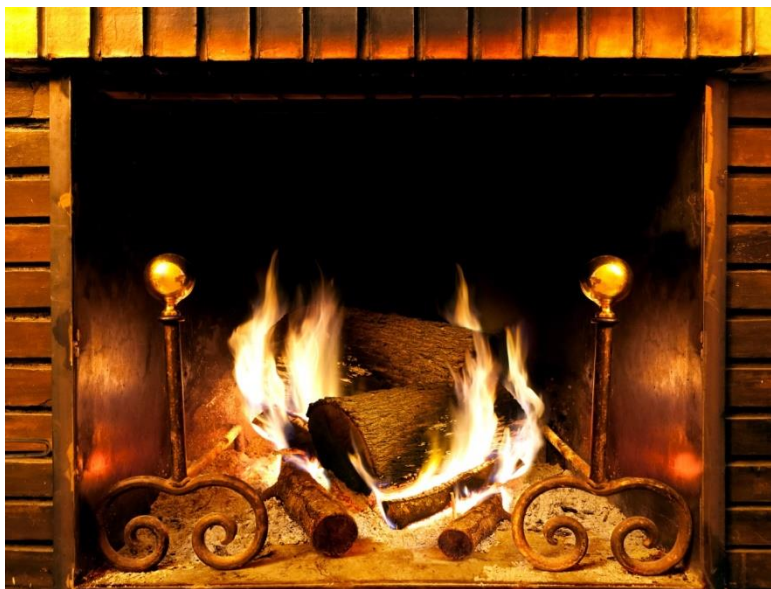


The Friendly Companion



“Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!”
(James 3.5)

January 2019

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

At the beginning of the year, it is customary for people to wish each other a “happy new year.” It is so commonplace that we hardly pay attention to the words. Perhaps we may fall into the habit of saying them without any thought of what we are really saying. It is not in our ability to create or bring about that which will make it a “happy new year.” Yet, it is a way of expressing good wishes for the year ahead.

What really will make it a happy new year? That will depend upon your age and circumstances. What will make it a happy year for someone who is seven or eight years of age, may not be the same for someone who is fifteen or sixteen.

There will be a measure of happiness in the year if we are granted prosperity. We hope that each of you may prosper in health through the year. Many children are sickly and spend hours and days in a doctor’s surgery (office) or in a hospital. They must undergo various treatments, yet they still do not prosper. How trying for them and their parents! May the Lord grant that you may prosper in health and be thankful for it.

We hope that you will prosper in your studies. Each year you build upon what you have learned in the past. In order to prosper, you will need to learn and grasp even greater ideas and concepts. To prosper in these things will enable you to advance to the next level or grade of education.

Do you remember the story of Abraham’s servant, who was sent to find a wife for Isaac? What a great responsibility he had! How he prayed that God would prosper his way! And God did so. The servant of Abraham had made a special request regarding the young woman whom God had appointed to be a wife for Isaac. When the servant met Rebekah, she performed all that he had prayed for, so that he *“wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not”* (Genesis 24.21). Later, he said to Rebekah’s mother and brother: *“Hinder me not, seeing the LORD hath prospered my way”* (verse 56). That is what we

wish for each of you in this year, that the Lord will prosper you in the way.

We read of Joseph that he was a prosperous man in the house of Potiphar. His master marked how *"the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand"* (Genesis 39.3). Later, when Joseph was in prison, the keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of many things, because he saw that *"the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper"* (verse 23).

In his third Epistle, the Apostle John wrote to a man named Gaius: *"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth"* (3 John verse 2). It is a great mercy to prosper in health and in circumstances, but how much more really to prosper in our souls: to walk in holy fear, heavenly love, gracious exercise, prayerful expectations, and sweet dependence on the Lord; to prosper in hearing of sermons, and especially in reading the Word of God. The Lord told Joshua: *"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 thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success"* (Joshua 1.8).

While thinking on the words "happy new year," we were reminded of another saying that has become popular in our day. A friend has also written to us about this expression. We refer to the expression, "Have a good day," which is often spoken as a parting word when we take leave of each other. Although innocently spoken, it verges on presumption. It surely is not in our power, nor in the power of those to whom we say it, to make or ensure that they have a good day. It is much better to say, "We hope you may have a good day." We have even heard some return answer to "Have a good day," with "Oh, we will."

We are reminded of the words spoken by James: *"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and*

then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, if the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (James 4.14,15).

May the Lord help us each to speak with understanding and with a sense of our dependence upon Him.

With loving wishes from the Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

What a welcome sight the fireside is on a cold, blustery, winter day! The soft glow of the fire, along with the crackling of the burning wood, creates a warm atmosphere that cheers and comforts those who sit down beside it. Some of the most pleasant memories from my childhood are of my father starting a fire in the fireplace, when the snow was rapidly falling, and the wind was whistling through the small gaps in the front door. While a winter blizzard was raging outside, the fire was like a kind servant to keep us warm.

There are many ways in which a fire was like a servant in the Bible. The children of Israel needed a fire to roast the Passover lamb, and later on, when they were commanded to make their burnt offerings unto God. They also used fire to purify certain metals. In the Book of Numbers, God had told them: *"Every thing that may abide the fire, ye shall make it go through the fire, and it shall be clean"* (Numbers 31.23).

The believers in Ephesus made a fire to burn up all their books of curious art (witchcraft). It was a great sacrifice on their part, for the price of the books amounted to fifty thousand pieces of silver (Acts 19.19).

However, fire is not always a faithful servant. When it is out of its proper place, it becomes a cruel master or tyrant. That is what happens when there is a forest fire or when a building is burned up. Another memory of my childhood revolves around the house of a neighbour that caught fire. Through mercy, all the family escaped; some through a bedroom window, and others through the door, with the flames closing in on all sides. The terror of being surrounded by flames had a lasting effect upon them.

Likewise, SIN, when it is first presented to us, is like the fire that seems so inviting that it draws us near and entices us. Our nature likes the pleasing sensation, and we soon sit down to enjoy it. But when our eyes and understanding are opened, then we see our danger. We begin to cry unto God to save us from the dreadful fire of our lusts, which burns out of control.

May the Lord teach us each something of these truths.

LOST TIME

A wealthy lady had a scroll hanging in her bedroom with the following inscription: "Lost, between sunrise and sunset, one golden hour, set with sixty diamond minutes. No reward is offered for its recovery, for it is gone forever."

What a solemn meaning those last few words convey! In whatever way it may have been spent, time can never be recalled. If we carefully consider the year that has just passed, every one of us must sadly exclaim, "Much of the time has been wasted."

We cannot recover lost time from the past, but we may ask for God's help to improve the present and the future!

Adapted from Cheering Words 1993

FAITHFUL IN OLD AGE

An old man in Sutherland, stricken in years and living a long way from the church, appeared one stormy day at the service. His minister was amazed to see him and asked why he had ventured out in such weather. The aged man replied, "I had the mind to come, and God gave me the strength. I also thought that I might be of some help to you here. Besides, I did not want to grieve the Spirit of the Lord by leaving my place empty in His house."

What a contrast to the lukewarm spirit that is often seen in the present day!

From "Gleanings of Highland Harvest" by Murdoch Campbell

PICTURES OF JESUS

Question: Why is it wrong to have pictures of Jesus?

Answer: Most children's books on the New Testament are full of pictures of the Lord Jesus. Many people cannot see any wrong in this. Why do we not agree?

First: We are strictly forbidden to make any "likeness" of God (Exodus 20.4), and Jesus is God. Images, stained glass windows, and pictures, however sincere the intent, have never had a good spiritual effect.

Second: We do not know what the Lord Jesus looked like. The four gospels abound with details of His holy character, His love, His righteousness, the things He did, the words He spoke – but the Holy Ghost is silent concerning His human appearance. He has not seen fit to give us one detail about the colour of His hair, or anything else. These so-called pictures of the Lord Jesus are *not* what He looked like; for no one knows. How would we feel if a person, who had never seen us, sent round an imaginary picture he had drawn of us (that was nothing at all like us) and said, "That is So-and-so"?

Third: It is wrong to separate the Godhead and the sacred humanity of the Lord Jesus. He is God as well as Man. The most beautiful picture of the Lord Jesus (even if it were exactly true) could only show His humanity. It would be impossible to convey what our hymnwriter says: "The God shines gracious through the Man."

B.A. Ramsbottom, Friendly Companion 1985

That state is surely best which keeps you dependent on God and thankful to Him; and so you shall find it in the end.

The Sower 1880

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**ELIJAH FLEES**

Ahab told Jezebel his wife that Elijah had slain all the prophets of Baal. How angry she was! She sent a message to Elijah that he would be slain by the next day.

When Elijah heard that, he fled for his life. He went far into the wilderness and sat down to rest under a juniper tree. He was so weary! Elijah asked the Lord to take away his life, for it seemed that all his work as a prophet had come to nothing.

Finally, Elijah lay down and slept under the juniper tree. As he slept, an angel touched him, saying, "*Arise and eat.*" Elijah saw food and water beside him. After eating, he lay down to sleep again. The angel of the Lord came to him a second time, saying, "*Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee.*" Elijah ate and drank again. What wonderful food the Lord gave him! He went in the strength of it for "*forty days and forty nights.*"

QUESTIONS:

1. Where did Elijah flee? (3 words)
2. Who touched Elijah? (2 words)
3. What did he say to Elijah? (3 words)

Please send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail. (See page 2 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

ANSWERS TO DECEMBER QUESTIONS

1. The sea.
2. There is nothing.
3. A little cloud.

Contributed.

*“I have
laboured in
vain,
I have spent my
strength for
nought, and
in vain.”*

Isaiah 49.4

BIBLE LESSONS**PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA**

What a striking contrast there was, as Paul was brought before King Agrippa: the king and Bernice in their royal apparel, the chief captain in his uniform, and the rulers of the city, no doubt, in their official robes. Then there was Paul, bound with chains, as if he was a dangerous criminal.

Agrippa told Paul, *"Thou art permitted to speak for thyself."* The Lord Jesus had told His disciples that in times to come, people would lay hands on them and persecute them. They would be put into prisons and be brought before kings and rulers for His name's sake. He also told them: *"Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to ... resist"* (Luke 21.12, 14,15).

Paul was thankful to have such an opportunity, especially since he knew that King Agrippa was very knowledgeable about the customs and laws of worship held by the Jews.

He told those assembled that the Jews knew what his manner of life had been from his youth and that he had lived after the strictest sect of the Pharisees. At the present time, he was being accused and condemned *"for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers."* The twelve tribes of Israel were serving God continually, waiting for that same hope of which he was being accused by the Jews.

Paul did not leave King Agrippa, nor the others in the judgment hall, to wonder what promise he was speaking of. He asked them: *"Why should it be thought a thing incredible [impossible] with you, that God should raise the dead?"*

Paul told Agrippa that at one time he had behaved against believers in Jesus of Nazareth, just as the Jews were now acting toward himself. He had put many into prison and testified against others, so that they would be put to death. He then rehearsed that memorable day when he had gone to Damascus to arrest the believers. He told them how the Lord had

appeared unto him in a light that was brighter than the sun. It had caused him and his companions to fall to the ground in fear. After the light, a voice spoke to him, commanding him to rise and stand up.

Paul still remembered the power of that voice and the words that were spoken: *"For I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the ... Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee."*

Paul told Agrippa that the purpose of the ministry was to open the eyes of sinners, to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive the forgiveness of sins. Paul then added: *"Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, ... and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God."*

It was because he had preached to the Gentiles that the Jews sought to kill him. How careful Paul was to give glory to God! Even while bound in chains, he declared: *"Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, ... saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and ... be the first that should rise from the dead."*

You can read about this in Acts chapter 26 verses 1 to 23.

QUESTIONS:

1. For what was Paul being accused and condemned? (9 words)
2. What did Paul say should not be thought impossible? (6 words)
3. What came after the light which appeared to Paul? (5 words)
4. For what did Jesus say He had appeared to Paul? (5 words)
5. How did Paul say he continued unto this day? (6 words)

Please send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail (See page 2 for the addresses). Remember to

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

ANSWERS TO DECEMBER QUESTIONS

1. "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."
 2. Festus.
 3. Caesar.
 4. King Agrippa and Bernice.
 5. That he was dead. That he was alive.
-

SHEEP AND GOATS

In the August issue of the *Friendly Companion*, we included an article entitled "Sheep and Goats." We trust each of you have read it and maybe even read it a second time, as it sets forth something of the solemn difference between them; a difference in their nature, their appetite, their value, and especially in their end.

In the article, the sheep were compared to the Lord's people, who often cannot see things clearly and "certainly can never see the mark on their own back." A very kind friend has written to remind us that the word "never" is not consistent with the Word of God and with what we profess as churches.

This indeed might cause many of the Lord's little ones to rest short of a revelation of Christ to their soul. Sooner or later, the Lord gives unto His people the earnest of the Spirit: *"Who bath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts"* (2 Corinthian 1.22). Again, we read in Romans 8.16: *"The Spirit Itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."*

When John wrote his first Epistle, he declared that the witness of God is greater than the witness of men. The witness of men may be founded upon misinterpreted actions and words. Then John tells us: *"He that believeth on the Son of God bath the witness in himself"* (1 John 5.10). Those that

believe are "... *sealed with that holy Spirit of promise*" (Ephesians 1.13).

Such souls know whom they have believed (2 Timothy 1.12), what they worship (John 4.22), and to whom they come (John 6.68).

Editor

"HE CARETH FOR YOU"

Near the time of the American revolutionary war, a godly old couple by the name of Jones lived in a town in the state of Connecticut. They were both infirm and very poor. All of their children had either died or moved away. There was no one to care for them, except that occasionally a neighbour came to give assistance. Their little house was on a road that was somewhat remote, and it was hidden from view by high knolls and large rocks.

One winter, there was a very severe snowstorm. Strong winds blew the snow about furiously, and the front of the Jones' cottage was buried almost completely out of sight. The aged couple had only a little wood left to keep them warm and a very scanty supply of food. At length, the last mouthful of food had been eaten.

The storm finally cleared up, but it was bitterly cold. The roads were all blocked by the snow. The neighbouring farmers had plenty to do in looking after their cattle and digging out paths. Who would first think of the poor old couple?

Mrs. Jones tried to open the outside door, but she found there was a snowdrift against it, higher than the top of the door. Then she took her broom and pushed it up, making a small hole through the snow to the top of the snowdrift. She had scarcely drawn back the broom, when a fine large partridge flew into the house through the hole.

The aged couple chased the partridge around the room and finally caught it. Very soon, it was cooking in the pot over the fire. What a good meal those hungry ones had from the fine

bird that God had sent them! God, as we see, was the first to think of them and the first to send them help.

They gratefully remembered this incident all the rest of their days. They would take up the Bible, which they always kept nearby, and read about God feeding Elijah by means of the ravens. Then they thought of how God had also provided for them in a time of great need.

"O fear the LORD, ye His saints: for there is no want to them that fear Him. The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing" (Psalm 34.9,10).

The Sower 1873

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Have you ever noticed how a clock keeps on ticking? Seconds roll into minutes, minutes into hours, hours into days, days into weeks, and weeks into years. The clock is a simple picture of time, which never stops. It continues on and on. But there is one clock that will stop, and that is the clock of life. I will share a short memory of a first impression at a young age.

Each year, as a family, we travelled far to visit my grandparents. It was fun and an exciting time. My grandmother was a God-fearing, humble lady, who had some simple, yet meaningful verses and sayings in various places in her home. One of them made a lasting impression on my mind and heart. The first time I read the saying, I did not quite understand it, so I read it again. Then, I realised that it was speaking of death. That made me think that I, too, could die at a young age. The words kept coming back to me, and they are solemn to think upon. The words are as follows:

The clock of life is wound but once,
And no man has the power
To know just where the hands may stop,
At late or early hour.

Each time we returned to grandmother's house, I read the poem several times. It caused me to ponder: "When will my clock stop? Will it stop when I'm young? Will I live to see old age?" I do not know the answer to these questions, but I have been taught from my youth that there is one thing needful before we die. Children, do you know what that one thing needful is? It is a new heart. And we should not wait until the clock strikes eleven to seek the Lord, for we know not when the eleventh hour may come!

In the dawn of this new year, may we all stop and consider. We may have lived five, ten, fifteen, or perhaps thirty, fifty, or ninety years. Has there ever been a time when the Lord has caused you to be concerned about when your clock will stop? And when it does stop ticking, will you meet God as a Judge or as a Saviour?

I was young, maybe nine or ten, when I first read this poem. It made me stop and think that I might die at any moment. I am not guaranteed to live until old age. I could die at an early hour. Will I be prepared to die? Have I been given a new heart, or am I seeking for one? The Bible says, "*Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near*" (Isaiah 55.6).

Although this was a first impression in my life, the Lord did appear some years later, and I trust He granted true, saving grace for my soul. He brought this poem back to my memory, and I wanted to tell you about it. My desire is to thank Him for the hope of praising Him eternally when my clock finally does stop.

Contributed

ONLY ONCE

One winter afternoon, a boy named James was walking home from school. One of his friends ran up to him, saying, "Stop a minute, James. We're going to go skating down the river tonight. We will build a fire on the island and have a grand time. Please come with us."

"No, George, I can't. Father says I must only skate on the canal. I know it isn't so wide, nor quite so good for skating, but it is safer," answered James.

"Nonsense! The ice on the river is at least two inches thick, even in the thinnest places."

"No matter," said James. "I can't skate on the river."

"Well, then, at least come to the canal. You can skate out to the fork, where it joins the river, and see us all. Will you do that?"

"Yes."

"All right. Be there at seven."

James was ready with his skates at the time appointed, and he was about to leave the house, when his father asked, "Where are you going now, James?"

"I'm going to skate awhile on the canal, father."

"Well, it's a bright evening, but don't stay late, and don't go on the river."

James crossed the field before the house, and he was soon on the canal, gliding swiftly towards the river, from which the sound of merry voices reached his ear. As he wheeled splendidly at the entrance of the canal, the boys saw him, and came swiftly skating towards him, like a fleet of ships before the wind.

"Hurrah, James!" cried a dozen of them, as they joined company with him on the canal.

There they amused themselves with racing, skating backward, and cutting all sorts of fancy figures on the ice, until George gave the word, "Now for the island!" With loud shouts, they shot out together upon the river, all but James.

"I must leave you now," he said.

"Oh, James, please don't!" cried several voices at once.

"Now, see here, James," said George; "what's the use of being so stubborn? Go down with us this one time."

"Father said, 'Don't go on the river.'"

"Well, as to that, you've already been on the river two or three times. Look at your marks."

James now saw that, in the excitement of their sport, he had repeatedly rushed out of the canal across the channel of the river. How he wanted to go with the boys! He did not really think there was much danger; the discovery that he had already broken his father's command without realising it, did not help him in his hour of weakness and temptation. The boys all begged him to join them. James slowly glided out of the canal. He stood still for a moment, and then the tempter prevailed.

"Well, I'll go down this once – mind you, only once," and he darted like an arrow to the front, for he was the best skater in the company, and soon he was far in advance of the rest.

Alas! None of the boys knew of the dangerous "breathing-hole" which had opened that day in the ice in the channel. It now lay right in James' path, waiting to receive him; and the first notice they had of its existence was a despairing cry of terror from him as he plunged in.

All was confusion among the boys; but George, more self-possessed than the others, hurried to the shore and shouted, "Hold on, Jamie! I'll help you out." He broke off the limb of a tree, as large and long as he could handle, and brought it on the ice. By carefully creeping towards James, he tried to put it within his reach.

However, the current was strong, the water was bitterly cold, and James, who had been urging his friend to hurry, now began to lose his strength. He became numb with cold, and before the limb came within his grasp, he said, faintly, "Oh, George, I can't hold on any longer! Ask father – to forgive –" and he went down with the current.

An hour later, men at the mill below were watching and waiting in expectation of their mournful task. They had broken up the ice above the barred outlet of the dam. They lifted James out of the water and tenderly carried his body home.

We have seldom told you a sadder story. Oh, that we could impress the lesson of obedience to parents upon your young hearts so deeply that it will never be forgotten! If you are ever

tempted to do wrong, even if it is “only once,” may you be helped to resist the temptation. Remember James. The sad consequence of disobedience is not always so immediate or fatal, but one sin often leads to another. The Word of God says, “*Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That is may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth*” (Ephesians 6.1,2).

We think of the Lord Jesus Christ who never gave in to temptation, not even once. He was “*in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*” (Hebrews 4.15,16). May our eyes be unto Him for help in times of temptation and especially for the salvation of our souls.

Adapted from The Little Gleaner 1888

MR. WHITEFIELD AND THE TRUMPETER

On one occasion, during Mr. Whitefield's residence in America, a trumpeter, belonging to an English regiment, resolved to interrupt him during a discourse that he was expected to deliver in the open air. At the hour appointed for the sermon, he went to the field where it was to be preached, carrying his trumpet with him. He intended to blow the trumpet with all his might at about the middle of the sermon. He took his stand at a short distance in front of the minister.

The gathering of people was very great. Those who were towards the outside of the crowd pressed forward in order to hear more distinctly. This caused such a pressure at the place where the trumpeter stood, that he found it impossible to raise up the arm that held the trumpet at the time in which he intended to blow it. He attempted to remove himself from the crowd, but he found that was equally impossible. Thus, he was kept within hearing of the Gospel as securely as if he had been

chained to the spot. After a short time, his attention was arrested by the words spoken. He became so powerfully affected by what the preacher said that he was seized with an agony of despair. At length, he was carried to a house in the neighbourhood. When the service was over, he was visited by Mr. Whitefield. He offered some seasonable words of counsel to the poor trumpeter, and he became a seeking soul.

The Little Gleaner 1877

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

THE BOOK OF DANIEL (Chapter 1)

“Them that honour Me I will honour”

“In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god” (Daniel 1.1,2).

What a sad and distressing day this must have been to the children of Israel! A foreign army had invaded their land and taken many people captive to a land far away in Babylon. This king also took away many vessels out of the temple and brought them to his own treasure house.

The children of Israel were reaping what they had sown. In Deuteronomy chapter 28, the Lord God clearly states the consequences of disobedience to Him. Sadly, the children of Israel had so often been disobedient to Him over the years, despite the Lord sending many prophets to warn them of their evil ways.

