One Saturday evening, she had a remarkable dream. In the dream, she was in a place of worship, hearing a sermon. But when she awoke, she could remember nothing but the text. However, the dream made a deep impression on her mind. The place and the minister from the dream felt familiar, as if she had known them for a long time.

The next morning, on the Lord's day, she told her dream to the friend with whom she was staying. "After breakfast," she said, "I am determined to find this place, if I have to go from one end of London to the other."

So they set out to look for the place in her dream. They went into several church buildings as they passed by, but none of them were the same as the one in her dream. At about one o'clock, they found themselves in the heart of the city. After having something to eat, they continued their search.

At about 2:30, they saw a large group of people going down Old Jewry Street. She and her friend decided to join them and see where they were going. They came to a place of worship, where a minister named Mr. Shower was about to preach, and they decided to stay for the service.

When she entered the door and saw the inside of the building, she came to a stop. Turning to her companion, she said with amazement, "This is exactly the place I saw in my dream!"

In just a few minutes, she saw Mr. Shower go up into the pulpit. Looking at him with great surprise, she said, "This is the very man I saw in my dream. If every part of it holds true, he will take for his text Psalm 116.7, *'Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.'*"

When he rose up to pray, she was all attention. Every sentence of the prayer went right to her heart. Having finished his prayer, Mr. Shower announced his text – Psalm 116.7, the text from her dream.

The Lord blessed the sermon to her soul, and it was the means of her conversion. At last, she had found what she had sought in vain for so long – rest for her soul. She had obtained the blessing from God that Mr. Rogers, many years before, had so solemnly and fervently implored on her behalf.

THE WRONG TRAIN

On a certain day in the year 1882, a minister left home to attend the funeral of an old friend. On his return trip, he stepped into the wrong train and did not notice his mistake. In calm ignorance he entered into conversation with a man who sat across from him, being his only companion in this compartment of the train.

At first their conversation was about general matters. The minister told the stranger that he was returning from the funeral of one of his best friends. The stranger said, "You must have attended a lot of funerals already," looking with a side glance at the dress of the minister.

"Oh, yes," he answered, "a great many, and I have witnessed many kinds of deathbeds in various circumstances."

They were both silent for a moment, after which the stranger asked, "Have you ever seen someone die who had committed a great transgression?"

The serious manner in which this question was asked, and the piercing eyes of the stranger, startled the minister, filling him with suspicion, and causing him to inwardly pray to the Lord for protection. Then he answered the stranger's question and took the opportunity to speak to him about the eternal welfare of his soul and Christ Jesus.

The stranger was much moved. When the minister stopped speaking, he said, "I am in deep trouble; I left my wife this morning, with the firm resolution to commit suicide. And now it is impossible for me to do it, although I undoubtedly would have done so if I had not met you. Every word you have spoken has penetrated deeply into my conscience because my parents have brought me up in the fear of the Lord, and formerly I believed in God."

After this they conversed together for awhile; yes, for a long time, which God was pleased to use to the salvation of the stranger.

Meanwhile, the train was approaching the place which the minister thought was his intended destination. He shook hands with his new friend and stepped from the train. To his surprise, he was in an entirely different city.

When he realised his mistake in taking the wrong train, he humbly acknowledged the Lord for His special providential direction. Man's wrong trains are often God's right ones.

Religious Stories for Young and Old Vol. 4

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

THE PARABLES OF JESUS (1)

The Sower

When the Lord Jesus was here upon earth, He spent a great deal of time teaching the people. He was a good Teacher, and He always taught the truth. He never made things up or tried

to impress His hearers with fanciful stories. His teaching was always to instruct and “teach the way of God.” We know that the majority of the Pharisees, scribes, and other religious leaders did not like or approve of what Jesus was teaching. That was because they were so steeped in their traditions. They were righteous in their own eyes, thinking they had kept the laws of God. Jesus taught that man has no righteousness of his own.

There is one notable thing about the teaching of Jesus – He always taught simply. He never made things complicated or used words that an ordinary person could not understand. One way in which Jesus taught was by using a parable. What do we mean by a parable? A parable is simply a story about everyday happenings, but with a deeper, underlying spiritual application. It is often called “an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.” So the Lord Jesus spoke of very common, well-known things. Yet He brought forth something far more important than the literal meaning.

In the parable of the sower, we can see something of this. *“The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And great multitudes were gathered together unto Him, so that He went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. And He spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow”* (Matthew 13.1-3).

Straight away the people would have understood about the sower going forth with his seed basket to sow his seed, in the hope that it would germinate, grow, and eventually bring forth fruit to be harvested.

Jesus spoke of four different types of ground on which the seed would have fallen. There was the wayside, which we would understand to be hard ground, like a path or track. Second, there was the stony place, where the ground had not been properly prepared, the stones not being removed. Then some fell among the thorns, perhaps near the boundary of the land, where the ground was uncultivated. Finally, there was

the good ground, which had been ploughed up and tilled. The people would have been able to relate to each of these four types of ground. Out of these four grounds, only one brought forth fruit. That is, only one was profitable. The other three all came to nothing.

Now let us consider the seed itself. *“Now the parable is this: The seed is the Word of God.”* So the Lord Jesus here compares a tiny grain of seed to the pure and holy Word of God. This would be the heavenly or spiritual meaning.