However, amongst the solemn judgments of God, there was mercy. There were four young men among those who were taken away from Jerusalem; four young men with the fear of God in their hearts; four young men who, by God's grace, sought to serve Him still, though in a foreign land. One of

these young men was Daniel. What a great thing it must have been for Daniel to be forcibly removed from his home and family, and to be taken to this far-off land! But, as it was spoken of Joseph so many years before, the same must be said of Daniel: *“But God was with him”* (Acts 7.9; see also Genesis 39.21).

The Lord had given Daniel great wisdom and understanding in natural things, and this foreign king Nebuchadnezzar was looking for young men with such gifts, to be set aside and taught in the learning and tongue of the Chaldeans. This would have been something similar to our universities.

In young Daniel, who would probably have been a teenager, the fear of God caused some deep searching of heart concerning the position he was in. *“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself”* (verse 8). The king had ordered that all the young men under his care should be given the finest of the food available. However, much of this food would be considered unclean according to the Word of God and most likely had been offered to idols; so Daniel would not defile himself or offend His God by eating it. What would we do in such circumstances? It is very easy for us to say that we would be as courageous or faithful as Daniel, until we come to similar circumstances.

Daniel clearly knew the Scriptures and what was right or wrong in the sight of the Lord. It is not likely that he had a copy of the Scriptures with him, but the Word of God was hidden in his heart (Psalm 119.11). We are so privileged to have the Holy Bible – the Word of God. We may know a great many of the things written therein, but the great thing is – has the Lord God, by His Spirit, applied these truths to our hearts, and do we desire to walk according to the Word of God?

Surely, Daniel must have known this scripture: *“For them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall*

be lightly esteemed" (1 Samuel 2.30). Daniel knew that to partake of this food and wine would dishonour God; it would grieve the Holy Spirit; it would be wrong in the sight of God. He also knew that God would be honoured by his gracious stand and would provide for him in his time of need.

"Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiab, Misbael, and Azariah, Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. Then let our countenance be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants" (verses 11-13). Rather than partake of that which would be wrong in the sight of God, Daniel was content to eat the most basic food (pulse is beans, peas or lentils) and thus have a clear conscience before God. *"Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife"* (Proverbs 17.1). When we know that something is wrong, even when it is so attractive to our carnal minds, we need much grace to be content to go without or accept something less, knowing that we shall have a clear conscience before Almighty God.

Daniel, as grace was given to him, sought to honour God, and God was pleased to honour Daniel. *"And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat"* (verse 15). Daniel and his friends suffered no loss or harm by accepting only pulse and water. God overruled the laws of nature and made sure that His servants were cared for.

Not only did God so care for these young men, but He also gave them much wisdom and understanding. We do need to remember that it is God alone who gives men their various gifts and abilities. During the course of their lives, the wisdom and understanding that God gave to these young men was used for His own purposes. Whatever wisdom and

understanding the Lord may give to you, may you acknowledge Him and be helped to use such gifts to His honour and glory.

A.T. Pickett

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about TEMPTATION. 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 2 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

The words “tempt” and “temptation” are used in several ways in scripture. Sometimes it simply means to test, to try or to prove that something is real.

1. In Genesis 22.1 we read that God tempted, or tested, Abraham. What did he tell Abraham to do?

Another way the words are used is in “tempting” God, when men do not believe what God says and call His word into question, or when they try to find fault with it. Many times the children of Israel tempted God while they were journeying from Egypt to the Promised Land.

2. How did the children of Israel tempt God at Meribah – what question did they ask? (Exodus 17.7)
3. Psalm 78.18 tells of one way the children of Israel tempted God in the wilderness. How did they do so?
4. The Pharisees asked Jesus a question: “Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?” What was the first thing which Jesus replied? (Matthew 22.17)

Satan is the great tempter and often he tempts or entices us to do wrong, to call God’s Word into question, to disbelieve and distrust God, or to abuse His mercy and kindness.

5. What question did Satan, as a serpent, put to Eve when he tempted her? (Genesis 3. 1)
6. When Satan came as a tempter to the Lord Jesus, what did he suggest Jesus should turn some stones into? What did Jesus reply? (Matthew 4)

7. When Satan tempted Jesus to cast Himself down from the temple, what did Jesus reply? (Matthew 4)

Sometimes the things around us and the things we do can be a temptation to us if we become entangled with them in a way that causes us to forget God.

8. Which people did the Apostle Paul say are especially liable to fall into temptation? (1 Timothy 6)

In James 1.12-14, James says that God cannot be tempted, nor does He tempt others, but we are tempted when we are drawn away and enticed by sinful things. The word “tempt” is used here in the sense of “entice to evil,” not “test or try” as in question 1.

Finally some more general questions.

9. What words of comfort did the Apostle Paul speak in 1 Corinthians 10, concerning those who were tempted?
10. Write out two things the Lord Jesus spoke concerning praying against temptations. (Luke 11; 22)

ANSWERS TO DECEMBER QUESTIONS

1. Solomon.
2. “He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just.”
3. “Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight: that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest.”
4. The Pharisees.
5. “And who is my neighbour?”
6. Man is not justified “by the works of the law,” but believers are justified “by the faith of Christ.”
7. Mercy.
8. “And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness.” (Genesis 15.6)
9. “And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.” (Acts 13.39)
10. Romans 3.24; Titus 3.7

ETERNITY

Lo, on a narrow neck of land,
'Twixt two unbounded seas I stand,
Yet how insensible!
A point of time, a moment's space,
Removes me to yon heavenly place,
Or shuts me up in hell.

O God, my inmost soul convert
And deeply on my thoughtless heart,
Eternal things impress.
Give me to feel their solemn weight,
And save me ere it be too late;
Wake me to righteousness.

Before me place, in bright array,
The pomp of that tremendous day,
When Thou with clouds shalt come
To judge the nations at Thy bar:
And tell me, Lord, shall I be there,
To find a joyful home?

Be this my one great business here,
With holy trembling, holy fear,
To make my calling sure!
Thine utmost counsel to fulfil,
And suffer all Thy righteous will,
And to the end endure!

Then, Saviour, then my soul receive,
Transported from this vale to live
And reign with Thee above;
Where faith is sweetly lost in sight,
And hope in full supreme delight
And everlasting love.

Charles Wesley

The Friendly Companion



Asiatic Male Lion in Gir Forest National Park, India

”... there came a lion ... and took a lamb out of the flock:
And I went out after him, and ... I caught him by his
beard, and smote him, and slew him”
(1 Samuel 17.34,35).

February 2019

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Front cover picture courtesy of Wikipedia.

OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

By S.P. Rosier

Dear Children and Young People,

Have you ever seen a pretty little village nestling in the hillside, perhaps with thatched-roof cottages and an ancient church tower, surrounded by green fields and meadows? How peaceful and picturesque it looks! Immediately the thought arises in our minds, "What a lovely place to live." However, if we were able to come a little nearer to the village and begin to lift up the thatched roofs and peer inside the pretty-looking cottages, what a different picture may meet our eyes. In one humble abode there may be a violent scene taking place; in another there will, undoubtedly, be a sinful scene; in yet another, a sorrowful scene. For in the lives of the villagers there are passions, lusts and proud thoughts. Have we forgotten this? And everywhere there is also some pain and worry. And surely, we cannot forget that there is a disease at this cottage and another at that; and, at length in every household, without exception, there comes that awful visitor, Death, and then the dreadful grave itself.

Dear friends, how easy it is to be deceived! For hidden inside the pleasant-looking outside, there was a monster called Sin, working death. Was not Abraham's nephew, Lot, deceived when he chose the verdant green plains of Sodom? Little did he think that soon the whole landscape would become an inferno of fire and brimstone. And what was the cause of this destruction? Sin. But it all looked and sounded so pleasant from a distance. Yes, the devil is a great deceiver. The forbidden fruit began to look very good and desirable in Eve's eyes when the devil spoke fair and deceitful words. But, afterward, how their guilty hearts began to tremble when they heard the voice of the Lord calling them. "*Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell*" (Proverbs 9.17,18). May we remember there is an afterwards.

But there are other things which may actually be better than they at first appear outwardly. Think of the Lord's people. We might be quick to think how poor, how weak, and how ugly such an one may look, especially compared to the glittering world. But O, how deceived we may be! The Lord Jesus said, "*Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment*" (John 7.24). What great riches there may be treasured up in the very place that really matters: the soul. There might be found the Pearl of great price, JESUS Himself! And what about the washing away of every sin and the unspeakable joy of God's love being shed abroad? Can earthly treasures compare to these heavenly blessings? How careful we need to be, then, lest we judge only after the outward appearance. Yes, there is a happy people in whom the Spirit of the Lord does dwell; and though poor in their own spirits, and often living as mourners here below, yet by God's great grace, they are rich in faith and heirs of a blessed kingdom. A heavenly, eternal crown is laid up for them.

O that each of you, my dear friends, might find this hidden treasure!

Thou hidden love of God, whose height,
Whose depth unfathomed, no man knows.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

There is no mistaking the picture on the front cover this month. The massive head and mane, the sleek body, and the long, slender tail with the ball of fur at the end are distinguishing features of the lion.

In the Book of Proverbs, Solomon tell us of three things that go well and are comely in their going. The first thing he mentions is "*a lion which is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away for any*" (Proverbs 30.30). When hyenas, jaguars, and other beasts have taken prey, they are always on the lookout for lions, who drive them from their prey and take

it for themselves. However, when a lion catches his prey, he does not worry that other animals may try to steal it from him.

Sometimes the Bible speaks of the fierce lion and especially of the roaring of the lions. Peter warned the believers to be always watching with vigilance because *“the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour”* (1 Peter 5.8).

If you have seen a lion exhibit in a zoo, you will have noticed the heavy iron bars or the thick glass which separates you from the lions. The bars and glass are not there to protect the lions from you or the other animals, are they? No, they are there to protect all others from the lions, so the lions do not escape and hurt them.

When Daniel was cast into the den of lions, he did not have bars or glass to protect him from the mouths of the lions. He had something better than those things. His God sent an angel to shut the mouths of the lions. Those who fear God are often filled with fear lest they should be left in the power of Satan. The Lord reminded Peter that Satan desired to have him. However, the Lord said that He had prayed for Peter, *“that thy faith fail not”* (Luke 22.32).

We love to read and hear of the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus, in His gentleness, His meekness and His loveliness. Yet, when the Apostle John was given his Revelation, he was told at one point not to weep over the distressing scene. Then his eyes were opened to see Jesus in a new way, as *“THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDA”* (Revelation 5.5). As that Lion, He would destroy all the enemies of His people.

IN THE SOLE OF A SHOE

Joe was the village shoemaker. Not so long ago, every village had its own butcher, baker and dairyman; sometimes more than one. Joe was a man who loved to argue, and he was an unbeliever. A friend had many talks with him about the Bible and gave him many gospel tracts, but all to no purpose.

"As for your tracts," Joe said to this neighbour one day, "you see what becomes of them!" He held up a shoe that he was making. He used the tract to fill up the space between the inner and outer sole. "Much good it will do to anyone now," he continued.

"Joe," replied his friend, "in the Bible, God says, '*My Word ... shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please*' (Isaiah 55.11). I believe that. The tract will do its work yet." And with that remark, he left the shop.

Further down the street, Joe had a rival, another shoe maker, who was as quarrelsome and unbelieving as himself. Sometime later, that same shoe was brought to this man for repair. It needed a new sole. Sitting down on a Sunday morning to do the work, he ripped off the old leather at the same time that the church bells were ringing. Then he came to the tract!

The title of the tract arrested him: "*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy*" (Exodus 20.8). He laid down his work and read on. At first, he read scornfully, but soon the clear, dignified argument of the writer held him fast. He felt uneasy and troubled. He laid down the shoe, washed himself, changed his coat, and started for the house of God.

Outside, he met the godly neighbour from whom the tract had originally come. He said, "What, Bill! You here? I'm very glad to see it."

"You'll hardly guess what brought me," remarked the shoemaker.

"What brought you, Bill?"

"A tract that I found today in the sole of a shoe." He then went on and told the whole story.

"I know the first part of the story," said his neighbour, relating his interview with Joe. "You see," he continued, "God will not let His Word fall to the ground."

That talk was the first of many. The two men spent many evenings over their Bibles, rarely separating without prayer. It

ended, as all such honest seeking after truth always ends, in Bill being brought to know the Lord.

Adapted from Cheering Words 2004

THE STORY OF A BIRD'S NEST

In the city of Hamilton, Ontario, a group of workers was once putting a new sewer line down one of the main streets. In the course of breaking up the pavement, a big tree had to come down. One of the workmen spied a bird's nest in one of the branches, and he climbed up to see if there was anything in it. Sure enough, there were four little eggs inside.

The foreman decided not to touch the tree for the time being. The workmen were astounded to think that the construction job should be held up for the sake of the bird's nest. But the foreman said, "No! We can't disturb that little bird."

They went to the other end of the street and started to work back from there, hoping the eggs would be hatched and the little birds gone by the time they reached the tree again.

After some days, the construction crew again arrived at the spot where the tree stood. As the nest was still there, one of the men climbed up to take a look inside. Sure enough, the little birds were gone. He called down to say that only a few broken egg shells were left. The foreman called back up and told him to bring the nest down. He did so, and you know how curious people are! They took the nest apart to see what the bird had used to build it with. How surprised they were to find at the bottom of the nest, a small piece of paper with the picture of a sparrow on it. It was a Sunday School paper, and the sweet verse printed on it was: "*I will trust, and not be afraid*" (Isaiah 12.2).

Cheering Words 1993

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**ELIJAH IN A CAVE**

Elijah went all the way to Horeb, the mount of God, and lived in a cave. The Lord said to him, *"What doest thou here, Elijah?"* He answered that the children of Israel had forsaken the laws of God, thrown down His altars, and slain His prophets. Elijah said, *"I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."*

Elijah stood upon the mount before the Lord. First, there was a great wind, then an earthquake, and then a fire. The Lord did not appear to him in any of these. Finally, Elijah heard a still small voice, and he covered his face. The Lord told Elijah that there was still work for him to do. He also told him that seven thousand people in Israel had not worshipped the idol Baal.

Elijah departed from Horeb and found Elisha, the son of Shaphat, ploughing in a field. Elijah cast his mantle (cloak) upon Elisha. *"Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him."*

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Elijah live in? (2 words)
2. What did Elijah hear? (4 words)
3. Whom did Elijah cast his mantle upon? (1 word)

Please send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail. (See page 26 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

ANSWERS TO JANUARY QUESTIONS

1. Into the wilderness.
2. An angel.
3. Arise and eat.

Contributed

*“What
doest
thou here,
Elijah?”*

1 Kings 19.9,13

BIBLE LESSONS

ALMOST A CHRISTIAN

As Paul spoke before Agrippa, those in the room showed great respect by keeping silent. However, when he spoke of Christ being crucified and rising from the dead, Festus called out with a loud voice, *"Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad."* He could not understand how Paul could believe such things.

Paul had once behaved like a madman when he raged against believers and persecuted them. Now he calmly answered Festus: *"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth."*

He told everyone in the assembly that King Agrippa knew all about the events relating to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, because this thing was not done in a corner, meaning it was not done secretly or hidden from those in the land of Judea. Turning to Agrippa, Paul said: *"King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest."*

King Agrippa knew what the prophets had written and also what had been done to Jesus of Nazareth. He knew that Paul was not mad. Paul's words had a great effect upon him, so that he answered: *"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."* Agrippa's conscience was testifying against him, but his heart remained unmoved. There are many who hear the preaching of the gospel in the same way that Agrippa listened to Paul. They are convicted of their sins in a measure, and they feel convinced of the truth, so that they cannot speak against it. They even admire the grace that they see in others. Yet they cannot forsake their own ways to follow the Lord with all their heart. They lean on their own understanding, and like a double-minded man, they waver back and forth. David the king wrote: *"My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed"* (Psalm 57.7). Those like David find that their mind is stayed on God. Many are like Agrippa or like Lot's wife, who was almost saved from the destruction of Sodom. She was brought out by the angel God sent; yet she looked back and perished.

Paul was burdened about the hardness of heart shown by all those in the room. He answered: *"I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."*

The king quickly rose up, along with Festus, Bernice and those with them, and they went aside where Paul could not hear them. They all agreed that Paul had done nothing worthy of death. Agrippa told Festus that Paul could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.

Festus now had to find a way for Paul to be brought to Rome so he could appeal to Caesar. Paul and other prisoners were placed under the charge of a centurion of Caesar's army, whose name was Julius. Although he had done nothing wrong, Paul was counted with the prisoners who had done wicked deeds.

Some time before, Paul had expressed a desire to go to Rome. He could hardly have imagined that he would go to Rome as a prisoner. Paul encouraged himself with the thought that he was not a prisoner of the Romans, nor of the Jews, but of Jesus Christ. He wrote in the Epistle to the Ephesians: *"I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles"* (Ephesians 3.1). Even in this state as a prisoner, he wrote: *"For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content"* (Philippians 4.11).

You can read about this in Acts chapter 26 verses 24 to 32 and chapter 27 verse 1.

QUESTIONS:

1. Festus said that much learning had done what to Paul? (3 words)
2. In answer, Paul said that he spoke forth what? (3 words)
3. How did Agrippa answer Paul? (8 words)
4. What did Paul say he wished all who heard him were? (11 words)
5. Paul said that he was the prisoner of whom? (2 words)

Please send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail (See page 26 for the addresses). Remember

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

ANSWERS TO JANUARY QUESTIONS

1. For the hope of the promise made of God.
 2. That God should raise the dead.
 3. A voice spoke to him.
 4. To make thee a minister.
 5. Having therefore obtained help of God.
-

GOD COUNTS

A brother and sister were playing in the dining-room when their mother set a basket of cakes on the tea table and went out.

"How nice they look," said the boy, reaching to take one. His sister strongly objected, and she even took hold of his hand, repeating that their mother had told them not to touch them.

"She did not count them," he said.

"But God did," answered the sister.

So, he withdrew from the temptation, and sitting down, seemed to be thinking over the matter.

"You are right," he said at last, looking at her in a cheerful, yet serious way, "God does count; for the Bible says: *'The very hairs of your head are all numbered'*" (Matthew 10.30).

Adapted from Little Gleaner 1877

ANDROCLES AND THE LION

The following is a well-known story from the pages of Roman history. It dates back as far as the middle of the second century. Perhaps some children may not have heard it before.

Androcles was the slave of a wealthy Roman citizen. He was very badly treated by his master, and at last, he made up his mind to run away. He managed in some way to get into Africa, which was his native country. While travelling on foot, one day

he saw a cave, and being tired with his journey, he went into it and sat down to rest. As he was resting there, a huge lion come into the cave. He was hobbling on three feet, and holding up one of his giant paws, as if it was causing him great pain. Seeing a man in the cave, the lion came limping up to him, and held out his wounded foot as though he wanted him to relieve the pain he was suffering from.

Androcles looked at it, and he saw in a moment what was causing the trouble. There was a thorn in the foot, with a great swelling and inflammation around it. He gently removed the thorn and pressed out the clotted blood which had gathered around it. Then he cooled the paw by bathing it in water from a spring near the mouth of the cave. This made the lion feel gratitude towards the man who had done this great kindness. He looked at him and rubbed his head gently against the side of Androcles, as if he was trying to thank him for relieving the pain in his paw.

The lion stayed by Androcles and became his companion in the cave. The lion went out hunting every day and brought something back for both of them to eat. Androcles lived in this way for some time; but at last, he left the cave and his lion friend to find something useful to do.

Several years later, he decided to go back to Italy. Perhaps he thought that by this time he would not be recognised. However, he had not been there long before his old master found him. Then he was put in prison, and he was condemned to be thrown to the wild beasts on one of their great public holidays. It was a cruel practice of the Romans at that time to bring condemned criminals, and sometimes even Christians, whom they hated, into a great amphitheatre or public arena. Then they would send out wild animals to kill them, while many people gathered to watch.

The Emperor Caligula and thousands of people were there to see the terrible sight. Androcles was led out into the amphitheatre along with the other prisoners. Finally, the cages were opened, and the hungry beasts rushed out upon the

defenceless victims. A lion came bounding and roaring towards Androcles. But when he got near him, instead of springing on him and tearing him to pieces, he crouched at his feet, rubbed his head against his side, wagged his tail, and looked into his face. It was the old lion of the African cave. He still remembered his kind friend!

The Emperor was astonished to see this. He sent for Androcles to explain the mystery. Androcles told the story of what had taken place in that cave in Africa. The Emperor was so impressed that he pardoned Androcles and gave him his liberty. Androcles also received the lion as a present. The Lord changed the nature of the lion to fulfil His purposes.

He ravens and lions can tame!
All creatures obey His commands!
Then let us rejoice in His name,
And leave all our cares in His hands.

Adapted from "Bible Animals" by Richard Newton

THE REFINER OF SILVER

Some years ago, a few ladies in Dublin met together to read the Scriptures and converse about them. On this occasion, they were reading the third chapter of Malachi. *"But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver"* (Malachi 3.2,3).

One of the ladies said that it was her opinion that the fullers' soap and the refiner of silver were the same image, both intended to convey the same view of the sanctifying influence of the grace of Christ. However, another lady thought there was something special about the expression of the third verse: *"He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver."*

They agreed that it might be so, and one of the ladies promised to go to a silversmith to learn what he might say about the subject. She went accordingly, without telling the

purpose of her visit, and asked him about the process of purifying silver, which he fully described to her.

"But, sir," she said, "do you not sit while the purifying is going on?"

"Oh yes, madam," replied the silversmith. "I must sit with my eyes steadily fixed on the furnace, for if the time of refining be exceeded in the slightest degree, the silver is sure to be injured."

At once she saw the beauty, and comfort too, of the expression: "*He shall sit as the refiner and purifier of silver.*" Christ sees it is needful to put His children into the furnace, but He is seated by them. His eye is steadily intent on the work of purifying, and His wisdom and love are both engaged in the best manner for them. Their trials do not come at random; the very hairs of their head are all numbered.

As the lady was leaving, the silversmith called her back. He said that he had something more to tell her. He only knew when the process of purifying was accomplished by seeing his own image reflected on the silver. Beautiful figure! When Christ sees His own image in His people, His work of purifying is accomplished.

Adapted from Little Gleaner 1907

"DO THYSELF NO HARM"

Some years ago, a young man, who had spent all his money in sinful and wasteful living, was reduced to poverty. For some time, his friends supported him, but at length they all forsook him.

He wandered about, homeless and without a job. Finally, he determined to put an end to his miserable life by drowning himself. He went to the river-side in a strange place, putting lead into his pockets for this terrible purpose. He waited until it was dark so that he might not be seen by anyone else. Noticing a light in a house a little distance away, he somehow felt inclined to go toward it. When he got there, he heard the

singing of Psalms. He listened at the door while a chapter of the Bible was read, and a prayer was offered up. He then felt a strong desire to be admitted inside, and he knocked at the door. When it was opened, he asked permission to enter. He was told that it was not customary to receive strangers into their meetings. However, if he behaved quietly, he might come in. The passage of Scripture under consideration that evening was: "*Do thyself no harm*" (Acts 16.28).

After several persons had made their remarks upon the subject, they concluded as usual with prayer. They had no sooner done this, than the stranger asked them how they came to know his thoughts, for he had not mentioned his intention to any person on earth. This equally surprised the whole company, who declared that they had neither seen nor heard of him until that evening. He then told them of his design of taking away his life, and how he had been prevented by seeing a light in their window. This remarkable providence affected his mind to such a degree that, by the divine blessing, it was made the means of his conversion. He later became an eminent Christian, regaining the favour of his friends, and he lived in comfort with a good reputation.

How similar this case is to that of the jailor in Acts 16, of whom the poet writes:

Suddenly the prison shook;
Open flew the iron doors;
And the jailor, terror-struck,
Now his captives' help implores.

Trembling at their feet he fell—
"Tell me, sirs, what I must do
To be saved from guilt and hell?
None can tell me this but you."

"Look to Jesus," they replied;
"If on Him thou now believe,
By the death which He has died,
Thou salvation shalt receive."

While the living Word he heard,
Faith sprung up within his heart,
And, released from all he feared,
In their joy his soul had part.

Adapted from Little Gleaner 1888

THE THORN IN THE FLESH

A minister preaching in London referred to the "*thorn in the flesh*," as recorded by the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 12 verse 7. He related the following incident in the life of the honoured servant of God, Francis Covell, of Croydon.

A friend called upon him during a brief visit to Croydon, and the two ministers had an enjoyable conversation upon spiritual things. It was well known that Mr. Covell was much favoured of God and lived very near to Him in his daily life. During conversation, the friend remarked that he should think Mr. Covell's lot was a very happy one. "You have a loving people, all you can desire in this world, and an abiding assurance of eternal blessedness in the world to come. You can have little or nothing to give you any sorrow."

Mr. Covell made no response at the moment, but before bidding his guest farewell, he asked him to come into an adjoining room. He showed him his imbecile (mentally disabled) son who was grown and yet totally dependent upon others. This sad sight needed no emphasis of words to convince the visitor that he had made a serious mistake in his thoughts about Mr. Covell's lot in life.

After the service that evening, a friend stayed behind, desiring to speak to the servant of Christ who had related the above incident.

He said, "We have a little one at home, six months old, who has never smiled. That is our thorn. It was very remarkable that you should have been led to relate what you did. We believe the child is mute (unable to speak) and are also afraid that she is blind. The medical men can give no relief, nor can they give us any hope of improvement in the future. Many,

many times, like Paul, we have earnestly desired the Lord to remove our thorn by taking our little one home to Himself.”

Every Christian has his own peculiar thorn or cross, and he alone knows what it is and how sharp it is. So far as grace rules in his heart, he also knows that it is intended to do him good, and that it is “given to him” by a wise and loving Friend. Even if sent by Satan, it is permitted by God. He knows that it gives him many errands to God’s mercy-seat. It makes and keeps him humble, watchful, tender, sober and prayerful. He is very dependent upon the grace of God, that all his mercies may be made a blessing to him, even in his sorrows. Paul said that he would “*rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me*” (2 Corinthians 12.9).

Adapted from The Gospel Echo 1892

DESIGNS FROM CREATION

The wonderful creation of God provides insight for many new products and procedures. Inventors and design engineers frequently look at things in nature for inspiration. How true are the words of Scripture: “*O LORD, how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches*” (Psalm 104.24).

In 1935, an inventor named Paul Sperry was looking for a solution to a problem that he encountered in his hobby of sailing. Whenever the boat deck became wet, it was slippery and dangerous. One winter day during a walk, he noticed that his cocker spaniel remained surefooted, even on slippery sidewalks. Sperry examined the dog’s paws closely, and he noticed wave-like grooves on the pads.

Mr. Sperry began to experiment with shoes. He obtained a thick sheet of rubber and cut grooves in a zigzag “herringbone” pattern. Then he attached sections of this rubber to his sailing shoes and tested them. When he walked on slippery surfaces, the traction was obvious. The grooves allowed the shoe sole to deform slightly and to grasp the ground surface. When the

ground was wet, the grooves channelled water outward from under the shoe.

Mr. Sperry went on to manufacture the first non-skid deck shoes, called *Sperry Top-Siders*. They were an immediate success in the world of sailing, and are still manufactured today in a style called the *Authentic Original*. Grooved soles on sports shoes have become a worldwide standard.

Adapted from Discovery of Design by D. DeYoung & D. Hobbs

THE BIBLE – A MIRROR

A missionary in China once read Romans chapter 1 to a large audience. When he finished, a Chinese man said he thought it was very wrong and unfair for this foreign devil (as missionaries were called) to come and find out all their secret sins, then write them down in a book, and read them out in public in that way! Yes, the Bible is a mirror that teaches us what we are.

“All About the Bible” by Sidney Collett

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

THE BOOK OF DANIEL Chapter 2

“Do not interpretations belong to God?” (Genesis 40.8)

“And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him” (Daniel 2.1).

King Nebuchadnezzar was now the most powerful king upon the face of the earth. His army had been victorious everywhere, making the Babylonian kingdom the greatest kingdom there had ever been. In the royal city of Babylon, he had counsellors and wise men to assist in ruling his kingdom. He also had a school of learning, where young men who showed signs of wisdom and understanding were instructed by the leaders in education. Among those young men was Daniel,

who was blessed with the fear of God in his heart, as well as natural wisdom.

King Nebuchadnezzar exerted great authority, proving what we read in the Book of Ecclesiastes, *"Where the word of a king is, there is power: and who may say unto him, What doest thou?"* (Ecclesiastes 8.4). This power had been given to him by God. The Lord Jesus said to Pilate, *"Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above"* (John 19.11). God also used King Nebuchadnezzar to forward His own purposes. What, then, could trouble this great king who had so much riches and power? God could and would trouble him! One night, in the luxurious comforts of his royal bed, he had a vivid dream which greatly troubled him. Indeed, it troubled him so much that his sleep went from him, and it left him in a state of anxiety and fear. He was unable to remember what the dream was about, but he was concerned about what it meant. He could not put it out of his thoughts. He turned to his wise men and demanded that they tell him what he had dreamed and the interpretation of it. Failure would carry the sentence of death.

Not even the wisest of the wise men was able to tell the king what he had dreamed. They were at a complete loss to know what to do. *"The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter"* (verse 10). Upon this, the king was furious and demanded that all the wise men should be destroyed. *"And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain"* (verse 13). It would appear that Daniel had not been called when the wise men were first asked to interpret the dream. Daniel knew that God was able, if it was His will, to make the dream known to him and to give him the interpretation. He courageously asked the king to give him a little time, and he would show the king the interpretation. What was Daniel to do now?

"Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiab, Misbael, and Azariah, his companions:

that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon" (verses 17,18). They cried unto the Lord their God. Daniel knew that prayer was a most wonderful blessing, by which Almighty God would hear and answer all the needs of His people. He knew that his hope, his only hope, was in the Lord his God. In our day we have a prayer meeting to ask the Lord for His help and to thank Him for mercies given.

"Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are His: And He changeth the times and the seasons: He removeth kings, and setteth up kings: He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He revealeth the deep and the secret things: He knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with Him. I thank Thee, and praise Thee, O Thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of Thee: for Thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter" (verses 19-23). How thankful and humbled Daniel must have been! The Lord his God had heard and answered his prayer and shown him both the dream and the interpretation of it. What a great blessing is the privilege of prayer! In the most distressing times of trouble, we may bring all our woes unto God in prayer to seek His help and intervention.

When Daniel was brought unto the king, he was very careful to give all honour unto the Lord his God and not take any unto himself. He admitted that he himself could not interpret the dream, *"but there is a God in heaven [the one, true, living and omniscient God] that revealeth secrets."*

In the dream, King Nebuchadnezzar saw a great image. The head was of gold, the breast and arms were of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet part of iron

and part of clay. Then a stone came and destroyed the feet, whereupon the whole image collapsed and became like chaff, which the wind blew away so that nothing was left. Very simply, Daniel saw that the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold; another kingdom (Medo-Persian) would follow, then another kingdom (Greece), and then another kingdom (Roman). But a stone would come and destroy them all and become a kingdom which would remain forever.

What is this last great kingdom? The kingdom of God. It is an everlasting kingdom, which God sets up in the hearts of all His people. The Lord Jesus Himself declared, "*My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence*" (John 18.36).

As set forth in king Nebuchadnezzar's dream, all the various kingdoms of this world come and go. But the kingdom of God will stand for ever. May it be our desire and earnest prayer to be found in the kingdom of God.

A.T. Pickett

BIBLE QUESTIONS

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

1. Which birds did God command to feed Elijah at the brook Cherith? (1 Kings 17. 3,4)
2. Which bird carries its young on its wings? (Deuteronomy 32.11)
3. Job speaks of a path "which no fowl knoweth" and which a bird known for its keen eyesight could not see. Which bird? (Job 28.7)
4. Which bird was sold, two for a farthing, or five for two farthings? (Matthew 10.29; Luke 12.6)

5. Noah sent a dove out of the ark three times while the flood waters were going down. What did the dove come back with the second time? (Gen 8.11)
6. Hezekiah mentioned three birds; two which "chatter," one which "mourns." What were they? (Isaiah 38)
7. One of the sacrifices the children of Israel were commanded to offer was "a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons." Who offered such a sacrifice in Luke 2?
8. In Psalm 102, David in his desolation and loneliness likened himself to three birds. Which three birds?
9. Whose hair grew "like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws"? (Daniel 4)
10. Write out a verse in Ecclesiastes which shows that secrets often become public knowledge through "a bird of the air."

ANSWERS TO JANUARY QUESTIONS

1. God told Abraham to offer up his son Isaac as a burnt offering.
2. "Is the Lord among us, or not?"
3. "By asking meat for their lust."
4. "Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites?"
5. "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"
6. Bread. "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matthew 4.4)
7. "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." (Matthew 4.7)
8. "They that will be rich." (1 Timothy 6.9)
9. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Corinthians 10.13)
10. "And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil." (Luke 11.4). "Pray that ye enter not into temptation." (Luke 22.40)

THE ROARING LION

The lion that on Samson roared,
And thirsted for his blood,
With honey afterwards was stored,
And furnished him with food.

Believers, as they pass along,
With many lions meet,
But gather sweetness from the strong,
And from the eater meat.

The lions rage and roar in vain,
For Jesus is their shield;
Their losses prove a certain gain,
Their troubles comfort yield.

The world and Satan join their strength,
To fill their souls with fears;
But crops of joy they reap at length
From what they sow in tears.

Afflictions make them love the Word,
Stir up their hearts to prayer,
And many precious fruits afford
Of their Redeemer's care.

The lions roar, but cannot kill,
Then fear them not, my friends;
They bring us, though against their will,
The honey Jesus sends.

Young People's Hymnal 184

The Friendly Companion



Gleaners – from the Painting by Jean-François Millet

“Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law.” (Psalm 119.18)

March 2019

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

This month we include the list of names of those who have answered the questions for the last six months of 2018. If your name is on the list, it means that you have accomplished that task. Sometimes when we see a list of names, we wonder exactly what those persons did.

In Genesis chapter five, we have the first list of names in the Bible. It was a list that went from Adam to the three sons of Noah. Although it was a relatively short list compared to other lists in the Bible, it covered a time period of over 1,500 years. Apart from Enoch, the list tells us three things about each person named: he was born, he had sons and daughters, and he died. Most of them lived over nine hundred years, and yet they died.

We are told some very wonderful things about Enoch. First, that he walked with God. How God made him to differ from others! The second thing we are told about him is that *“he had this testimony, that he pleased God”* (Hebrews 11.5). That testimony came from God Himself! The third and greatest wonder was that he was *“translated,”* or removed out of this world to heaven without dying.

In the Book of Joshua, a list of names was given of those to whom the land of Canaan was to be divided. In that long list, one man from the tribe of Judah was singled out by the Holy Ghost. His name was Caleb, one of the twelve spies sent by Moses to bring a report to the children of Israel. Because Caleb (along with Joshua) brought a good report of the land of Canaan, God promised him that the land he walked on would be given to him for a possession. We are also told three wonderful things about Caleb. First, he *“wholly followed the Lord [his] God”* (Joshua 14.8,9); he never turned aside from following his God. Second, the Lord kept him alive through the long journey, while all the rest of his generation perished in the wilderness. Third, Caleb was as strong in his eighty-fifth year as he was when he was forty, both in his natural strength

and in the strength of his faith. He came to Joshua saying, *"Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; ... if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them [the giants] out, as the LORD said"* (Joshua 14.12).

Then, what a great list of names is found in the first nine chapters in the first Book of Chronicles! Yet among all those names, there was one who again was singled out by the Holy Ghost. His name was Jabez, which means "sorrowful." There are also three things that we are told about him. First, he was *"more honourable than his brethren."* It was the grace of God that made him so. Second, we are told that he *"called on the God of Israel."* May God grant such grace to all of us that we may pray as Jabez did: *"Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed and enlarge my coast, and that Thine hand might be with me, and that Thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me!"* He asked that God would bless him indeed. These "indeed blessings" are eternal blessings. They are the blessings of the Lord that make rich and to which there is no sorrow added. He also asked that God would enlarge his coast. Whatever did he mean? He wanted the Lord to expand his knowledge of salvation, his understanding in the Word of God, and his desires for heavenly things. Then he asked that God's hand might be with him. He needed God to guide, to uphold, and to supply his needs. Especially, he desired that God would keep him from evil, that it would not grieve him. How honourable he was in his prayer! The third thing we are told of Jabez is very wonderful: *"And God granted him that which he requested"* (1 Chronicles 4.10).

There is another list that we cannot see, but the names of all the Lord's people are written there. It is called the Lamb's Book of Life. May all of our names, yours and mine, be found in that list. When I was a boy in Sunday School, we often sang a hymn of Isaac Watts which ended with these lines:

When He reveals the Book of Life,
O may I read my name

Among the chosen of His love,
The followers of the Lamb!

With loving wishes from the Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

Do you remember what happened on Mount Sinai? There were all the outward signs to show that God was approaching His people. There were thunders and lightnings, the voice of the trumpet so exceeding loud that all the people trembled, fire and smoke, and the mountain quaking. God had indeed come down upon Mount Sinai before them!

God spoke His holy law unto them in a voice that they heard. He also gave directions for setting up the tabernacle, where He was to be worshipped. He ordained the priesthood and the offerings that were to be made; the burnt offerings, the trespass offerings and the peace offerings.

He then gave laws concerning clean and unclean animals and birds; laws concerning leprosy and the cleansing of the leper. He also gave laws of mercy and kindness. One of those laws concerned the harvesting of their fields. *"And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the LORD your God"* (Leviticus 19.9,10). In the Book of Deuteronomy, the poor are described as the stranger, the fatherless and the widow.

Our front cover is a picture of such gleaners. The fact that they were gleaners tells us that they were poor. There are some wonderful lessons for us in the commandment regarding the gleaners. First, the Lord understood their needs beforehand and made such a wonderful provision for them. This commandment, like the principal ten commandments, began with the familiar words: *"Thou shalt not."* It gave the poor and the strangers a God-given right to go into a farmer's

field and glean after his reapers. They could obtain their daily bread in that way.

Second, although gleaning required much labour, they were comforted in knowing that the owner of the field would make no charge for the grain they took. It was without price!

Third, although they could not pay for the grain, God would repay the owner of the field by blessing all the work of his hands.

Of course, the most well-known gleaner in the Bible was Ruth. She was a stranger in the land of Israel; she was poor, along with Naomi her mother-in-law, and she was a widow, although very young.

We love to read how the Lord directed Ruth to the field of Boaz. He took such notice of her and commanded his reapers to leave handfuls of purpose for her. Then we read how he became her husband in the end. In like manner, those who are taught of God long to glean in the gospel field; that means they glean or gather instruction from His Word, His truth, and His promises. Even though they feel to be strangers, and they are so poor in their knowledge of Him; they glean after His reapers (ministers), listening with fervent prayer and earnest seeking after God. O to be made a real gleaner after Jesus!

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Sometimes the Lord uses things that happen early in life to first bring an awareness of God, the soul, and eternity.

When about five years of age, an older relative became ill and died. It was my first experience of death. Mother tried to explain that when life departs from the body, the soul inside of a person keeps on living. The Lord's people go to be with Him in heaven, but those who have not been saved must go to hell. She also told of the great need to be given a new heart by God. How solemn and mysterious it all seemed!

Later on, a young man who attended the chapel died of drowning. Here was a young person who died without warning. What solemn and searching thoughts it caused!

In early school days, we were given many Bible texts to memorise. One of them was: *"Thou God seest me"* (Genesis 16.13), which caused many anxious thoughts. Others were: *"Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow,"* and *"Create in me a clean heart, O God"* (Psalm 51.7,10). These became real, heartfelt prayers. A hymn that we sang in school also caused me to think upon God, who could see in every place and at all times. The words were these:

You cannot hide from God,
Though mountains cover you,
His eye our secret thoughts behold,
His presence all our lives enfold,
He knows our purposes untold,
You cannot hide from God.

Chorus:

You cannot hide from God, you cannot hide from God,
Wherever you go, whatever you do,
You cannot hide from God, His eye is fixed on you,
You cannot hide from God.

There was so little understanding in those early days, but the first impressions about God and eternity never wore off. Later on, I was brought to see my need as a sinner and to seek for mercy through Jesus, the Saviour.

Contributed

Update: We are thankful to report that the young girl whom we wrote about in the monthly message for December escaped from her abductor after eighty-eight days of captivity. There had been much prayer for her deliverance, and after she was safe again, a service of thanksgiving was held near her home town to acknowledge the Lord's goodness and mercy.

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**THE VINEYARD OF NABOTH**

A man of Israel, named Naboth, had a vineyard near the palace of Ahab the king. Ahab wanted it for himself, but Naboth refused to sell his vineyard. He said, "*The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.*"

Ahab was so unhappy about this that he laid on his bed and refused to eat. Then Jezebel his wife said that she would give him the vineyard of Naboth. She wrote letters in Ahab's name to the rulers of the city. She told them to lie about Naboth, saying that he had spoken evil things against God and the king. Then they were to kill Naboth. What a wicked plan it was!

After Naboth was dead, Ahab went to take the vineyard. But the Lord saw all that had happened. The Lord told Elijah to meet Ahab in the vineyard and tell him of the evil that would come upon him. Ahab, Jezebel and all of their family would be killed because of their great wickedness in the sight of the Lord.

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Naboth refuse to do? (3 words)
2. Who said that she would give it to Ahab? (1 word)
3. Who saw all that had happened? (2 words)

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

ANSWERS TO FEBRUARY QUESTIONS

1. A cave.
2. A still small voice.
3. Elisha.

Contributed

*“The eyes
of the LORD
are in
every place,
beholding
the evil and
the good”
Proverbs 15.3*

BIBLE LESSONS**PAUL'S VOYAGE**

The quickest and safest way to bring Paul to Rome was by ship. However, even by ship, it would take many days. Ships at that time did not have powerful engines as they do today. They relied on the wind blowing upon hoisted sails to propel them through the water. Most of the ships were owned by merchant men and carried goods to distant cities.

Julius, the Roman centurion, found a ship going to Asia Minor (present-day Turkey), the first stop on their journey to Rome. He put Paul, and the other prisoners under his charge, on board. Paul had two companions to accompany him. One was Luke, who wrote the gospel bearing his name and the Acts of the Apostles. Paul had a special name for him: *"the beloved physician."* The other companion was Aristarchus, one of the early believers from Thessalonica.

It must have been a sad day for Paul when the ship left the land of Palestine (Israel), knowing that it was unlikely he would ever see his beloved homeland again. The following day, the ship anchored at Sidon.

No doubt, Paul asked to be allowed to greet the believers there and bid them goodbye. The centurion gave Paul liberty to go ashore and thus to be refreshed by the brethren, both in body and in spirit. For a brief moment of time, after two long years of imprisonment and at the beginning of the difficult, trying passage to Rome, Paul's hands were strengthened by these brethren.

Setting sail from Sidon, they were forced by contrary winds to sail between the island of Cyprus and the coast of Asia Minor. Cyprus was the first place that he and Barnabas had stopped on their first missionary journey. In spite of the adverse winds, they arrived safely at Myra on the southern shore of Asia Minor.

Here the centurion found another ship that was sailing to Italy, and he put Paul and the other prisoners on it. It was a

ship from Alexandria, a city in Egypt, with a cargo of wheat. As they left Myra, powerful winds forced them to sail along the coastline until they came to Cnidus. Luke tells us: *"And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce [hardly] were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete."*

The account of Paul's long and dangerous journey has often been helpful to those who are seeking the Lord. They also find that there are many winds of adversity blowing against them, making their progress in spiritual things seem so slow.

How pleased Paul and his companions must have been to enter the harbour of Crete called *"The Fair Havens."* Yet, so much time had been lost that it had become dangerous to sail any further.

The Fair Havens did not seem to be a place that resembled its name, at least not in the winter time. Thus the owner and the master of the ship thought it would be best if they sailed a little further up the island of Crete to harbour at Phenice [Phoenix].

Paul, by the revelation of God, spoke up to warn them that if they departed from the Fair Havens, there would be *"hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives."*

What was the centurion to do? He had great regard for the Apostle Paul and the things that he said. However, the master of the ship had knowledge of the constellations, by which he would guide the ship. He had great knowledge of the winds and their patterns. He also knew the ports, with their rocks and sand bars, which had to be avoided. *"The centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul."*

You can read about this in Acts chapter 27 verses 1 to 11.

QUESTIONS:

1. Who were the two companions of Paul in his journey?
2. What was the first city at which they stopped?

3. What was Paul given liberty to do?
4. Into what harbour of Crete did they enter?
5. What did Paul warn would happen if they departed? (16 words)

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

ANSWERS TO FEBRUARY QUESTIONS

1. Made him mad.
2. Words of truth.
3. Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.
4. Both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.
5. Jesus Christ.