How favoured we are to possess the Word of God, the Holy Bible! It is one of the things we may take for granted and think very little about. How different it was many years ago, when a Bible was very difficult to obtain! Men like John Wycliffe and William Tyndale laboured incessantly to give the English-speaking world a Bible in their own language. We also think of Mary Jones, who so longed to have a Bible of her very own, that she saved all her money to purchase one. *“The Word of the LORD was precious in those days”* (I Samuel 3.1).

Yet, favoured as we are to possess the Word of God, how often does it remain neglected and forgotten? The seed remains sealed up and put aside. What a great mercy if we know something of a true desire for the Word of God. *“Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law”* (Psalm 119.18). What great blessings and comforts are found in the Word of God for those who search prayerfully and seek diligently for the “hidden treasure” therein.

In the parable of the sower, the Lord Jesus set forth the vital importance of the Word of God. Where by grace it is found in the heart, fruit will be brought forth, in time, to the honour and glory of God.

The Bible is a spiritual book, and as such, it requires spiritual understanding of the truths set forth. May the Lord bless us with the gift of the Holy Spirit, of whom the Lord Jesus says, *“He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you”* (John 16.14). That is, the Holy Spirit will cause us to

understand the true meaning of the Word of God and bless us with faith to believe it. May we also be saved from a mere head knowledge of the Bible, being taken up with the historic accounts alone or with theological arguments. The Pharisees and religious leaders in Christ's day understood the Old Testament scriptures in the letter of them. They could argue, debate and gloat over their knowledge of them, but they completely failed to understand the true spiritual meaning, which was to set forth the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God. *"And ye have not His word abiding in you: for whom He hath sent, Him ye believe not. Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me. And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life"* (John 5.38-40).

Almighty God, Thy Word is cast like seed into the ground,
Now let the dew of heaven descend and righteous fruits abound.

Oft as the precious seed is sown, Thy quickening grace bestow;
That all whose souls the truth receive its saving power may know.

A.T. Pickett

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about FAITH. Faith believes God, works by love, trusts in Him and always has a gracious, humbling effect on those who possess it. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail. (See page 266 for the addresses.) Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. Write out the description of faith given in Hebrews 11.1.
2. Of whom was it written that he "was strong in faith, giving glory to God"? (Romans 4.20)
3. To whom did Jesus say, "O thou of little faith, wherefore

- didst thou doubt?" (Matthew 14:31)
4. Who was described as "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost"? (Acts 6.5)
 5. What did the Apostle Paul join with "faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" in his testimony to both Jews and Greeks? (Acts 20.21)
 6. What else is always joined with faith, otherwise it is "dead"? (James 2)
 7. What needs to be "mixed with faith" if it is to profit us? (Hebrews 4)
 8. Faith is called a "law" or a reigning principle within us. What is "excluded" by the "law of faith"? (Romans 3)
 9. What kind of armour is faith likened to in Ephesians 6?
 10. Jesus commended two people for their great faith, and neither of them were Jews. Who were they?

ANSWERS TO NOVEMBER QUESTIONS

1. "The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine."
2. Darius was speaking to Daniel.
3. "And call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me."
4. Evil.
5. God divided the waters of the Red Sea and the children of Israel went through on dry ground, but the Egyptians in trying to follow them were drowned.
6. Jacob had heard that Esau was coming to meet him with 400 men. (Genesis 32.6)
7. Joseph. (Genesis 45.7)
8. Peter was delivered when the angel opened the prison doors and led him out. (Acts 12.11)
9. The angel of the Lord smote and killed 185,000 men in the Assyrian army. (Isaiah 37.36)
10. David prayed to be delivered from "all my transgressions" (Psalm 39.8) and "blood guiltiness" (Psalm 51.14). In Psalm 56.13 he prays "deliver my feet from falling."

CONSIDER THE END

“Whatever you do, or take in hand, consider the end.”

My dear young friends, whate’er you do,
Be sure and keep the end in view;
Whate’er you do, whate’er you see,
Consider what the end will be.

My dear young friends, O do beware,
For Satan has laid many a snare
To try to draw you from the truth,
While in the slippery paths of youth.

My dear young friends, I’d have you know
That this deceitful, crafty foe,
Will try his best, your feet to catch
Within his gins, within his traps.

My dear young friends, O could you see
The end of what these things would be,
You’d shrink to take one step astray
From the upright and honest way.

My dear young friends, the time is short!
It is no time to play or sport,
Eternity’s at hand, and we
Know none of us how soon ’twill be.

My dear young friends, the end *will* come,
As sure as years and weeks *have* done;
How solemn is the thought, that we
Are hastening to eternity.

My dear young friends, O may you know
The vanity of things below;
And don’t forget, whate’er you do—
Be sure and keep the end in view.

E. Booy, The Little Gleaner

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OUR MAGAZINES

We would humbly acknowledge the Lord's mercy in making provisions for the Magazine. We would again acknowledge the faithful service of the former editor, Mr. Buss, and all his helpers, in their many years of service. We would also thank the Lord's dear servants and many other friends who have been such a help in bringing forth the magazine each month. Their help is greatly appreciated.

We understand that there will be no change in the price of the Magazine for 2018.

May it please the Lord to bless the various pieces to the hearts of young and old, for His Name's sake. "Brethren, pray for us."

G.L. Tenbroeke