RECEIVE HIM AS MYSELF

During the American Civil War, a young man named Charlie enlisted in the Union Army. He was the beloved and only son of a banker. Although the father reluctantly allowed his son to join the army, it seemed as if it would break his heart.

While Charlie was away, his father became deeply interested in the young soldiers who were serving their country. Whenever he saw a uniform, his heart was touched, as he thought of his own dear boy. Eventually, he began to neglect his business while caring for soldiers who came home sick or wounded. His friends reproved him, saying that he should not spend so much time, thought, and money upon soldiers. Finally, he decided to give up all those efforts.

After he had come to this decision, a soldier stepped into his bank one day. He was wearing a faded, worn uniform. From his face and hands, it was apparent that he had been recently wounded and spent time in a hospital. The poor, weakened soldier was fumbling in his pocket to get something out. When the banker saw him, he said, "My dear fellow, I

cannot do anything for you today, for I am extremely busy. You will have to go to your headquarters; the officers there will look after you."

Still, the poor soldier stood before him, not seeming to fully understand what he had been told. He continued to fumble in his pockets. Eventually, he drew out a scrap of dirty paper on which a few lines were scribbled with a pencil. He laid the soiled paper before the banker. These words were written on it: "Dear Father, this is one of my comrades who was wounded in the last fight and has been in the hospital. Please receive him as myself, Charlie."

In a moment, all the resolutions the banker had made flew away. He took the boy to his spacious home, put him in Charlie's room, and gave him Charlie's seat at the table. The banker tenderly cared for him until food and rest and love had brought him back to health; then the soldier returned to the battlefield to fight for his country.

The banker received the poor, wounded soldier and showed him every kindness on behalf of his own dear son. How much greater is the love of God to poor sinners! Jesus said, "*Hitberto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full*" (John 16.24).

Adapted from Daily Inspiration – Streams in the Desert

"THAT IS WHAT I WANT"

A certain man who lived on the coast of Malabar had become uneasy about his spiritual state. He asked a nearby priest how he could make an atonement for his sins. He was told to drive blunted iron spikes through his sandals and walk a distance of about 480 miles. So, he undertook the tedious, painful journey; he travelled a long way but could obtain no peace.

One day, he stopped to rest under a large, shady tree. The gospel was sometimes preached at that very place. While the man was resting, a missionary came and preached from the

words, "*The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin*" (1 John 1.7). As he was preaching, the poor man began to listen. Rising up, he threw off his torturing sandals and cried aloud, "That is what I want!" From that time on, he became a lively witness of the healing power of the Saviour's blood.

Are there not thousands who try to obtain peace by works of their own? May God lead them into the rest that can only be found through faith in the precious blood of Christ!

Adapted from The Little Gleaner 1879

THE ROBBER'S AUCTION

Many years ago, an incident occurred in the Black Forest of Germany, which gives a wonderful illustration of the gracious providence of God and of His power to save the lost. It took place in one of the dark, hidden clefts in the wild, wooded hills which abound in the Black Forest.

A band of highway robbers gathered at midnight for an auction. The spot was a strange one, indeed, for an auction. The men were seated in a circle under the yellow glare of torches. They had a rough and frightening appearance, being heavily armed with weapons. That same evening, these Black Forest robbers had plundered a richly-laden wagon belonging to some wealthy merchants. They did not dare to try selling their loot in any town of that district; thus, they were selling it among themselves first, before taking it to far distant places to sell.

One of the bandits acted as auctioneer in that strange market. Costly garments and many other objects had been offered for sale, while a bottle of strong drink was passed around. Suddenly the salesman held aloft a New Testament as the next article for which he invited bids.

There was laughter from the group, as the auctioneer uttered jeering blasphemies. He knew that this was a way of stirring them up and getting loud applause.

In the midst of this profanity, one of them proposed that the auctioneer should read a chapter in order for them to judge the worth of the Book. Encouraged by the applause, he at once agreed to their suggestion. In a tone of bitterest mockery, he began to read, to the great amusement of the listeners. In their merriment, they failed to notice that one of their number was sitting very quietly and in a contemplative mood, altogether contrary to his usual attitude. He was the oldest of the band and was usually the leader in their expeditions of plundering. He was the hardest drinker of them all, but now his folded hands rested on his knees, and he sat as if in deep thought.

What could account for this strange mood in such a man? The reason was a very simple one. The chapter which was being read was the very passage his father had read at family worship on the morning, thirty years before, when he fled from home in order to elude the search of the police. To that home he had never since returned. However, it was now appearing very vividly in his memory. The whole of that happy family circle, which had been so dear in those old days, came up before him like a beautiful vision. Again, he saw them all seated at the breakfast table, and he heard his aged father, with the open Bible on the table, reading the chapter which was now being recited with mockery. He saw his dear old mother listening eagerly to the Word of God, and his brothers and sisters participating in the privilege. Above all, he saw himself, and his heart was breaking. Since that day, he had flung all religion to the winds. Since that morning he had never offered a prayer, and he had cast God out of his life.

But now, that same Word of God, so lightly rejected in the past, was suddenly producing a mighty and miraculous work in the lost man's soul. In a few moments, the hammer of truth was smashing the rocky hardness of his heart. The coldness of unbelief had frozen the sensibilities of his inmost being, but the sunshine of revelation was now melting the ice. Into his memory poured words of loving counsel and instruction which

his father and mother had given to him in early years. Absorbed by these sweet recollections of childhood and youth, the robber chief forgot all that was passing around him. He was deaf to the impious uproar, until suddenly he was aroused from his deep thoughts by a rough slap on the shoulder from the hand of his nearest companion.

"Now, old dreamer, why are you not bidding for that book? You know you need it worse than anybody else, for you are the biggest sinner amongst us."

"Yes, that I am. Give me the Book. I'll pay the full value."

The sale proceeded to the end and the circle broke up. In the morning, the robbers dispersed to go one by one to distant villages to try to dispose of their spoil. But the purchaser of the Testament spent his day otherwise. Going to a secluded retreat among the rocks, he spent the whole day and all the next night in terrible spiritual struggles. His agony of conscience was fearful. His experience was like that of David: *"The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul"* (Psalm 116.3,4). He would open the Book and read a little, seeking for some comfort, hope or guidance; then he lay it down again, thinking that after such a life of wickedness, there could never be forgiveness.

Thus he struggled on for some time between fear and hope. At length, as he read and prayed in turns, promise after promise brought the hope of pardon to his soul. He was not hopeless any longer. He had a precious sight of the great Redeemer Jesus. He resolved to quit his associates, to abandon his shameful life, and to surrender himself to the officers of justice in order to make some atonement according to the law for his evil deeds and ways. He concluded that before actually doing so, he would seek out the pastor of the nearest village in the Black Forest and tell him all about the case.

The next morning, he went to the village to keep his resolution. He learned that during the night the whole band of robbers had been captured by soldiers and lodged in prison. This information confirmed him in his purpose. Going to the pastor's house, he told his whole history, confessing that he, by the grace of God, had come to seek salvation as a lost sinner. After hearing assurance that coming thus to the Redeemer of sinful souls, he would not fail to find acceptance with God through the blood and righteousness of the atoning Lamb of God, he earnestly begged the minister to accompany him to the judge. The officer of the law heard the whole story with astonishment. He expressed hope that this voluntary surrender and confession might, at least, save his life. All the rest of the band were condemned to die, but he obtained mercy at the hands of the archduke, and he was sentenced to imprisonment for the term of ten years. His conduct was so exemplary that he was released at the end of seven years. He was taken into the confidential service of a nobleman.

The converted robber proved to be a true follower of Christ Jesus throughout the rest of his life. He remained in the service of the same kind master who received him when he came out of prison. In that household he became a lasting blessing. After constant usefulness, he died in peace, blessing the Redeemer to whom he had turned, by grace, at the crisis of his history. All honour be to God alone!

God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform.

Adapted from Religious Stories for Young and Old, Volume 1

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

THE BOOK OF DANIEL Chapter 3

“His servants ye are to whom ye obey” (Romans 6.16).

“Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery and dulcimer, and

all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" (Daniel 3.15)

King Nebuchadnezzar was a very proud man, who thought he was very important. In the pride of his heart he made an image of gold to stand as an emblem of his power and greatness. After this image had been completed and set up, there would be a great day of dedication to which all the important people in his realm were commanded to come. No doubt, there would have been thousands of people from all around gathered together on this very important occasion. An orchestra had also been arranged to play music to all the assembled people.

"Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations and languages, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: and whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace" (verses 4-6). If we were there, what would we have done? Suppose this was at your school or college, with all the children and teachers present, and a very important (so-called) person was there whom everyone was expected to revere and idolise in a certain way. Would we be prepared to make a stand and resist, meeting all the scorn and derision of the others?

Amongst that huge concourse of people were three young men. These men were Hebrews who had been taken away from their own nation and had been educated in the leading academic institution of the time. They were now holding important positions in the government in the province of Babylon, and they were exactly in the place where this image had been set up! What were they going to do? As Hebrews, they were of the children of Israel, whose God was the true,

almighty and living God. To bow down to this image would be sinning against God, who had said: *"Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God"* (Exodus 20.3-5). The Word of God is very clear. Any such behaviour is idolatry. As we have noticed before, these three young men were blessed with the fear of God in their hearts. They were servants of God, and the grace He had given them enabled them to continue to serve God, despite being under tremendous pressure to bow to this idol. They could have made excuses such as: "Surely it will not matter just this once," or, "In my heart I will worship God, but to escape being punished, I will pretend to worship this idol." We read of no such behaviour from these men, who knew that God looks upon the heart.

After the music played, certain Chaldeans came to the king and accused the Jews of not bowing to the image: *"There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Mesbach and Abed-nego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up"* (verse 12). The three brave, godly men were brought before the king, who demanded that they bow before the image. Still they refused. Then the king made this astonishing statement: *"Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the ... musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my bands?"* (verse 15). What a thing for a sinful, fallen, finite creature to say against Almighty God! Still, those three men were given much grace to stand firm, and they refused to bow to the image. *"Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the*

burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king” (verse 17).

Remember, the only thing that enabled these men to make such a stand was the grace of God in their hearts. But God must be glorified, and there was a great blessing in it for these men. They were able to commit their bodies and souls into God’s hands.

The king, in his anger, had the burning fiery furnace heated seven times hotter than usual and had the three men cast straight in. What a sight, though, greeted the king! *“Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God” (verses 24,25).*

We cannot imagine what this must have been like for the three God-fearing men. God not only brings His people into fiery trials, but through them. As He proved in this case, He will be with His people in all their trials. The three godly men had their Saviour revealed to them in the hottest part of the trial. It may have been with some reluctance that they came out of the fire to the king who called them. Not only did the fire have no effect upon them at all, but even the smell of it could not be noticed on them.

King Nebuchadnezzar, surrounded by all the important people of the land, was forced to make another statement. The facts were staring him in his face. *“There is no other God that can deliver after this sort” (verse 29).* It truly was a most remarkable deliverance!

We may think it is unlikely that we will ever have to face a trial like that, but God has said, *“All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3.12).* May we be given that same grace to discern that which is against the Word of God and to trust in the same God as Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego.

“Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us” (2 Corinthians 1.10). “Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me” (Psalm 50.15).

A.T. Pickett

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about JESUS AS GOD. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 4, 5 and 8 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail. (See page 50 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

There are many people who call themselves Christians who deny that Jesus is truly God as well as man. Jehovah's Witnesses and Muslims do so too. The questions this month are about the scriptural evidence that Jesus is God. The first questions concern the testimony of the Bible itself.

1. When Isaiah prophesied the coming of the Lord Jesus in Isaiah 9. 6, what was the middle name of the five names by which He would be called?
2. Which name of the Lord Jesus means, “God with us”? (Matthew 1.23)
3. The Apostle John (1 John 5.20) says, “And we know that the Son of God is come ... Jesus Christ.” What eight words follow?
4. Where are we told that Jesus is “the image of the invisible God” and as the Son of God created all things? (Colossians 1)
5. What did Jesus say in John 5, by which He plainly declared that He was equal with God, as the Jews well understood?

Some questions now follow about things which could only have happened because Jesus is God.

6. What did the wise men (Matthew 2.11) and the man born blind (John 9.38) do to Jesus, which can only be done to God, as Jesus Himself testified? (Luke 4.8)
7. In Matthew 9.4 and Luke 11.17, what did Jesus know, which none but God can know?

Jesus did things which showed His foreknowledge of and complete control over all events – things which are unique to God.

8. What did Jesus tell Peter and John to do in Luke 22?

9. What did Jesus tell Peter to do in Matthew 17?

Another similar occasion is that recorded in Luke 19.30-31.

10. Sins against God, only God can forgive. There were two occasions in the life of the Lord Jesus when He openly forgave the sins of others? One is in Matthew 9, Mark 2 and Luke 5; the other in Luke 7 only. Find all the references.

ANSWERS TO FEBRUARY QUESTIONS

1. Ravens.
2. Eagle.
3. Vulture.
4. Sparrow.
5. An olive leaf.
6. Crane and swallow, dove. (Isaiah 38.14)
7. Joseph and Mary. (Luke 2.24)
8. A pelican, an owl and a sparrow. (Psalm 102.6,7)
9. Nebuchadnezzar's. (Daniel 4.33)
10. "Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter." (Ecclesiastes 10.20)

A GOSPEL GLEANER

Lord, hast Thou me a gleaner made
Like Ruth, who chose to leave
Her home, her gods, her people too,
And to Naomi cleave?

She longed to know Naomi's God,
And love Him for herself;
And is not that my wish, dear Lord;
O, do reveal Thyself!

Have I been made to cleave in truth
With strong and ardent plea?
Then make me, Lord, a real Ruth,
Let me my Boaz see.

I feel I have a little gleaned
Within the gospel field,
But O, 'tis such a little, Lord,
It does but longing yield.

Longing for more, for much, much more,
I want to see Thy face,
To know that Thou wilt me redeem,
That Thou wilt me embrace.

Ruth, knew her Boaz' love and care,
He spoke to her by name,
He let her glean without reproof,
Her husband then became.

May this my blest experience be,
To hear Thy gracious voice,
To be assured that I'm with Thee
One, by the Father's choice.

Ah, Lord, it seems too good, too great,
Too high, for such as I,
I am not like Thine handmaids, Lord,
But Thou canst draw me nigh.

Young People's Hymnal (185)

The Friendly Companion



“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.”

(Isaiah 53.10)

April 2019

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

Throughout the Bible, there are very beautiful and helpful prayers that the Lord taught His people to pray. When feeling the need for some special help or blessing, how encouraging it is to read in God's Word that one of His servants expressed the same desire.

Have you ever felt the Word of God to be like a sealed book? You feel certain there are many precious things to be found in it, and you know it is full of heavenly truths, if only you had eyes to see them. How you long for the Lord to open your eyes that you might see! David prayed for such a blessing in Psalm 119 verse 18: *"Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law."*

David's Bible would have consisted of the first five books, called the books of the law or the books of Moses, along with Joshua, and possibly Judges and Ruth. Yet he knew that in those books there were many truths concerning the promised Saviour. He needed light and understanding upon the Word so that he could see the precious truths hidden in them, the truths concerning the Lord Jesus.

What a good desire and what a good prayer it is, if we sincerely ask that the eyes of our understanding might be opened to see Jesus in His Word!

It will be an experience similar to that of Hagar in the book of Genesis. She and her son Ishmael had been sent away from Abraham's house, and the supply of water that Abraham gave them was gone. Ishmael cried out in thirst, and Hagar laid him under a bush. She went some distance away, so she would not hear his painful cries or see his death. Yet God heard the cry of Ishmael, and He spoke to Hagar from heaven, telling her to take up her son. Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. It was everything that she and her son needed at the time.

It will be like that when we have a special need, and God opens our eyes to the truths in His Word. That will be

everything to us at such a time. Like the two with whom He walked to Emmaus on the resurrection day – when their eyes were opened, they knew Him.

May the Lord convince you of the wondrous things in His Word, and then may He give you such fervent desires to know and see them by faith and to believe them with all your heart.

With loving wishes from the Editor,

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

The two swords pictured on the front cover belong to Mr. J.K. Stehouwer, the pastor at Zion Chapel, Grand Rapids. The sword on the top is a two-edged sword; both edges are very sharp. It was sent to his family many years ago by an uncle who had fought in the Spanish-American War in 1898 and was stationed in the Philippine Islands. When Spain was defeated, the Philippine Islands became a possession of the United States. Mr. Stehouwer's uncle was appointed deputy governor of the second largest Island, called Mindanao, from 1910 to 1916. He was instrumental in bringing the fighting tribes on the Island to terms of peace.

The sword on the bottom was obtained by Mr. Stehouwer when he fought in the Philippines during World War II. After defeating the Japanese, the American army befriended and aided the native people of the Philippines. This was deeply appreciated, for the Japanese had plundered the Islands. One of the natives gave Mr. Stehouwer the sword and sheath (which he made himself) in exchange for half of his blanket, for the poor man had nothing with which to cover himself.

Although they are not used much in warfare today, swords were very important and needful in Bible times. They are the weapons mentioned most frequently in the Bible. The Lord's judgments were often called His sword, such as in Ezekiel 21 verse 3: *"Behold, I am against thee, and will draw forth My sword out of his sheath."* When God cast Adam out of the Garden of Eden, He placed *"a flaming sword which turned*

every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Genesis 3.24). How solemn, and yet how wonderful it was, when God called for the sword to awake (to act) against His Son, Jesus: "*Smite the Shepherd*" (Zechariah 13.7). That was the sword of divine justice.

The spear is another weapon mentioned in the Bible. When Jesus hung upon the cross, a soldier took his spear and pierced the side of Jesus, from which flowed out blood and water. The giant Goliath had such a heavy spear that most men would not have had the strength to use it. King Saul used a smaller and lighter spear called a javelin. You may remember that he tried to kill David by throwing it at him. The darts that Joab took to kill David's son Absalom were smaller and lighter still.

In the Bible, we are told of men who became very skilful in using the bow and arrow as a weapon. Those well-trained archers rarely missed the mark.

When David went up against Goliath, he used a weapon that the great giant despised. His sling and pebbles seemed so small compared to Goliath's great sword and heavy spear. Still, the Lord gave him strength and skill to aim aright, and they brought the giant down.

When Paul wrote to the believers at Corinth, he told them that the weapons of their warfare were "*not carnal*," not literal swords or spears or bows, but rather spiritual and "*mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds*" (2 Corinthians 10.4). He also exhorted the believers at Ephesus to take "*the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God*" (Ephesians 6.17). In Hebrews 4 verse 12, we are told that: "*the Word of God is ... sharper than any two-edged sword*," meaning that it cuts in every direction in which it is wielded, for the top and bottom edges are equally sharp and destructive. The Lord spoke to the church of Pergamos, "*These things saith He which hath the sharp sword with two edges; ... and will fight ... with the sword of My mouth*" (Revelation 2.12,16).

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**ONE FAITHFUL PROPHET**

Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, went to see Ahab, the king of Israel. Ahab asked him to join in a war against Syria, but Jehoshaphat wanted to ask the Lord first. Ahab called four hundred prophets and asked: *"Shall we go ... to battle?"* They all told him to go and that he would prosper. A prophet named Zedekiah even made horns of iron to show how they would push the Syrians and win the war.

Jehoshaphat did not trust those prophets of Ahab. He asked, *"Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might inquire of him?"* Ahab said, *"There is yet one man, ... but I hate him."* That prophet was Micaiah. An officer was sent for him and asked him to speak good words, just like all the other prophets. But Micaiah said, *"What my God saith, that will I speak."* He faithfully spoke the word of the Lord to the kings. He warned Ahab that he would be killed in the battle.

Sadly, the kings did not listen to Micaiah. Ahab put him in prison, and then they went out to battle.

QUESTIONS:

1. Who went to see Ahab?
2. Which prophet faithfully spoke the word of the Lord?
3. Where did Ahab put him?

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. Sell his vineyard.
2. Jezebel.
3. The Lord.

*“ . . . what
the LORD
saith unto
me, that
will I
speak.”
1 Kings 22.14*

BIBLE LESSONS**A STORM CALLED EUROCLYDON**

The experienced mariners were quite sure they could easily reach Phenice and spend the winter in a more accommodating place. The winds that had blown so powerfully against them had ceased. Now, the south wind began to blow softly. The master and the owner of the ship were pleased, for this was a favourable wind. Surely it was a sign that they should venture to sail.

Just to be certain, though, they kept as close to the coast of Crete as it was safe for the ship. They had not gone far when a very fierce and powerful wind called Euroclydon blew them off course. They could not turn back, nor could they go on to the port they had hoped to reach. Being unable to steer the ship, they were driven out into the open sea. Psalm 107 verses 23 to 26 describes their condition. *"They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters: These see the works of the LORD, ... For He commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble."*

They laboured hard to bring a small boat (perhaps a lifeboat) on board, which was being towed behind the main ship. As the ship was tossed and twisted in the waves, loud creaking sounds came from the boards. They pulled strong cords underneath the ship, tying them together on the deck, hoping they would keep the ship from breaking apart.

The following day, they cast part of the load into the sea to lighten the ship. On the third day, they threw overboard all the ropes and cables and everything that could be spared to lighten the ship, and they waited for the storm to pass. But the storm raged on day after day, and the tempest seemed only to increase. The sun was not seen by day, and the moon and stars did not appear at night. With the waves boiling around them and the storm beating upon them, Luke tells us that *"all hope that we should be saved was then taken away."*

How often the Lord's people, in the storms and trials and dark seasons of their lives, feel the same. You may remember that David the king once said: *"I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul"* (1 Samuel 27.1). Yet, David never did perish by the hand of Saul; nor would all those in the ship with Paul perish. There are some very beautiful verses about the sea in the Psalms: *"Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters"* (Psalm 77.19); *"If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me"* (Psalm 139.9,10). The Lord was in control, so that all the waves that beat against and went over the ship could not sink it.

Paul had remained silent since the storm began, but on the thirteenth day, he stood in the midst of all those on board and called out above the howling winds: *"Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship."* Then Paul told them how he knew it would be so: *"For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee."*

During the thirteen days while they were working hard to save the ship, he had been praying. Now Paul exhorted them to be of good cheer, even though the storm was still raging and the winds as fierce as ever.

You can read about this in Acts chapter 27 verses 12 to 24.

QUESTIONS:

1. What did the master and owner of the ship consider a sign that they should venture to sail? (7 words)
2. What was the name of the fierce wind?
3. Whom did Paul say stood by him? (4 words)
4. Where was Paul told he must be brought? (2 words)
5. Who had God given to him? (6 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. Luke and Aristarchus.
2. Sidon.
3. Go ashore and be refreshed by the brethren.
4. The Fair Havens.
5. "Hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives."

A SEARCH FOR THE BLOOD OF ATONEMENT

In the spring of 1898, a gospel address was given by a minister in San Francisco, California, to a "Mission to Israel." Afterwards, an old Jew spoke to his Jewish brethren who were present at the meeting. The minister found those remarks to be so interesting that he wrote them down in his own words, as nearly as he could remember them, which were as follows:

"This is Passover week among you, my Jewish brethren, and as I sat here, I was thinking of how you will be observing it. You will have put away all leaven from your houses, and you will eat the matzah (unleavened wafers) and the roasted lamb. You will attend the synagogue services and carry out the rituals and directions of the Talmud. But you forget, my brethren, that you have everything but that which Jehovah required first of all. He did not say, 'When I see the leaven put away, or when I see you eat matzah, or the lamb, or go to the synagogue,' but His Word was: *'When I see the blood, I will pass over you'* (Exodus 12.13). Ah, my brethren, you can substitute nothing for this. You must have blood, blood, blood.

"Blood: that is an awful word for one who reveres the ancient oracle and yet has no sacrifice. Turn where you will in

the Book, the blood meets you, but seek as you may, you cannot find it in the Judaism of the present.”

After a moment's pause, the patriarchal man went on somewhat as follows: “I was born in Palestine nearly seventy years ago. As a child I was taught to read the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets. Early on, I attended the synagogues and learned Hebrew from the rabbis. At first, I believed what I was told, that ours was the true and only religion, but as I grew older and studied the Law more intently, I was struck by the place that the blood had in all the ceremonies outlined there, and I was equally struck by its utter absence in the ritual to which I was brought up.

“Again and again, I read Exodus 12 and Leviticus 16 and 17. The latter chapters, especially, made me tremble as I thought of the great Day of Atonement and the place the blood had there. Day and night one verse would ring in my ears, *‘It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul’* (Leviticus 17.11). I knew I had broken the law, and I needed an atonement. Year after year, on that day, I beat my breast as I confessed my need of it, but it was to be made by blood, and there was no blood.

“In my distress, at last, I opened my heart to a learned and venerable rabbi. He told me that God was angry with His people. Jerusalem was in the hands of the Gentiles, the temple was destroyed, and a Mohammedan mosque was reared up in its place. The only spot on earth where we dare to shed the blood of sacrifice in accordance with Deuteronomy 12 and Leviticus 17 was desecrated, and our nation was scattered. That was why there was no blood. God had Himself closed the way to carry out the solemn service of the great Day of Atonement. Now we must turn to the Talmud and rest on its instruction and trust in the mercy of God and the merits of the fathers.

“I tried to be satisfied but could not. Something seemed to say that the law was unaltered, even though our temple was destroyed. Nothing else but blood could atone for the soul.

We dared not shed blood for atonement elsewhere than in the place the Lord had chosen. Then we were left without an atonement at all.

“This thought filled me with horror. In my distress, I consulted many other rabbis. I had but one great question: where can I find the blood of atonement?

“I was over thirty years of age when I left Palestine and came to Constantinople with my still unanswered question ever before my mind, and my soul was exceedingly troubled about my sins.

“One night, I was walking down one of the narrow streets of that city, when I saw a sign telling of a meeting for Jews. Curiosity led me to open the door and go in. Just as I took a seat, I heard a man say, *‘The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin’* (1 John 1.7). It was my first introduction to Christianity, but I listened breathlessly as the speaker told how God had declared that *‘without shedding of blood is no remission’* (Hebrews 9.22); but he said that God had given His only begotten Son, the Lamb of God, to die, and all who trusted in His blood were forgiven all their iniquities. This was the Messiah of Isaiah 53; this was the Sufferer of Psalm 22. Ah, my brethren, I had found the blood of atonement at last. I trusted in it, and now I love to read the New Testament and see how all the shadows of the law are fulfilled in Jesus. His blood has been shed for sinners. It has satisfied God, and it is the only means of salvation for either Jew or Gentile.”

Reader, have you found the blood of atonement? *“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world”* (John 1.29). Are you trusting in God’s smitten Lamb – the sacrifice of God?

The Free Presbyterian Magazine (Scotland)

If there were no night, there could never be sunrise; if no labour, no rest; if no winter, no spring; and if there were no mourning, there would be no comfort. Sower 1885

NE-HUSH-TAN

Throughout the wanderings of the children of Israel in the wilderness, the gospel was repeatedly set before them in types and shadows. Sometimes those types were revealed in dark times, when the mixed multitude among them moved the fledgling nation to open rebellion. We read of one of those occasions in Numbers 21. Almighty God had just granted Israel a most significant victory over King Arad, who had come against them. As is so often the case with God's people, after a great blessing, they become vulnerable to an attack from Satan from another angle. So it was here. To reach the land of Canaan, they had to go around the land of Edom, where the descendants of Esau lived. God did not permit them to cross the land by way of a shortcut. Instead, they had to take a more circuitous route. We read that because of this, *"the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way"* (verse 4). The original Hebrew suggests that the discouragement made the people short-tempered and out of patience. Sadly, when sinners get out of patience, they often say things which at other times they would not think of saying. How right James was in his Epistle to say: *"Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell"* (James 3. 5,6). So, we read that *"the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread"* (Numbers 21.5).

In saying this, the people committed several sins. They were ungrateful. They lied, because there **was** daily food and water miraculously provided by God. But the cardinal sin was to loathe the manna, which was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Bread of Life. And just as Moses was sharply reprov'd for smiting the already smitten rock in Numbers 20,

thus undoing the type of Christ, the Rock, who was to be **once** smitten at Calvary but no more, so the slight on the honour of God's dear Son, as the Bread of Life, could not go unnoticed by God. In just displeasure, He sent a plague of fiery serpents with a venomous bite, from which many Israelites died. At last, the people of Israel realised their great sin, and they besought Moses to pray for them in asking God to remove the fiery serpents.

In answer to Moses' prayer, the Lord did not take away the serpents, but He did provide a sacred remedy for any serpent-bitten Israelite. We see here that God does not take away the old nature of sin while we live here below. Like the serpent, it remains; but He has provided the remedy for sin, as we shall see. Moses was commanded to make a serpent of brass like those which were biting the children of Israel and raise it on a pole. Their God gave a simple, yet profound command, that whoever was bitten, if they should look upon this brazen serpent, they would be healed. No other remedy was to be found, either among friends, physicians, or relatives. Old or young, rich or poor, known or unknown, near or far, the cure was the same: "Look and live." The power lay in what God had promised to those that look, not in the brass itself.

In this, we see a wonderful portrayal of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Sin is that fiery serpent. Sadly, man by nature does not recognise this and would rather live with the disease than seek a cure. Were there some Israelites who despised the cure, we wonder? However, the work of the Holy Ghost is to cause sinners to feel the sting of sin and its dire consequences and to lead them to the cross of Christ, where the only remedy for sin is to be found in the blood and water which flowed from His riven side. He Himself foretold that: *"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"* (John 3.14). Thus, wounded sinners are bidden to look on the suffering Saviour and see there the cure for sin; Jesus, bearing the punishment,

the curse, the sting of death, that His people might have eternal life in Him. It is a great mercy when sinners are enabled to see the sweet simplicity of the gospel and the welcome that there is for any sin-bitten sinner to look and live.

How thankful those who had been bitten must have been for the remedy. Those who had never felt the sting might have admired the brazen serpent as a work of art, but they were strangers to the blessing of God that attended that vital look. So, many might admire the gospel from a doctrinal viewpoint, but never having felt the solemn necessity of a cure for their sin, are strangers to its power and mercy.

Eventually, the camp of Israel moved onward in their journey to Canaan. It seems that they kept the brazen serpent, but we read no more about it until the reign of Hezekiah, centuries after the wilderness miracle. By that time, the serpent had become an object of worship, and incense was offered up by idolaters. Hezekiah, being the great reformer, took the serpent and broke it in pieces, calling it "*Ne-bushtan*," which literally means "a piece of brass" (2 Kings 18.4).

What do we learn from the end of the brazen serpent?

First, that fallen men are natural idolaters. The place that God ought to have in the heart is taken by something inferior, in this case, a piece of brass. Wealth, pleasure, learning, popularity, self-righteousness, and many other idols take the place God ought to have in the heart of man. The true believer must not even make an idol of his own experience of God's grace, lest even grace becomes a snare. God has said that He will cleanse His people from their idols. Just as the serpent was broken up, so God breaks the idols in His people's hearts and lives.

Second, that whatever means God may use to deliver His people in their times of need, must not become the object of adoration. Paul sharply reprov'd the Corinthians for their party spirit in preferring one minister or apostle over another. Paul puts the crown where it belongs: "*I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase*" (1 Corinthians 3.6).

Third, the ordinances of Christ's church are to be viewed as windows through which He shows Himself, but they are not themselves to be worshipped (see Song of Solomon 2.9). The apostate church of Rome makes an idol of the bread and the wine in the communion service, saying that it is literally turned into the body and blood of the Lord. However, the bread and wine remain but bread and wine, like the brazen serpent which was but brass.

Fourth, man has no right to add or take away anything from what God has ordained for worship. From the sin of Cain onwards, man has repeatedly fallen in this way.

Finally, may we be able to join with good Joseph Hart in his precious exposition of the true meaning of the brazen serpent (see hymn on the back cover).

G.D. Buss

THE TORN BIBLE

Some years ago, a priest took hold of a Bible belonging to a colporteur, a man who sells or distributes Bibles. In a great rage, he tore the Bible into pieces. It seems very awful, doesn't it, to do such a thing to God's holy Word? But the Bible says: "*Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee*" (Psalm 76.10). Almighty God, who manages the winds and the waves, directed the wind where to blow the pieces.

A man was taking a walk in the countryside, when something settled on his arm. As he paused to take it off his coat sleeve, he saw that it was a tiny scrap of paper on which was printed: "*And Jesus said.*" God the Holy Spirit fastened those three little words on the man's mind.

When he was able, the man obtained a Bible, and it became a great treasure to him. God blew the words, "*And Jesus said,*" into the man's soul with a breath of new life. In the Bible he found what Jesus had said; beautiful words, blessed words, solemn words. They brought him hope and peace and life.

Adapted from Cheering Words 1993

THE MAN AT THE WHEEL

Steamboats once travelled on Lake Erie in North America, carrying passengers from one side of the lake to the other. Large boilers below produced the steam to run the boats.

The Swallow was a large steamboat that could carry many people. One beautiful day, the Swallow was about half way on its run that usually took an hour and a half. Some of the passengers were seated, and others were strolling along the deck. They were enjoying the pleasant trip. No one was thinking of any possible danger. But suddenly, a large cloud of smoke billowed up from beneath the boat.

Captain Jones was the first to see the smoke. "Sam!" he called to one of the crew, "Quickly go below deck and see what is causing all that smoke!"

Sam did as he was told and returned at once, pale and filled with terror. "Captain! Captain!" he shouted, "The boat is on fire!"

Several of the passengers also heard Sam and began to shout, "Fire! Fire!"

Captain Jones quickly took command. "Everyone on deck!" he ordered. "Seamen! Pour on water!" His orders were followed immediately. Streams of water were poured onto the fire. But the boat was loaded with tar, which burns easily and makes a very hot fire. It was, therefore, impossible to put out the fire with water.

The passengers began to panic. They asked the captain how far it was to land.

"About a mile and a half," he answered.

Then the captain was asked how long it would take and whether they were able to make it. He answered that they were in great danger. He ordered them all to the back of the boat, for most of the fire was at the front.

Everyone hurried to the back of the steamboat, everyone but John Maynard, the helmsman. John remained at the wheel, steering the boat towards land. From the rear of the boat, Captain Jones called through the smoke, "John! John, can

you hear me? What direction are we going?"

"South-southeast!" came the reply.

"Steer southeast to the nearest coast!" returned the captain.

Black clouds of smoke continued to pour from below deck. Flames began to lick their way around the front of the boat. After some time, the captain called again, "John! John! Are you still there?"

"Here, Captain," was the reply. But his voice was growing weaker.

"Can you hold out for five more minutes? We are almost to land."

"I will try, Captain, with the help of the Lord."

The hair of John Maynard was already singed, and parts of his body were badly burned. His right arm was charred, but his left hand was steady on the wheel. He stood as firm as a rock in the middle of the smoke and flames. He had to steer the boat to land to save his captain and all the men, women and children on board the boat.

At last the boat reached land. The passengers, crew and captain scrambled from the burning vessel. John, too, was helped ashore. But as everyone gathered around him, he sank down on the shore and died. What a sad sight that was! Grief filled the hearts of the people! There lay the one who had saved them. John had given his life so that they could live. Thankful tears filled their eyes.

The captain and all the crew members and passengers attended the funeral. A large crowd from the city also came. As the coffin was lowered into the grave, many, many tears were shed.

A beautiful marble headstone was placed on John's grave in memory of his bravery.

John Maynard was certainly a hero. He did not spare himself, but saved those on board the steamboat. In this way, he is similar to the Lord Jesus Christ. But Jesus did much more for His people! Jesus freely gave Himself, knowing that He would die the most painful and shameful death on the cross.

This was necessary to save His people from eternal death. But the grave of the Lord Jesus is empty, for He has risen again. He has ascended into heaven to pray for His people. If you are brought to know, by the grace of God, that He died to save you, then you, too, will be truly blessed — both now and forever.

Adapted from Building on the Rock Volume 3

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

THE BOOK OF DANIEL (Chapter 4)

“God resisteth the proud” (James 4.6).

“Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase” (Daniel 4.37).

Pride is a terrible sin. It has most solemn consequences, and it brings trouble upon all mankind. It was found in the Garden of Eden when Satan tempted Eve to take of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Satan suggested that “*ye shall be as gods*” (Genesis 3.5), meaning that they would be greater than what they were or be in a more exalted position. Pride is in all of us by nature, seated deep down in our hearts, but it rises up very quickly when we think we have something of which to boast.

King Nebuchadnezzar thought he had plenty of which to boast. He was the greatest king in the world at that time. His army had won many battles and conquered more lands than any other. He was living a life of luxury, surrounded by many servants and advisers. He had rebuilt Babylon, his capital city, and he had built the famous Hanging Gardens of Babylon to show off his might and power. As was noticed last month, he had built a huge image in the plain of Dura, which may well have been of himself. Indeed, he had much of which he could be very proud; but God would cut him right down.

One night, Nebuchadnezzar had a vivid dream. He knew the dream meant something, and it greatly troubled him; possibly he suspected that the dream concerned himself. He called for his advisers to interpret the dream for him, but they were unable to help. Then Daniel (whom the king called Belteshazzar) was called: *"O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof"* (verse 9). The king related his dream to Daniel. To summarise, the king had seen a great tree which was very fruitful, under which the beasts of the field lodged, and within the branches of which the birds dwelt. But then, an angel from heaven came down and commanded that the tree be cut down, leaving only the stump.

The Lord God showed to Daniel the interpretation of the dream, which astonished even Daniel! But now Daniel had to relate faithfully the interpretation to this great king.

How humbling it must have been for the king! The interpretation was that one day in the near future, he would be cut down like that tree and behave like a beast of the field. And this came to pass about a year later. As he was surveying Babylon in all its glory from his royal palace and congratulating himself for being such a great person, he was suddenly cut down. *"While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will"* (verses 31, 32). In the language of today, we would say that his mind was completely gone. It must have been very sad to see this great king reduced to behaving like an animal.

Seven times passed over (however long that may have been), and then the king had his normal senses or understanding restored to him. When he was restored, he acknowledged that it was God who had brought him down and raised him up.

One thing is for sure: all of the Lord's people are humbled under His mighty hand. Peter spoke very proudly when he stated, "*Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended*" (Matthew 26.33). Peter meant well, and he sincerely thought that he (unlike the others) could keep himself and would never be offended because of Jesus; but Peter had to learn a very hard and painful lesson. He could not keep himself for a moment. Neither can we! It is no good thinking that we would never do such a thing. Left to ourselves, we are capable of committing any sin that anyone else can do.

We should always remember that whatever gifts or abilities we have are given to us by God. We might do very well at school, always pass the tests, and be at the top of the class; yet what room there is here for pride to swell.

May the Lord keep us from religious pride! In Luke chapter 7, we read of Simon the Pharisee, who looked down upon the woman that anointed the feet of the Lord Jesus because she was a sinner. No doubt, he thought that he himself was not a sinner. We each need grace to humble us in the knowledge and conviction of our sins, for we are all guilty sinners and not worthy to receive anything good from God.

Another danger of being proud is that we become too confident in ourselves, which can make us very negligent in prayer. The Scripture teaches: "*Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God*" (Philippians 4.6). Do we always feel our need of God's help when we attend to various duties? God continually instructs His people of their need to depend upon Him for help in all that they do. Sometimes we attempt to do things which we thought would

be easy, only to find to our shame that everything has gone wrong, with many mistakes being made. Why is this? Perhaps we did not ask for God's help.

It is so easy to notice pride in others, but the Lord teaches His people the wretchedness of pride within themselves. He brings them to groan and mourn over it. They are taught how unlike the Lord Jesus they are, for He *"made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men"* (Philippians 2.7). May we pray for true humility and submission to His teaching. He has said, *"I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go"* (Isaiah 48.17). A pathway of dependence is a pathway of humility, and the Lord God will lead all His people in such a path.

A.T. Pickett

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about WOMEN OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. 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. The Lord Jesus said to a Pharisee, "Seest thou this woman?" What had the woman done to Jesus? (Luke 7.44)
2. Which woman was "filled with the Holy Ghost"? (Luke 1.41)
3. Of which woman is it recorded, "whose heart the Lord opened"? (Acts 16.14)
4. To which woman was it said, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee"? (Luke 1. 28)
5. What was Tabitha's other name, and how does the Bible describe her? (Acts 9.36)
6. A woman left her water-pot by a well and in amazement went to the men of her city. What did she say to them? (John 4)

7. Martha was "careful and troubled about many things." What was her sister called, and what did Jesus say about her? (Luke 10)
8. The Pharisees brought a sinful woman to Jesus, whom they thought should be stoned. What did Jesus say to them? (John 8)
9. One woman pressed through the crowd to touch the hem of Jesus' garment. Why did she do that, and what did Jesus say to her? (Matthew 9)
10. Jesus once called a woman just by her name, the one word "Mary." Why did this cause a complete change in her feelings?

ANSWERS TO MARCH QUESTIONS

1. The Mighty God.
2. Emmanuel.
3. "This is the true God, and eternal life."
4. Colossians 1.15,16.
5. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5.17).
6. The wise men and the man born blind both worshipped Jesus as God.
7. Jesus knew what others around were thinking.
8. Jesus told the disciples to go into the city, and they would meet a man carrying a pitcher of water. They were to follow him and go into the same house as he entered into, and then ask the master of the house where the guest chamber was. Jesus said that they would be shown a large, furnished upper room where they were to make ready the Passover meal. (Luke 22.10-12)
9. Jesus told Peter to go to the sea and cast a (fishing) hook. In the mouth of the first fish he caught, he would find a coin sufficient to pay the tribute money for Jesus and himself. (Matthew 17.27)
10. Jesus forgave the sins of the man sick of the palsy (Matthew 9.2, Mark 2.5, Luke 5.20) and the woman who kissed His feet in the house of Simon the Pharisee. (Luke 7.47)

THE BRAZEN SERPENT

When the chosen tribes debated
'Gainst their God, as hardly treated,
And complained their hopes were spilt,
God, for murmuring to requite them,
Fiery serpents sent to bite them;
Lively type of deadly guilt!

Stung by these, they soon repented;
And their God as soon relented;
Moses prayed; He answer gave:
"Serpents are the beasts that strike them;
Make of brass a serpent like them;
That's the way I choose to save."

Vain was bandage, oil or plaster;
Rankling venom killed the faster;
Till the serpent Moses took,
Reared it high, that all might view it;
Bid the bitten look up to it;
Life attended every look.

Jesus, thus for sinners smitten,
Wounded, bruised, serpent-bitten,
To His cross directs their faith.
Why should I, then, poison cherish?
Why despair of cure, and perish?
Look, my soul, though stung to death.

Thine's alas! a lost condition;
Works cannot work thee remission,
Nor thy goodness do thee good.
Death's within thee, all about thee;
But the remedy's without thee;
See it in thy Saviour's blood.

See the Lord of glory dying!
See Him gasping! Hear Him crying!
See His burdened bosom heave!
Look, ye sinners, ye that hung Him;
Look how deep your sins have stung Him;
Dying sinners, look and live.

J. Hart, Gadsby's Hymn 876

The Friendly Companion



“Although my house be not so with God; yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although He make it not to grow.”

(2 Samuel 23.5)

May 2019

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

Throughout history, many people have been left to harden their hearts against the Lord. Some of them have even felt it their duty to try and overthrow the faith of those who profess to believe in God and to love Him. That is a great trial to those who believe with fear and trembling.

We remember hearing of one who spoke scornfully of those who feared God and would not go to places of amusement that he and other worldly persons found so enjoyable. He went on to speak against those who kept the Lord's day, calling them foolish for their "religious zeal" and saying that it was a great loss of opportunity to set that day apart for worship. Thus, he proved the truth of what Peter wrote in his first Epistle: *"Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you"* (1 Peter 4.4).

As this man went on ridiculing those who fear God, a certain woman spoke up. She was one of those who had followed the Lord for many years and did not participate in the so-called pleasures of the world. She said that she had two questions for him. First, "If I have denied myself such things as you have spoken of because of my faith in God, and I am mistaken in the end, what will I really have lost?" Her second question was even more pointed. She asked, "If the things you deny about God prove to be true after all, then what will you have lost?" He was unable to give an answer.

On another occasion, a woman, in the presence of a small company, humbly told of the grace of God that had brought salvation to her soul. Among the company was one who thought he could confuse her; thus, he asked if she could explain what grace was. She thought for a moment and then said that she could only tell what it meant to her, and it would be with words that he would not understand. Then she simply, yet boldly declared: "It was Jesus standing in my shoes and me standing in His." A theologian could not have explained it any better; simple, yet wonderfully deep! How

clearly the doctrine of substitution was set forth. John Newton spoke similar language in hymn 119:

What wondrous love, what mysteries,
In this appointment shine!
My breaches of the law are His,
And His obedience mine.

“God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble” (James 4.6). These women were given grace to answer the scorers of their day. They proved the words of Jesus: *“For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay [speak against] nor resist”* (Luke 21.15). It is our prayerful desire that the Lord may give each of you such grace.

With loving wishes from the Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

Many of our readers may live in houses that are built very close together, with just a few feet separating them. Others may live in houses like the one pictured on the front cover, surrounded with fields of grain or pastures.

Although houses vary in size and shape, their vital purpose is to provide shelter and privacy. Have you ever felt thankful to the Lord for the home He has given you? On a very stormy night, or during the cold of winter, we especially appreciate our homes. While we need shelter from the weather, it is a great blessing if our homes also provide us with privacy and a place of retreat from the world.

When you go to school, you may be surrounded by those who have beliefs quite different from what you have been taught. Many children may behave in ways and use language of which you are ashamed. What a good thing it is if our homes afford us a place to escape from such an atmosphere.

Yet, our homes cannot always provide us with safety. At the time we are writing this, a great number of people in a small town in the state of Alabama have lost their homes. A tornado

swept through their town and destroyed many homes and businesses. In a matter of minutes, the people in the path of the tornado had everything taken away from them. Although the lives of many were spared, sadly, twenty-three died in the storm.

How often we hear warnings that one day we will have to leave everything behind. That happens when we die, as we are told in 1 Timothy 6.7, *"For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out."* We do not like to think about that, although it happens around us every day. In the case of those in the path of the tornado, they experienced what the Lord declared to Hezekiah in 1 Kings 20.17, when He said that all that was in his house, and all that his fathers had laid up in store, would be carried away, and NOTHING WOULD BE LEFT.

When writing to the Corinthians, Paul told the believers that they had *"a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens"* (2 Corinthians 5.1). We need faith to see that house. Then, one day the Lord Jesus will receive His people into the house that He has prepared for them, and they will never go out any more.

IF THE BIBLE IS TRUE

An atheist was speaking one day to a friend who was as sceptical as himself about the existence of God. He said, "There is one thing that mars all the pleasures of my life, and that is the fear lest the Bible should prove to be true! That is the thorn that stings me; for if the Bible is true, I am lost forever!"

The Little Gleaner 1877

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**AHAB IS SLAIN IN BATTLE**

Ahab the king of Israel disguised himself in the battle against Syria, but Jehoshaphat the king of Judah wore his kingly robes. The king of Syria told his captains to fight only with the king of Israel. When the captains saw Jehoshaphat, they surrounded him, thinking that he was the king of Israel. *“But Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD helped him; and God moved them to depart from him.”*

One of the soldiers drew his bow and shot an arrow at random. That arrow hit Ahab between the joints of his armour. He was badly wounded and died at evening. The battle was ended, and Ahab was taken home and buried at Samaria.

When Jehoshaphat returned to his home at Jerusalem, a prophet came to meet him. He asked Jehoshaphat, *“Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD?”* God had preserved Jehoshaphat in the battle, but He was angry with him for helping Ahab.

QUESTIONS:

1. Who disguised himself in battle?
2. Who helped Jehoshaphat?
3. What did a soldier shoot at random?

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. Jehoshaphat.
2. Micaiah.
3. In prison.

Contributed

*“And a
certain man
drew a bow
at a
venture . . .”*

1 Kings 22.34

2 Chronicles 18.33

BIBLE LESSONS**THE PRISONER EXALTED**

Paul told the mariners and soldiers that none of them would lose their life, but he said that they would be cast upon a certain island.

As midnight approached on the fourteenth night, the mariners (sailors) perceived that they were drawing near to some land. They were afraid that the churning sea would cause them to crash against a rocky coast or run them aground. They sounded, or measured, the depth of water and found it to be twenty fathoms, or 120 feet. In a little while, they measured again and found the depth to be fifteen fathoms, or 90 feet. Above the howling of the wind and the roaring of the waves, the experienced sailors could, no doubt, detect the distant sound of waves crashing upon rocks. They quickly dropped four anchors from the back of the ship and waited for daybreak.

Those who seek and follow the Lord know a little of this anxious waiting in their own souls, when their way is so dark. They long for the morning, as David did in Psalm 130 verse 6: *"My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning."* Whenever we are in trouble or danger and wait for deliverance, it seems so long in coming.

The sailors did not believe the words of Paul, when he told them that no life would be lost. They began to let down the little boat that they had pulled aboard at the beginning of the storm. They pretended that they were going to cast out anchors from the front of the ship, but their real intention was to row away and leave the ship.

Paul warned the centurion and the soldiers: *"Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved."* The centurion believed what Paul said. He commanded his soldiers to cut the ropes, so the little boat dropped off into the sea.

As the day dawned, Paul exhorted them all to eat some food for their health. They had not eaten a proper meal for

fourteen days, and their bodies had become weakened. They would need much strength to endure the shipwreck and come safely to land. Paul reassured them: *"There shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you."* What a wonder! Who was the one that was now in charge? It was not the captain of the ship, or the Roman centurion, but Paul the prisoner.

The sailors, soldiers and prisoners watched as Paul took some bread; before them all, he gave thanks to God for His care and provisions. Perhaps he even thanked God for the deliverance that He would give to them. How this cheered them all! They followed Paul's example and ate some food. Luke tells us that there were 276 souls in the ship. When they had all eaten enough, they cast the rest of the wheat into the sea to lighten the ship further.

With daylight, they could see the land; but, oh, what difficulties lay between them and the land! Sometimes the Lord's people may be given a glimpse of the heavenly land; yet what obstacles lay between them and that land! At times, they are sorely tried as to whether they will ever come safely there at last.

As they looked over the shoreline, they discovered an inlet, or creek, with a suitable beach. They would attempt to steer the ship into that inlet and let her run aground.

You can read about this in Acts chapter 27 verses 25 to 39.

QUESTIONS:

1. On what night did they finally approach land?
2. What did Paul warn the centurion regarding the sailors?
(10 words)
3. With what words did Paul reassure them? (13 words)
4. What did Paul do before them all? (5 words)
5. How many people were in the ship?

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. The south wind began to blow softly.
 2. Euroclydon.
 3. The angel of God.
 4. Before Caesar.
 5. All them that sail with thee.
-

GRANDFATHER'S EYES

Little Myra was never happier than when she was taking a walk with her grandfather. He was so kind and gentle, and he talked to her about everything they saw in such a pleasant and cheerful way.

If they saw ants at work, grandfather would say, "What makes you so busy, when you have no rent or taxes to pay? But I see how it is; you are at work for one another." Then he would say, "Remember, Myra, we must not be idle; when we have nothing to do for ourselves, we may always help other people."

If they saw a bee winging its way from flower to flower, he was almost sure to speak of it. "Well Mr. Buzzybee, will you tell us what you are doing? But we understand very well, and we will try and learn a lesson from you." Then grandfather would say to her, "Myra, as a bee gets honey from every flower, may you and I seek to get good from everything."

In this way, Myra was entertained by her grandfather, who compared her to a fresh bud that would soon burst into a flower, and compared himself to a faded leaf which was almost ready to fall from the tree.

One day, after Myra had a pleasant walk with her grandfather, she sat down to do a little sewing with her mother, and they talked together.

"I wish I had grandfather's eyes, mother," Myra said.

"Do you, dear? I hardly think that he could spare them. What could you possibly want with the eyes of your grandfather, Myra?"

"Oh, if I had his eyes, I would see all that he sees when we go walking together, but now I cannot see half as much as he does."

"No? That is very strange, when you are young and he is old. He often says that his sight is not what it used to be. Although his Bible is in large print, he finds it necessary to use his glasses for reading."

"Yes, mother, but he can still see more than I can."

"Tell me what you mean, dear, for I cannot understand what you are saying."

"Well, when we walk out in the fields and lanes, no matter what we look at, grandfather says that he sees God's goodness in everything."

"I see now, Myra; it is not your grandfather's eyes, but grandfather's heart that you want. May God fill your little heart with His fear and love, and then you will see all those things just as plainly as your grandfather sees them."

Adapted from The Little Gleaner 1877

WHICH CAME FIRST?

"What is that you are reading?" a young man roughly demanded of a young girl.

"I am reading God's Book, the Bible," she replied.

"Then you believe that there is a God?" he asked.

She answered, "Is it possible that you don't believe it?"

"I used to believe that there is a God, but after attending university and studying science and philosophy, I realised that it is all wrong. There is no God," he replied.

"I have never studied those subjects that you have. But since you are so educated, may I ask you a question?"

"Certainly," he replied, "ask as many as you please."

"You say that there is no God. Now suppose I had an egg in my hand; could you tell me where it came from?" He replied, "What a funny question! Of course, it came from a hen."

"And which existed first, the egg or the hen?" she asked.

"I really don't know what you mean by this question. Of course, the hen existed first."

"Well, that must have been a hen that did not come from an egg. Can you tell me where that hen came from?"

The young man stuttered and replied, "I was mistaken. Of course, the egg came first."

"Then that must have been an egg that did not come from a hen. Where did that first egg come from?" she continued.

The man was frustrated. "What's the use of asking such questions as these?"

"The use is this," continued the girl. "If the first hen did not come from an egg, as other hens do, then somebody must have made that hen. That somebody must be God. If you cannot explain how the first egg existed without God, how can you explain how the whole world came into existence without God?"

The young man looked very annoyed. He turned and walked away. The simple question from the girl had shown how empty all his so-called learning was.

Strange Events in the Lonely Cabin by R. Cameron-Smith

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

"GOD KNOWS ALL THINGS AND CAN DO ALL THINGS"

The first impression that I remember of the existence of God was when I was about seven years of age. It arose from the following circumstance. At school, I had a box with a lock and key, in which I kept my books. It so happened that when I reached home one evening, my father asked for my key. I had stopped to play along the way home from school. Now, as I looked in my pocket for the key, I found to my dismay that it had been lost. I was threatened with severe punishment if I did not find it. I carefully searched all the way I had gone until the stars came out. It had become quite dark by then, and all hope of finding the key was given up.

While I stood grieving, this thought came into my mind: I have read at school that there is a God who knows all things and can do all things. I said, "If there is a God who knows and can do all things, He knows where my key is and can find it; I will go and pray to Him."

Accordingly, I went to the edge of a ditch in a small meadow, where there were some brambles. I took off my hat and reverently knelt down, putting my hands together and said, "O Lord, if there is a God that knoweth all things, Thou knowest where my key is; and if there is a God that can do all things, Thou canst find it for me." I cried as a child to the great unknown God to find my key and said, "If I find it, I shall then know that there is a God."

I continued on my knees for some little time. To my great astonishment, when I laid my hand on the ground to arise from my knees, I laid it at once on the very key.

I cannot describe the solemn reverence and dread of the great God I felt in an instant. I fell again on my knees, shed tears in abundance, and truly felt that there was a God who knew all things and could do all things. I also felt sure that there was a place of happiness and a place of misery hereafter. I returned home, both sad and pleased, with the key, and I told my parents the way in which I had found it. I do not recollect that any remarks were made, but I believe my mother kept it in her mind and pondered with wonder.

Experience of William Freeman, Friendly Companion 1951

GOD KNOWS THE ANSWER

Recently, a dear old widow who is well into her eighties, experienced the Lord's wonderful help in answer to prayer. She lives by herself in a first floor flat, and one day she noticed some water standing on the worktop in her kitchen. She could not think how the water got there, but she quickly wiped it up. A little while later, she noticed more water in the same place. Looking up at the ceiling, she could see water dripping down,

so she put a bowl in place to catch the drips and reported it to the manager of the estate.

Since the water was coming from the flat above, a plumber was called. However, he was unable to find any leak. He made several visits over several days, but all to no avail. He carefully checked all the joints and also the waste-pipes. He even inserted inspection cameras in various places, but there was no moisture to be seen anywhere.

One day, after trying yet again to solve the problem, the plumber said to the woman, "I am ever so sorry, but I just cannot find the leak. I must go and do another job tomorrow, so I will not be able to come again for two or three days."

The widow tried to pray about it. Then she suddenly remembered what an uncle had related to her family many, many years ago. He had told them about a very serious problem at his workplace. His boss had told him that he must sort it out, but it seemed impossible. He just could not see how to put matters right. He had to take it to the Lord in prayer! That night, the Lord did show him what to do. Although this uncle had died forty years ago, the incident he told about was brought back clearly to her memory. Then she thought, "If the Lord could show Uncle what was wrong, then He can also show this plumber where the leak is." So, she prayed very earnestly that the Lord would show the plumber what was wrong.

Now, dear reader, just remember what this plumber had said. He was not coming back for two or three days. Well, the next morning, the widow's doorbell rang, and to her amazement, the plumber was standing there! She said, "Oh, I did not expect to see you this morning, and certainly not as early as this."

The plumber, to the best of her knowledge a non-religious man, told her: "I do not understand this, and I have never experienced anything like it before; I awoke about two o'clock this morning, which I never otherwise do, and I started to think about this leak in your flat. Suddenly I remembered that

the bathroom in the flat above yours had been completely renovated, and a bath had been replaced with a shower. I began to wonder if the old water supply pipes to the bath had been sealed off properly. So, I came early this morning to inspect the flat above. Sure enough, they had not been sealed correctly, and there was the leak! I have been able to fix the problem very easily.” And within an hour or two, the drips had stopped entirely.

How thankful this woman was that the Lord had brought to her remembrance the experience of an uncle from perhaps sixty years ago. Then how thankful she was that the Lord had heard and answered her own prayers!

Dear young reader, this happened to an old lady, and it happened this year in 2019, but it matters not how old you are. If you ever have a problem that no one seems to know the answer to, just remember that there is a God in heaven who does know the answer. He has said in Psalm 50 verse 15: *“Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.”*

Contributed

A SAILOR'S STORY

My father and cousins perished one stormy night in their fishing boat, which went down with all her hands on the Dogger Bank. My poor widowed mother was unable to care for or discipline me, so I was left as a child to shift for myself. When quite young, I was taken on board a man-of-war, a warship armed with cannons and propelled by sails. There I heard vile oaths and curses from all quarters, and I soon joined in them as heartily as the worst of my shipmates. When the captain of a ship is an ungodly man, the sailors on board are in a terrible position. If a sailor is a Christian, it is very hard for him to keep himself pure.

After leaving the man-of-war, I found employment on another vessel. One Sunday morning, the captain said, “Now,

lads, there is no work on board on Sundays; you may go to what place of worship you choose.” Those words made a great impression upon me, for they seemed so strange after the rough language that I had been used to hearing. I took the captain’s advice and went to a chapel. There I heard an old grey-headed minister preach on these words: *“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled”* (Matthew 5.6). From that day, the Lord put a longing for righteousness in my heart.

There were eleven of us on board. They were rough, bad fellows. I was the only one amongst them seeking mercy. My companions were enraged when they saw me take out my Bible and read it; especially since I no longer took any pleasure in their songs and ways. One Sunday night, when I was reading, they began to jeer at me over their drinks. “To have a religious captain is bad enough,” they said, “but a Psalm-singing and praying mate won’t do.” “I should like to give him a passage overboard in the dark,” grumbled one of them, called Peter. I continued to read my Bible and prayed for strength from on high, while they continued drinking and playing cards.

The ship was anchored in the river, and a little while later, a shout was suddenly heard, “Man overboard! Man overboard!” Jumping up, I saw the round hat of a sailor floating between the vessels. A hand-rail was flung over the side of the ship. “Lay hold of it,” we cried; but the man never rose again. Then we dragged the river, and after two hours, the drag held onto something. We hauled it up. It was a sailor’s dead body – the body of poor Peter, the man who had wished to give me a passage overboard in the dark. Upon the quarter-deck we laid his corpse, who a few hours before had been joining in blaspheming my blessed Jesus.

If a stiff-necked sinner should read this true story, let him take it as a solemn warning of the end of all who live and die haters of Jesus, which will be a passage in the dark to hell and death eternal!

Hear a word from me, dear reader, before I end my story. All true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, instead of being the servants of sin, are lovers of holiness. Reformation will not do: there must be a change of heart. The works of darkness that he once loved, he now hates. The fruits of the Spirit – love, joy, gentleness, peace – are now his delight. *“Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new”* (2 Corinthians 5.17). A man is never his own master; he is either the servant of sin or the servant of holiness. Lust leads him about captive. It makes him spend his money for that which is not bread, his strength for that which satisfies not; thus, he goes downwards until, if he dies thus, he perishes. *“For the wages of sin is death”* (Romans 6.23), eternal death; and that is all that poor men and women will get for having worked hard for lust and Satan all through their wicked lives. But the believer is God’s free man, free for all eternity; free from the guilt and service of sin, the rewards of sin, and the ruling love of sin. Jesus has made him free indeed. His name was called Jesus, *“for He shall save His people from their sins”* (Matthew 1.21).

Adapted from The Little Gleaner 1877

MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD

A colporteur (Bible-seller) in Hungary came across an old man who had received the present of a Bible from his daughter. The old man found no words sufficient to express his joy in his new treasure. But his wife complained that the bill for paraffin for the lamp had grown enormously since he had taken to reading the Bible. “He stays up half the night immersed in his Bible,” she cried.

The old man, however, remarked that the value he got from the Bible was far more than the cost of the paraffin. Taking the colporteur’s hand, he said, “How grieved I am not to have read the Bible in my youth; my life would have been so different.”

Cheering Words 1989

THEM THAT HONOUR ME

There was a millionaire who had a very prosperous business at an American port. He was an infidel (unbeliever) who despised the gospel and had no time for God. He was very strict in the management of his business affairs, and he expected everyone to obey his commands. One Saturday, he told his men that a ship had just arrived, and they were ordered to work the next day to unload it.

One young man stepped forward, saying, "Mr. Girard, I cannot work tomorrow."

"And why not?" asked the millionaire.

"It is the Lord's day," replied the worker.

"Don't you have a widowed mother to care for?"

"Yes, sir, but I cannot work on the Lord's day."

"Very well; go to the wages clerk, get the money that is due to you, and you are dismissed!"

For the next three weeks, the young man walked the streets of the town looking for work, but he could find nothing. His heart continually went up to the Lord in prayer, as he remembered the Scripture: *"But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 4.19).

Unknown to him, the millionaire was joining his friends at a banquet and had entered into conversation with the chief executive of a bank. They were opening a new branch and needed a manager. The bank executive asked the millionaire whether he knew anyone who could be trusted, who might be suitable for such a job. The millionaire thought for a moment; then he mentioned the young man's name, recommending him.

"But didn't you just dismiss him?" asked the executive.

"I did let him go because he wouldn't work on Sundays. However, a young man that will keep a good conscience, even when it costs him his job, is the sort of man you would want!"

With such a favourable reference, the young man was contacted, and he was given the job of bank manager. He proved to be the right man for the post.

The Lord honoured the young man who was given grace to obey the Lord. Indeed, the Lord has said, *"Them that honour Me I will honour"* (1 Samuel 2.30).

Adapted from Cheering Words 2002

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

THE BOOK OF DANIEL Chapter 5

"The Writing on the Wall"

"But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee" (Luke 12.20).

King Belshazzar was probably the grandson of King Nebuchadnezzar. According to historians, he was a co-king with Nabonidus, who was also a son or grandson of King Nebuchadnezzar. A few other kings had short reigns before Nabonidus and Belshazzar ruled. Belshazzar was about the same age as Daniel, and he must have been aware of the various events recorded in the first four chapters. In verses 18 to 21, Daniel reminds him of Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation when he became like a beast and was driven out from men.

The great feast that we read of in verse 1 was quite a common event in ancient Babylon. An eminent dignitary would invite many other important people for a social party to drink wine with him, and they would often become intoxicated with the strong drinks. No doubt, King Belshazzar had hosted many a great feast before.

During this feast, however, a terrible thought entered into the mind of King Belshazzar. He remembered that the gold and silver vessels, taken from the temple of God in Jerusalem, were nearby, and he commanded them to be brought, so that he and his guests might drink out of them. *"They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone"* (verse 4).

While they were in this state of wickedness and debauchery, something happened to put an immediate stop to their partying. *"In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's band, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the band that wrote"* (verse 5). It was a sight that greatly troubled the king; he could see the fingers writing the letters, but he could not understand what was written. To him, and to all the others around him, it was a strange language. If we were to see a very well-known Bible text written in Hebrew, we would not understand what the text said, as we do not understand the Hebrew language. The king immediately called for the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. They would be men of learning, professors, and people of great natural wisdom. These men came in and looked at the writing on the wall, but they could not understand the language or the words. *"Then came in all the king's wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof. Then was King Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished"* (verses 8 and 9). What a great change from the frivolity that was taking place before!

No doubt, word soon went around the palace about the strange writing that had appeared. The queen, hearing of this astonishing news, came into the banquet house. She reminded Belshazzar of Daniel, who many years before had interpreted the dreams of King Nebuchadnezzar. *"There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods ... Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation"* (verses 11 and 12).

It does seem remarkable that King Belshazzar had not thought of Daniel, although many years had passed since Daniel interpreted the dreams of King Nebuchadnezzar. What

grace was found in Daniel! He was not interested in the gifts and honours the king would give him if he could interpret the writing. He said, *"Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another"* (verse 17). How fearlessly Daniel stood before this king and all the other dignitaries who were present! Daniel reminded Belshazzar that when King Nebuchadnezzar became boastful and proud, *"the most high God"* had cut him down. *"And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before thee"* (verses 22 and 23).

Daniel told the king what was written on the wall: *"MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN"* (verse 25). Then he most solemnly gave the interpretation of the writing. *"MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians"* (verses 26 to 28). PHARSIN (verse 25) is the plural and PERES (verse 28) is the singular form of the same word. The letter "U" before PHARSIN is equivalent to the word "and" in English. We are not told how the king received these tidings. He did bestow upon Daniel the gifts he had promised and declared that Daniel would be the third ruler in the kingdom. He may have thought that those events would not happen for quite a while. Little did he know that it would all happen that very night! The army of the Medes under Darius must have been approaching the royal city at that very moment. *"In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old"* (verses 30 and 31).

Truly, God is angry with the wicked every day. God knows all the things that men, women, and children are doing, as well as what they are thinking. Many times, the Lord's patience is lengthened out, as was the case while Noah was building the ark. We read that: *"the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing"* (1 Peter 3.20). The people continued in their evil ways, even though the ark

itself served as a most solemn warning of the tremendous judgment that was coming. When it came at last, they were suddenly destroyed without remedy. At other times, God's judgments come very quickly. When the two sons of Aaron offered up strange fire on the altar, they were immediately slain by God.

King Belshazzar knew something about the Lord God who rules over heaven and earth because of what He had done to King Nebuchadnezzar, but he still lived a wicked life with no fear of God in his heart. Surely, everyone who reads this knows something about the holy God; but is the fear of God to be found in your heart? You may not have been left to commit such great evils as King Belshazzar, but you are still a sinner by birth and by your thoughts and deeds. You, and all of us, are in great need of His mercy. One day we must also die -- and who can say how soon? May the Lord, by His grace, prepare us each for that day, that it come not upon us unawares.

A.T. Pickett

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about EZRA. 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. Which king of Persia issued a decree permitting the Jews in Babylon to return to their own country? (Ezra 1.2)
2. How many of the Jews returned from Babylon? (Ezra 2.64)
3. The Jews began to rebuild the temple, but were continually opposed. Which king gave commandment for the work to stop? (Ezra 4.21-23)
4. After some years God sent two prophets to encourage the Jews to continue building. What were their names? (Ezra 5.1)
5. The Jews were again opposed, but by this time another king, Darius, was on the throne. What was found, as a result of

- which he overturned the previous king's command and encouraged the Jews to continue building? (Ezra 6. 1-3)
6. When was the building of the temple finished? (Ezra 6)
 7. Ezra himself did not go up to Jerusalem till many years later in the reign of another king called Artaxerxes who encouraged him. The way was dangerous, but why was he ashamed to ask for a band of soldiers to help him? (Ezra 8)
 8. Ezra found that many of the Israelites had done something wrong, and it deeply grieved him and caused him to cry unto God about it. What was he so concerned about? (Ezra 9)
 9. Nehemiah came to Jerusalem about thirteen years later and was with Ezra when the book of the law was read and explained to the people. The people wept on hearing it, then later rejoiced. Why did they rejoice? (Nehemiah 8)
 10. The word "pulpit" is only used once in the Bible, and Ezra was in (or "upon") the pulpit. Find the reference.

ANSWERS TO APRIL QUESTIONS

1. The woman had washed Jesus' feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head.
2. Elisabeth.
3. Lydia.
4. Mary, the mother of Jesus.
5. Dorcas – she was "full of good works and almsdeeds which she did."
6. "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" (John 4.29)
7. Mary – she had "chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her." (Luke 10.42)
8. "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." (John 8.7)
9. The woman had an issue of blood twelve years. Jesus said, "Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole." (Matthew 9.22)
10. Mary loved Jesus because of what He had done for her, and was heartbroken when He was crucified. By the one word, "Mary," she knew that Jesus had risen from the dead and was alive and talking with her. (John 20.11-18)

PAUL'S VOYAGE

If Paul in Caesar's court must stand,
He need not fear the sea;
Secured from harm, on every hand,
By the divine decree.

Although the ship, in which he sailed,
By dreadful storms was tossed;
The promise over all prevailed,
And not a life was lost.

Though neither sun nor stars were seen
Paul knew the Lord was near;
And faith preserved his soul serene,
When others shook for fear.

Believers thus are tossed about
On life's tempestuous main;
But grace assures, beyond a doubt,
They shall their port attain.

They must, they shall appear one day,
Before their Saviour's throne;
The storms they meet with by the way,
But make His power known.

Their passage lies across the brink
Of many a threatening wave;
The world expects to see them sink,
But Jesus lives to save.

Lord, though we are but feeble worms,
Yet since Thy word is past;
We'll venture through a thousand storms,
To see Thy face at last.

John Newton, Olney Hymns

The Friendly Companion



A Landing Craft bringing Soldiers ashore on D-Day, 1944

“And Asa cried unto the LORD his God, and said, LORD, it is nothing with Thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude. O LORD, ... let not man prevail against Thee.” 2 Chronicles 14.11

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

This month marks the 75th anniversary of the D-Day invasion of allied forces against Germany in World War II. The D-Day invasion took nearly two years of planning by military leaders. There were many details that required planning, manoeuvring, and much secrecy for such a large-scale attack; such as the time of month, the place where the assault should begin, the number of troops needed, and the massive amount of supplies required.

However, all these efforts would have had no success without the Lord's favour. While the military and political leaders were engaged in their preparations, those who feared God were not idle. God alone knows the fervent prayers, the confession of sins, and the imploring of mercy that this noble remnant offered up to God daily, both in their personal prayers and when they came together at times appointed for prayer. After victory was at last obtained, the military genius was lauded, the bravery of men was praised, and the fighting forces were honoured; yet the remnant of praying souls, and the force of their prayers, was little remembered!

The day of June 6th 1944 stands out for the victory that was obtained. However, for hundreds of young men in their late teens and early twenties, it was the last day of their lives. Far from their homes and loved ones, it was their lot to perish on the beaches and lands that they had heard little of until the war broke out. We must never forget the sacrifice of so many to secure our way of life and freedom from tyranny.

Some time ago, we read an article about a man whose job on the day of invasion was a most difficult one. It was not the most dangerous task, but it was definitely exceeding hard. He was placed in a certain position on the landing craft and given an order to make sure that every soldier left it. If any turned back after leaving the craft, he was told to shoot them; to shoot one of his own countrymen! There was no possibility for anyone to turn back.

It is the same with those who seek to follow the Lord Jesus. They, too, will find such strong opposition that it will often make them falter. Their fears will overwhelm them. Their flesh will protest that the way is too hard. The temptation to turn back becomes so strong! The Lord Jesus warned: *"No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God"* (Luke 9:62). The word to the children of Israel when they stood still before the Red Sea was: *"Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward"* (Exodus 14.15). The charge to the Hebrew believers was: *"Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him"* (Hebrews 10.38). How encouraging were the words that Paul concluded with! *"But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul"* (verse 39).

With loving wishes from the Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

What a foreboding scene the picture on the front cover presents! Dark, cloudy skies and stormy seas added to the



War Graves in Normandy, France

gloom of the dangerous mission that the soldiers on the landing craft would face in the days and months ahead. The landing craft pictured was one of thousands that transported the Allied armies to the shores of Normandy, France.

The soldiers had spent months in training to prepare them for this hour, and they had received instructions from their commanding officers; now they were at the mercies of God. Ahead were days and nights of loneliness, extreme weather conditions, and imminent dangers. Soon, the groans of wounded and dying men would become familiar, but dreaded, sounds. How painful and terrible war is!

Prior to the first landings on the French coast, bombers from the Royal Air Force and the US Air Force weakened the German bunkers by dropping bombs. They formed huge craters in the fields along the French coast. Many of those fields remain in the same condition up to the present time.

One of the most heart-rending pictures is that of the graves of thousands of soldiers now buried on the flat, grassy field overlooking the Normandy coast. When looking at those graves, now laid out in a very impressive formation, we cannot help but think that each grave has a story to tell. Each of those graves speaks of a suffering and dying soldier, far off from his loved ones. It also speaks of the sorrow and grief of the loved ones for a husband, son, or brother who never returned home.

Note: Perhaps some of our readers have thought that the sky does not appear so dark, nor the seas so rough in the front cover picture. You are right to think so, as the picture of the landing craft we have used was actually taken on June 7th 1944, when the stormy conditions had subsided considerably.

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**THE MESSENGERS OF AHAZIAH**

After Ahab died, his son Ahaziah became king. He did evil like his father and served Baal. Ahaziah fell from a window in an upper room of his palace. He sent messengers to ask Baalzebub, the idol god, if he would recover. The Lord told Elijah to meet the messengers and say, *“Thus saith the LORD, Thou ... shalt surely die.”*

When King Ahaziah heard these words, he sent a captain with fifty men to bring Elijah to him, but fire came down from heaven and killed them. The king sent a second captain with fifty men, telling Elijah to come quickly, but once again *“the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.”*

Ahaziah sent a third captain with fifty men to Elijah. This captain said, *“O man of God, ... let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight.”* The Lord told Elijah to go down with him and not be afraid. Elijah told Ahaziah that because he had sent to ask an idol instead of the Lord, he would not get well. *“So he died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken.”*

QUESTIONS:

1. Who fell from a window?
2. Whom did the Lord tell to meet the messengers?
3. What consumed the first two captains?

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. Ahab.
2. The Lord.
3. An arrow.

*“Therefore
let my life
now be
precious
in thy sight.”*

2 Kings 1.14

BIBLE LESSONS**SAFE AT LAST**

For fourteen days and nights, it seemed that the stormy sea would become a watery grave to all on the ship. Now the land could be seen, but they did not know what land it was. However, their hearts were stirred with the hope of safely reaching the shore.

The anchors were taken up and the main sail was raised. The rudder bands were loosed, and the sailors tried hard to steer the ship into the creek. By turning the rudder from side to side, they could steer the ship. As the ship moved forward, they were driven into a place where two strong currents met. The front of the ship hit the ground with force and stuck fast, while the back of the ship was battered by the violent waves. Soon the ship began to break apart.

Besides the danger of drowning in the sea, there was another danger for the prisoners. The soldiers, who were given charge over them, were afraid that the prisoners might escape. The Roman authorities required the life of the soldier who allowed any prisoner to escape. Thus, they thought it would be best to kill the prisoners. However, God had given Paul such favour in the eyes of the centurion that he kept the soldiers from their purpose. He ordered those who could swim to jump into the sea and get to shore. The rest were told to take hold of the floating boards that had broken off the ship and make their way to shore. After they had been rescued, they must have taken a count and found that all 276 were safe, just as God had told Paul.

They soon learned that the island was called Melita. The people who lived on the island came to help the shipwrecked strangers. Although they were cold and wet, at least they were safe on land.

Luke tells us something very wonderful about the men of the island. They *“received us every one.”* They could easily distinguish the difference between the sailors, the soldiers, and the prisoners; yet they received even that third group, the

prisoners, whom most would despise. Luke also tells us that the island people showed them great kindness and kindled a fire so they could warm themselves. Paul, along with the others, gathered a bundle of sticks to put on the fire. When Paul placed his bundle on the fire, a venomous (poisonous) snake fastened on his hand. The men of the island looked on in horror as Paul vigorously shook his hand until the serpent dropped off into the fire. They knew that Paul was one of the prisoners and said among themselves: *"No doubt, this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live."* They judged by outward signs. The Lord Jesus warned the hearers in His day, *"Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment"* (John 7.24).

They looked intently at Paul, waiting for his hand to swell up or for Paul suddenly to fall down dead. When they had watched a great while, no harm came to Paul. The Lord Jesus had prophesied of this before He returned to heaven: *"And these signs shall follow them that believe; ... they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them"* (Mark 16.18).

Then the people *"changed their minds, and said that he was a god."* How changeable men are when blinded by Satan; to what opposite extremes they go! First, they thought that Paul was a very wicked man. Then they said that he was a god because no harm came from the poisonous serpent.

You can read about this in Acts chapter 27 verses 39 to 44 and chapter 28 verses 1 to 6.

QUESTIONS:

1. What did the soldiers want to do with the prisoners?
2. What was the name of the island?
3. What kindness did the men of the island show?
4. What came out of the fire and fastened on Paul's hand?
5. What did the people of the island say that Paul was?

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. The fourteenth night.
2. Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.
3. There shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.
4. He gave thanks to God.
5. 276.

THE SCARS REMAIN

When Jim was a little boy, he and his father were always together. They lived on a farm, and Jim followed his father around and helped with all his tasks. However, Jim began to change as he grew older. He became mean and disagreeable. He often lost his temper and even told lies.

His father felt very sad about the change in Jim's behaviour. He wanted to help him overcome his bad ways. One day, he went out to the barn with a hammer and a can of nails. He told Jim, "Every time you disobey me, every time you tell a lie, and every time you get angry, we will hammer a nail into the barn door."

At first, Jim laughed about this idea. He did not think there would be many nails in the barn door, but he soon found that he was wrong. In a very short time, the barn door was almost covered with nails.

Then Jim began to realise how sinful he had been. With shame, he went to his father and said, "I didn't know I was such a bad boy. I would like to change my ways. I want to get rid of those nails in the barn door, for it makes me sad to look at them."

The father told Jim that he could not win the victory over sin by himself, but only with the help of the Lord. He told Jim to pray each day to the Lord; to ask Him for help to overcome sin and to teach him to do what was good and right. The Lord

says, *“Come, ye children, hearken unto Me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD”* (Proverbs 34.11).

The father said that he had another plan. “Every time that you do something good, you may pull a nail out of the barn door; every time that you are tempted to tell a lie, but you tell the truth, you may pull a nail out; every time you overcome your anger, you may pull a nail out.”

There began to be a change in Jim’s life. Gradually the nails were pulled out of the barn door. The merciful Lord helped him to overcome his faults, until there was not one nail left. However, to Jim’s dismay, he saw that the barn door was covered with holes. Every time he looked at them, he was reminded of his past sinful behaviour. Then Jim felt so ashamed, but he was thankful that the Lord had helped him.

May this same Lord Jesus keep you, children, from sinning against Him. May He help you at all times to do that which is good. May He help you to seek Him in prayer. *“Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near”* (Isaiah 55.6). Seek Him in your younger days, and do not forget that the scars of sin remain. It is true that we cannot be saved by doing good – only by grace and for Jesus’ sake. But it is God’s will that we should do good and not evil.

Adapted from Gathered Gems

GOD’S OVERRULING PROVIDENCE

“Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you”
(1 Peter 5.7).

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

While I was stationed in Malta during World War II, a group of fellow-Christians with myself had left the army camp and spent the evening by the sea. As we made our way back to the camp, we turned off the footpath to a quiet spot and sat down

on the hillside. One of our group read a portion of Scripture and prayed for the Lord's protection over us during the night. Then we went on to our different parts of the camp.

There were four of us in our tent, which was attached to my lorry, and was in the far corner of the field. As we were preparing our beds for the night, a large dog entered the field from the lane and made his way to our part of the camp. To my surprise, he entered our tent and settled down under my bed, which was No. 1, as if it was his accustomed place. As I am not fond of dogs, I tried my best to steer him out, but I could not get him to move.

We all settled down for the night. I dropped the tent flap, and we went to sleep.

Suddenly in the night, there was a terrible commotion; the dog was outside barking and driving off an intruder. I lifted the tent flap, and we all called him to come back, but he took no notice. Only after our enemy had gone, did he come back and settle down once more under my bed.

We woke in the morning, and I looked under my bed for the dog, but he was gone! We looked outside, but there was no sign of him, and we never saw him again.

Why did this dog – a stranger to us – come into our tent to guard four men he had never seen before? Why should he choose to settle under my bed? Did not the Lord send him? As the hymnwriter says, "All creatures obey His command."

"This is the LORD's doing, it is marvellous in our eyes" (Psalm 118.23).

Friendly Companion 1986

A PROPHETIC MESSAGE

Shortly before G. vanReenen, an aged minister in Holland, entered into the rest which remaineth for the people of God, he spoke to a young fellow minister, W.C. Lamain. He said, "I have received two messages from the Lord which I will not be able to deliver to the people; but, I request you to do so."

What was the content of those messages? He said that when it was Old Year's Day, he must preach from James 5.9: "*Behold, the Judge standeth before the door.*" And on New Year's Day he must preach from Matthew 24.6: "*Behold, the bridegroom cometh.*"

Out of love for Dominie vanReenen, he tried to preach from those texts in 1935 and 1936 but was unable to do so. In 1937 and in 1938, he did not even think about them. When the last day of the year 1939 came, there was no other text in the Bible than James 5.9; and for New Year's Day 1940, there was no other text than Matthew 25.6. The Lord revealed many things to him which were going to take place in the coming years. There were people in the congregation who thought that he was seeing the future much too darkly and that he painted a picture too black when he spoke about empty stores, empty streets, empty dykes, etc. However, many people received a deep impression about what was contained in those texts. The God of Judgment was standing before the door, and hard times were approaching. Many would die in the Nazi invasion, and those who survived would ask, "Are you still alive?"

Adapted from The Life and Work of W.C. Lamain

Ed. Note: The warning given from those two texts on New Year's Eve 1939 and New Year's Day 1940 should weigh heavily upon our hearts, along with the hardships suffered and lack of provisions that followed soon after. We cannot say with certainty what sins brought such judgments upon those people. However, the abominable sins of the present day have surely made our nations ripe for the pouring out of God's judgments; especially those nations that have been blessed with the gospel, such as the United States, Canada, Europe, and the United Kingdom.

There are three things that cannot be recalled: a spent arrow, a spoken word, and a lost opportunity.

Cheering Words 1989

LEST WE FORGET

The invasion of France in June 1944 was the greatest military adventure ever undertaken in the history of Britain. Many people seem to have forgotten that the whole of the continent of Europe had fallen under the domination of a tyrant – Adolf Hitler. France, Belgium, Holland, Norway, Denmark, Czechoslovakia and Poland had all been overrun by his Nazi armies. The continent of Europe had been subdued. They were pinning their hopes on Britain and America for liberation. They all longed for deliverance, and no doubt, many of them were praying for it. The task was very great, requiring leaders prepared and directed by God, a clear vision of the purpose set before them, a dedicated fighting force, and a miracle. Several remarkable events in the providence of God had already taken place in the war. Another great miracle would be needed effectively to carry out the invasion.

As at so many other critical points in the war, there was a solemn call to prayer and dedication. On the eve of D-Day, King George VI broadcast a message to the nation and to the world:

“Four years ago our nation and empire stood alone against an overwhelming enemy, with our backs to the wall. Tested as never before in our history, in God’s providence we survived that test. The spirit of the people, resolute, dedicated, burned like a bright flame, lit surely from those unseen fires which nothing can quench. Now once more a supreme test has to be faced. This time the challenge is not to fight to survive but to fight to win the final victory for the good cause That we may be worthily matched with this new summons of destiny, I desire solemnly to call my people to prayer and to dedication. We are not unmindful of our shortcomings, past and present. We shall ask not that God may do our will, but that we may be enabled to do the will of God. And we dare to believe that God has used our nation and empire as an instrument for fulfilling His high purpose. Surely not one of us is too busy to play our

part in a nation-wide, perchance a world-wide, vigil of prayer as the great crusade sets forth.”

In their final Orders of the Day, General Eisenhower and General Montgomery asked for prayer that God would prosper us, and prayer went up from hearts, freely and fully convinced that the business in hand was a liberation according to the will of God.

While the physical preparations for invasion proceeded, the chaplains set about their task of preparing the fighting forces spiritually. The culmination of this long and painstaking task took the form of services of dedication held on the eve of D-Day, and it was reported that there had been crowded pre-battle services everywhere. Four hundred officers and men of Second Army Headquarter Staff held an hour-long vigil in a church overlooking the road down which the Allied forces trooped twenty-four hours later to the invasion ships. General Dempsey called it one of the most moving experiences of his life: “With military police guarding the doors, and the Allied armies poised in sealed camps in the surrounding woods, the Chaplain recited the famous prayer Drake offered in 1587:

‘O Lord God, when Thou givest to Thy servants to endeavour any great matter, grant us also to know that it is not the beginning, but the continuing of the same, until it be thoroughly finished, which yieldeth the true glory; through Him that for the finishing of Thy work laid down His life, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.’”

Eve-of-battle services took place on ships, on landing-craft, on airfields – everywhere. The whole of the coming endeavour was committed into the hands of God.

The day of the invasion came, and the troops from Britain and her allies set foot once more in France and opened the last campaign against Germany. The decision had been made for the attack to be launched across the English Channel, which at that moment looked as wild and forbidding as it is possible for the Channel to appear. The normally placid and sunlit days of

late May and early June were just the opposite that summer. Yet those dark clouds that were so much dreaded were big with opportunities, which the Supreme Headquarters was quick to grasp. The weather, indeed, bluffed the enemy completely. The German commanders were advised by their meteorological service that there could be no invasion in the period up to and including June 6th because of continuous stormy weather. It had been the windiest month in Normandy for at least twenty years. That is why the D-Day forces, which landed during a brief break in the weather, found so many German troops without officers and why other enemy coastal units were away having exercises at the time of the landings.

In a speech given by General Eisenhower after the war, he related the circumstances: "This day, eight years ago, I made the most agonising decision of my life. I had to decide to postpone by at least twenty-four hours the most formidable array of fighting ships, and of fighting men that was ever launched across the sea against a hostile shore. The consequences of that decision at that moment could not have been foreseen by anyone. If there was nothing else in my life to prove the existence of an almighty and merciful God, the events of the next twenty-four hours did it. The greatest break in a terrible outlay of weather occurred the next day and allowed that great invasion to proceed, with losses far below those we had anticipated."

According to an editorial in *The Times* in 1944: "On the morning of the assault, the wind had moderated, and the cloud was not only well broken, but its base was at least 4,000 feet high, ideally suited for the large-scale airborne operations. In the hour preceding the landings, when perfect conditions for pin-point bombing were so essential, there were large areas of temporarily clear sky, and throughout the critical time, medium and light bombers were unhampered."

Furthermore, the *Daily Telegraph* reported that "this was the only night that U-boats did not patrol the Channel. The way our forces went over to Normandy was beyond

imagination – 4,000 ships and 11,000 planes – and they never met a single enemy ship or plane! There could hardly be anything in our history to compare with the night we invaded Normandy.”

All the evidence bears testimony that the attack was made under the overruling hand of God. It was recorded that as the combined British and United States Army of Liberation landed on the beaches of Normandy, a magnificent rainbow was arched over the battle area. On June 24th 1944, it was reported in *The Sphere*: “The rainbow spread right across the combat zone in brilliant colours, only fading from sight after thousands of our men had seen it and been heartened by its appearance at the outset of the Great Adventure. One aeroplane crew reported that they had flown through the middle of it whilst carrying out a bombing mission over the beaches. ‘It stood out as plain as it could be. I watched it for quite a while,’ said the aircraft’s turret gunner.”

There followed the triumphant advance through France, so unexpectedly rapid (after some initial setbacks had been overcome) that General Montgomery said in a message sent to his armies, “Such an historic march of events can seldom have taken place in such a short space of time ... Let us say to each other, ‘*This is the LORD’s doing; it is marvellous in our eyes*’ (Psalm 118.23).” Victory was now within sight.

The entire period of the 1939-45 War was full of the great works of the Lord. Soldiers, statesmen, the monarch, and the events themselves, all bear testimony to this fact. The hand of God was clearly seen, with one mighty deliverance or intervention after another. “*If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us; then they had swallowed us up quick ... Then the waters had overwhelmed us ... Blessed be the LORD, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth*” (Psalm 124). Our help was from the Lord.

*Adapted from information in The Trumpet Sounds for Britain,
Volume 2 by David E. Gardner*

HONEYBEE EYES

The Lord created the eyes of each of His creatures in a unique way to meet their individual needs. *“O LORD, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all”* (Psalm 104.24). Scientists have been studying the eyes of insects in order to design useful and improved instruments.

Honeybees, flies, and many other insects have compound eyes. Each eye consists of thousands of tiny tubes or columns called *ommatidia*. Light first enters the eye through a micro lens on the outer end of the column. Then the light moves through the hollow column until it meets the photoreceptors at the internal end.

Insect eyes have the ability to see both lighter and darker images at the same time. Cameras, on the other hand, are typically limited to either light or dark illumination, but not both.

Scientists in Berkeley, California, are working on an artificial eye that duplicates the advanced optics of the honeybee. They begin with a tiny lump of clear resin, forming thousands of tiny bumps on the surface to function as lenses. Next, the resin is exposed to ultraviolet light. The surface lenses divide this light into many separate beams that move through the resin. Along the way, the light polymerizes, or chemically alters, the resin. The result is permanent, side-by-side columns of light-guides within the resin, similar to the *ommatidia* of insects.

The scientists are still working on the challenge of lengthening those light guides and connecting them with microelectronic photo sensors. They hope to use this artificial eye for applications like miniature surveillance cameras and medical endoscopes for probing inside the body.

Adapted from Discovery of Design by D. DeYoung & D. Hobbs

The will of God is the only standard of right and good.

Joseph Hart

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES**THE BOOK OF DANIEL Chapter 6****“But continue in prayer”**

“O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?” (Daniel 6.20).

This chapter is one of the most well-known in the whole Bible. Perhaps all those who are reading this have known about Daniel and the lions’ den from their earliest years.

Following the death of King Belshazzar, Darius the Median took over the kingdom. The Babylonian kingdom was now controlled by the Medes and Persians. King Darius planned his government very carefully. He had one hundred and twenty princes over the provinces, and over them were three presidents who would report directly to the king. We are not told the names of two of the presidents, but the king chose Daniel as one of the three, and he would be above the other two. *“Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm”* (verse 3). The king must have known something about the history of Daniel to place such trust and confidence in him.

How true is that word, *“Jealousy is cruel as the grave”* (Song of Solomon 8.6). It appears that the other two presidents and the one hundred and twenty princes had something against Daniel. Whether this was because Daniel was a Jew or because he was preferred above them, we are not told. One thing they all had in mind was to get rid of him. But how? *“Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him”* (verse 4). How sad to think that all those men were spending their time spying on Daniel, noting everything he did and said so that they might have something to testify against him.

They held another secret meeting in which they came up with a very cunning, devious plan, whereby they could cause Daniel to fall. They then presented their plan to the king. *"All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions"* (verse 7). This was a plan of flattery and deceit to make the king feel that he was so important and that all his subjects greatly admired him. The king fell for it straight away and signed the decree.

We wonder how Daniel felt when he heard about this new decree. All his life he had been given grace to be faithful unto the Lord his God – the true and living God! Daniel must have known that it was designed to cause him to fall. What a day of trouble it would have been! He knew if he continued to pray unto the Lord God, he would probably be discovered and then be cast into the den of lions, suffering a horrendous death. But he was given grace to remain faithful unto God. *"Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime"* (verse 10). Godly Daniel still continued in prayer.

The spies soon reported him to the king, who must have then realised that the new decree was devised against Daniel. The king laboured to deliver Daniel from the lions' den, yet he was unsuccessful. The greatest king on the earth could not prevent his most trusted advisor and president from the cunning, devious and subtle schemes of men. Daniel, who was an old man now, must be cast into this den of ferocious lions. Death appeared certain!

We read that the king could not sleep. He was, no doubt, troubled at how he had been deceived by two of his presidents and all the princes into destroying his most loyal and faithful

servant. We wonder if Daniel also had a sleepless night. Being cast into that awful den amongst those savage beasts, he may well have spent the whole night in prayer.

We wonder what prompted Darius to go to the den of lions in the morning, when to all sense and reason, Daniel would be dead. The answer is in the question the king put to Daniel. *"And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: ... O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?"* (verse 20). Something must have prompted the king to think that there may have been a faint possibility that Daniel's God had kept him safe all that night. We can be sure that no one had ever before survived the lions' den.

What a pleasant surprise the king must have had when Daniel replied, *"My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lion's mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before Him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt"* (verse 22). At once, Daniel was brought forth out of the den and thoroughly examined, but there was not the tiniest scratch to be found on him.

The king soon turned on those who had accused Daniel. He commanded all of them to be cast into the very same den of lions where Daniel had been that whole night, *"and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den"* (verse 24).

Remember that Daniel's God is the same yesterday, and today, and forever. He is still able to deliver His people (those who trust in Him alone) out of every trouble that they may come into. He is still able to shut the mouths of lions and silence them who falsely accuse those who trust in Him. May we each be found among those who are taught to pray unto Him and be helped to continue in prayer whatever the outward circumstances.

Satan will always oppose God's works and those who walk in His fear. Just as Daniel's godly, faithful conduct was a cause of envy to the princes, so the blameless, faithful testimony of

the Lord Jesus was to the Jews. They continually tried to trip Him up, and when they failed, out of envy they accused Him to Pilate. But God will always have the last word. In Daniel's case, it resulted in Daniel's preservation and the destruction of those who opposed him. In the case of the Lord Jesus, His death brought in eternal salvation for all His own elect people.

A.T. Pickett

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about REPENTANCE. 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.

Repentance is a complete turning of our back on our former sin, and where real, it is always shown by hatred to sin, confession of it before God, and seeking His mercy for Jesus' sake.

1. Who said "against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight"? (Psalm 51.4 – see the heading of the Psalm)
2. What did the prodigal son say when he realised the awful state his sin had brought him into? (Luke 15.18,19)
3. What prayer did the publican use in expression of his repentance? (Luke 18.13)
4. When John the Baptist was preaching repentance, there were some who looked to their upbringing as being sufficient. What warning did John speak in Luke 3.8?

We have all sinned against God and God commands "all men every where to repent" (Acts 17.30). We are held accountable to God for our sin, and none more so than those who have special privileges in being taught the Word of God and in having seen His work and its effects.

5. Why did Jesus "upbraid [rebuke] the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done"? (Matthew 11.20-23). Which three places did Jesus especially mention?

6. The Jews seemed to think that those who suffered some calamity must have been greater sinners than others. What warning did Jesus give twice in Luke 13?

Repentance is not always real, and the Bible gives some solemn examples of those who were sorry because of the consequences of their sin, but never knew true hatred to their sin as being sin against a good and gracious God.

7. Which wicked man “repented himself,” but never knowing true godly sorrow, went and killed himself? (Matthew 27)
8. Which king of Israel acknowledged his sin, but was more concerned about his own honour than God’s? (1 Samuel 15).
Only God can give us true repentance (see Acts 5.31) and those who feel their need of it are welcome to come in prayer and ask God for it. (Matthew 7.7-11)
9. Why did the Apostle Paul rejoice when the Corinthians were sorry? (2 Corinthians 7)
10. What causes “joy ... in heaven” and “joy in the presence of the angels of God”?

ANSWERS TO MAY QUESTIONS

1. Cyrus.
 2. 42,360.
 3. Artaxerxes.
 4. Haggai and Zechariah.
 5. A roll, with the record of the decree made by King Cyrus.
 6. The third day of the month Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of Darius. (Ezra 6.15)
 7. Ezra had said, “The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him ...” and he trusted in the Lord to protect and help him. (Ezra 8.22)
 8. The Jews had contracted marriages with the idolatrous people of the land which God had forbidden. (Ezra 9.1-4)
 9. The people rejoiced because they had understood the words of the law which had been read and explained to them. (Nehemiah 8.12)
 10. Nehemiah 8.4.
-

PRAYER FOR SAFETY ON THE SEA

Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep;
 Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee,
 For those in peril on the sea!

O Christ! whose voice the waters heard
And hushed their raging at Thy word,
Who walked'st on the foaming deep,
And calm amidst its rage didst sleep;
 Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee,
 For those in peril on the sea!

Most Holy Spirit! who didst brood
Upon the chaos dark and rude,
And bid its angry tumult cease,
And give, for wild confusion, peace;
 Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee,
 For those in peril on the sea!

O Trinity of love and power!
Our brethren shield in danger's hour;
From rock and tempest, fire and foe,
Protect them wheresoe'er they go;
 Thus evermore shall rise to Thee
 Glad hymns of praise from land and sea.

William Whiting

The

Friendly Companion



“Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith.” (Proverbs 15.16)

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

This month we will endeavour to direct your thoughts to “little things.” Although some things are little, they have a place and purpose in the world in which we live. Little things are often overlooked or despised.

How different the proud spirit of sinful man is from the wonderful condescension of the great, eternal God of heaven. The Lord often uses little things to bring down or lay low the lofty thoughts of proud men. It might be said that the companions of “little things” are “lowly things.”

Do you remember the words that Jesus said of Himself? *“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart”* (Matthew 11.28, 29). Those who are blessed with the grace of the Lord Jesus will feel themselves to be very small and to be brought low.

What a little thing God used to bring the destructive plagues upon Egypt! God appeared unto Moses in the burning bush and gave him the commission to deliver Israel out of the land of Egypt. When Moses began to protest that the people would not believe him, the Lord asked, *“What is that in thine hand? And he [Moses] said, A rod”* (Exodus 4.2). When Moses left Midian to go into Egypt, we read that he *“took the rod of God in his hand.”* Before he returned to Egypt, the rod in his hand had already been given the name: *“THE ROD OF GOD”* (Exodus 4.20).

By faith, when the ROD was stretched upon the waters of Egypt, they became blood. When stretched over the streams and the River Nile, it brought forth frogs which covered the land. When Aaron smote the dust with the ROD, the dust became lice upon man and beast. Again, when Moses stretched the ROD toward heaven, the Lord caused hail to fall, which slew all men and cattle in the open field. When stretched over the land of Egypt, it brought forth locusts which devoured every herb and all the fruits of the trees. When the

ROD was stretched over the Red Sea, it was divided so the children of Israel could pass over.

The stone that David took from the brook was very little compared to the sword, spear and shield of Goliath, the giant. How little was David himself when compared the great giant! What a great victory God gave to David and Israel with little things – things that were despised.

In the day of extreme famine, the Lord provided for Elijah and the widow woman of Zidon with a handful of meal in the barrel and a little oil in the cruse. Although little, it was sufficient; it never failed. Although little, it was supplied by the great God of Israel. When Elijah prayed that God would send rain to end the famine, he kept looking until he saw a little cloud arising out of the sea. He sent a message to Ahab to prepare his chariot and get down to his house, lest the rain should stop him. Soon the heavens were black with clouds, and there was a great rain.

Although Bethlehem was the littlest of all the cities of Judah, yet it would be the birthplace of the Lord Jesus (Micah 5.2). What honour was bestowed upon such a little city! In the prophecy of Zechariah, the people were instructed not to despise "*the day of small things*" (Zechariah 4.10).

With loving wishes from the Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

The fall of man through Adam is a vital doctrine for which we must earnestly contend. After Adam sinned and ate of the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God cursed the ground for Adam's sake. He told Adam that it would bring forth thorns and thistles unto him. What a fit emblem of the curse are thorns and thistles!

Even our youngest readers know what thorns are. Thorns may vary in length and thickness, but they all have a very sharp point. If you are pricked by a thorn, it can be very painful.

When I was a boy, we would go into the woods on my uncle and aunt's farm to pick wild blackberries. Being wild,

the berries grew on a vine rather than a bush, and the vines were covered with very small thorns. Oh, how those little thorns hurt, especially when they broke off into our fingers! Sometimes we could not see the thorns in order to pull them out, but we could certainly feel them. What distress such a little thing caused! It also seemed that we often came across snakes (serpents) hiding among those thorny vines. In the Garden of Eden, the serpent was the means that Satan used to bring forth the curse.

Do you know who in the Bible wrote about the thorn in his flesh? It was the Apostle Paul. He had been given a revelation of heaven and had heard words that can only be understood by those who are in heaven. How blessed he was! Although he had been caught up to heaven to hear them, he still had to live upon earth for a time. The Lord knew that Paul, like any saint thus favoured, would be exalted in fleshly pride. Thus, he was given: *"a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure"* (2 Corinthians 12.7).

Paul felt that little thorn was too much of a hindrance for him to succeed in the work of the ministry. He prayed earnestly for the Lord to remove it, but instead the Lord showed him the real need for it. The Lord said, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (verse 9). The thorn in the flesh made him weak and dependent upon the grace of the Lord Jesus.

The way to heaven is narrow, and there are but few travellers in it. God's children must not expect a smooth path, for a religion that brings no cross will not lead to a crown. If we are sincere followers of Christ, we must expect trials, crosses and afflictions.

W. Tiptaft

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**JEHOSHAPHAT PRAYS FOR HELP**

Jehoshaphat was king in Judah when Ahab, and then Ahaziah, ruled over Israel. One day Jehoshaphat was told that a very great army was coming against him. Jehoshaphat was afraid. He called all the people together to ask help of the Lord. He prayed, *“O our 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.”* While he was praying, the Spirit of the Lord came upon a prophet. He told them not to be afraid, *“for the LORD will be with you.”*

Early in the morning, they went out into the wilderness against the enemy. Jehoshaphat *“appointed singers unto the LORD”* to go before the army. As they began to sing, the LORD caused their enemies to fight against each other until they were destroyed.

Then the people of Judah assembled in the valley of Berachah to bless the Lord for helping them. Jehoshaphat led them back to Jerusalem and to the house of the Lord with great joy.

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Jehoshaphat call the people together to do?
2. Whom did Jehoshaphat appoint to go before them?
3. Where did the people assemble to bless the Lord?

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. Ahaziah.
2. Elijah
3. Fire.

*“Be not afraid
... for the
battle is
not yours,
but God’s.”*

2 Chronicles 20.15

BIBLE LESSONS**PAUL ARRIVES AT ROME**

A wealthy man named Publius lived on the same island where Paul and his companions escaped from the shipwreck. He was called the chief man of the island; perhaps he was the governor. He was not only a man of great wealth, but he was also a man of very great kindness. He was courteous to Paul and those with him and lodged them for three days.

Publius would not have known what was written in Hebrews 13.2, *"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares,"* but he would prove the truth of it. At the time he took Paul and the others into his house, the father of Publius lay in bed with a very sad disease. When Paul knew of it, he entered the room and, kneeling down, prayed for him. He laid his hands on him and healed him. This was a gift given to the apostles, and it was done by the power of God.

The news of this healing spread quickly around the island. Very soon, a steady stream of diseased and afflicted people came to Paul and were healed. What a blessing it was for the people to have the apostle of the God of heaven with them! Thus the Lord overruled the shipwreck for good.

For three months the people from the ship remained on the island. We are not told what they did during that time, although we may be sure that Paul preached the gospel of Christ unto them.

As the warm spring weather began to return, the centurion was anxious to complete his mission of bringing the prisoners under his charge to Rome. He found a ship from Alexandria which had wintered in a harbour on the island and was preparing to sail to Italy. He put all the prisoners, including Paul and his two companions, Luke and Aristarchus, on board. The people of the island brought provisions that Paul and his companions would need on the journey. In this way, they showed their love and appreciation for all that the apostle had done.

Leaving the island of Melita, they arrived at the port of Puteoli, where they went ashore and would complete the journey to Rome on foot. In Puteoli, they found believers who desired that Paul and his companions would stay with them for seven days. We marvel that the centurion was so willing to allow for this delay. In all of these events, the Lord was directing the steps of the apostle.

Some time before, Paul had written a letter (epistle) to the believers at Rome. No doubt, you have read the Epistle to the Romans yourselves. Word had gone to the believers at Rome beforehand that Paul was nearing the city. Such was the love that these believers felt toward him that they could not wait for his arrival in Rome. They went out to meet him, journeying as far as Appii forum, which was nearly halfway between Rome and Puteoli. The Bible tells us that when he saw them, *“he thanked God, and took courage.”* Thus the coming of the believers from Rome was a means of strengthening the hands of the apostle.

Even though Paul wore the chains of a prisoner, these brethren were not ashamed of him. Although strangers in the flesh, they were real friends through the gospel of Jesus Christ. The rest of the journey to Rome must have been sweetened by the company and conversation of these believers.

After arriving in Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard. What an impression the prisoner Paul had made upon the centurion! He must have spoken to the captain of the guard on Paul’s behalf, for we are told that *“Paul was suffered [allowed] to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.”*

You can read about this in Acts chapter 28 verses 7 to 16.

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the name of the chief man of the island?
2. What did Paul do for this man’s father? (9 words)
3. How long was Paul allowed to stay with the believers at Puteoli?

4. What did Paul do when he saw the believers from Rome? (6 words)
5. What was Paul allowed to do in Rome? (10 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. Kill them.
2. Melita.
3. Kindled a fire.
4. A poisonous snake (or serpent).
5. A god.

THE LITTLE LOAF

Many years ago, there was a great famine in Germany, and the poor people suffered from hunger. A certain rich man loved children. He sent for twenty of them and said, "In this basket there is a loaf of bread for each of you. Take it home and come back again every day until the famine is over. I will give you a fresh loaf each day."

The children were very hungry. They seized the basket, and each one struggled to get the largest loaf. They even forgot to thank the man who had been so kind to them. After a few minutes of quarrelling and snatching for bread, each of the children ran away with a loaf, except for one little girl named Gretchen. She stood alone at a little distance from the gentleman. Then, smiling, she took up the last loaf, the smallest of all, and thanked him with all her heart.

On the next day, the children came again, and they behaved as badly as ever. Gretchen, who would not push with the rest, received only a tiny loaf, scarcely half the size of the others. But when she came home and her mother began to cut the loaf, out dropped six shining silver coins. "O Gretchen!"

exclaimed her mother, "this must be a mistake. The money does not belong to us. Run as quick as you can, and take it back to the gentleman."

So Gretchen carried the coins back; but when she gave the gentleman her mother's message, he said, "No, no, it was not a mistake. I had the silver baked into the smallest loaf in order to reward you. Remember that the person who is contented to have a small loaf rather than quarrel for a larger one will find blessings that are better than money baked in bread."

Adapted from Cheering Words 1991

A SMALL BODY BUT A BIG HEART

A young boy, who was very small for his age, wanted so much to help his widowed mother. He went to a fishmonger (someone who sells fish) and asked if he would hire him as an errand boy.

"I want a boy who is strong enough to carry a barrel of oysters on his shoulder; you are too small for that," was his answer.

The boy thought again of his dear mother's need, and he replied, "I know it, but I can go twice, sir."

The man was struck by the lad's answer. He took the determined boy into his service. He was found to be a faithful little worker. Step by step, he rose in the business, and he finally became a wealthy merchant.

Adapted from the Little Gleaner 1933

A LITTLE HYMN SUNG BY A DYING BOY

The most beautiful sights of joy and peace have their opposites in sights that give pain and sadness. One of the most pleasing sights is that of a happy and joyous child, while one of the most painful is that of a lost and helpless child. Those painful sights were frequent in former years, especially in large

towns and cities like London, where there were so many poor and destitute people.

A man named Mr. Brown became a friend to many poor, helpless children. He looked for those who had need of food and clothing. One day Mr. Brown came upon an attic in London, reached by a flight of stairs. Thinking that some poor creature might have crept up there, he climbed the staircase and found himself under the rafters and roofing slates. He knocked, and a feeble voice answered, "Come in." There was no lamp or light fixture in the place, but after his eyes adapted to the dim natural lighting, he saw a boy of about ten years of age lying upon a heap of wood chips and shavings. He appeared very pale but had an especially sweet face.

"What are you doing here?" he asked the boy.

"Hush, hush! I am hiding."

"Where is your mother?"

"Mother is dead."

"Where is your father?"

"Hush, hush! Don't tell him; I am hiding."

"Hiding? What for?" Mr. Brown gently asked.

Then the boy showed him his white arms, swollen and covered with bruises.

"Who beat you like that?"

"Please, don't tell him; my father beat me."

"Why did he beat you?"

"Father got drunk and beat me because I wouldn't steal," answered the young boy.

"Did you ever steal?"

"Yes sir; I was a street thief once."

"And why won't you steal anymore?"

"Because I went to the school for ragged children, and they told me, '*Thou shalt not steal*' (Exodus 20.15); and they told me of God, of Jesus, and of heaven. I will never steal again, sir, even if my father kills me."

Mr. Brown kindly said, "I don't know quite what to do for you, my dear boy; you cannot stay here or you will die. Here is a shilling (a piece of money); I will go and look for some help."

The boy looked at the coin for a moment and then said, "Please, sir, wouldn't you like to hear me sing my hymn?"

Mr. Brown thought it amazing that the child was able to sing a hymn; without food, without warm clothing or shelter, without mother, without a friend, bruised and beaten, as he lay hiding from an angry father; yet, he had a little hymn to sing. "Yes, I will hear you sing," he softly answered. In a sweet voice the boy sang:

Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Look upon a little child;
Pity my simplicity,
Suffer me to come to Thee.

Fain I would to Thee be brought;
Gracious God, forbid it not:
In the kingdom of Thy grace
Give a little child a place.

After listening with tears in his eyes, Mr. Brown left the child, promising to return as soon as possible. In two or three hours, he climbed the stairs again and knocked at the door. Hearing no answer, he opened it and went in. There upon his crude little bed lay the boy with a smile of peace on his face. The Lord had heard the dying prayer of the little child and taken him out of his suffering and sorrow. Jesus said, "*Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God*" (Mark 10.14).

Adapted from the Gospel Echo 1892

"AND A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM" (Isaiah 11.6)

It is a great grief and sorrow to faithful ministers when men and women come regularly to the public worship of God, year after year, and go away unchanged and unimpressed by the preaching or the services. One such person was a special trial

to a clergyman at Brixton. The means “in season” failing, very earnestly he tried to speak to him “out of season.” However, all his efforts to show the man his personal need of salvation were always received with great pride and unbelief. In fact, sometimes he was quite disagreeable to the minister, who tried to be a true friend. Every attempt at spiritual conversation was promptly rejected.

But there came a time when sorrow and sympathy drew them together. The unbeliever had a little son who became very ill, and then suddenly became much worse. Hearing of the child’s serious condition, the minister hastened to the house and found it darkened with blinds and shutters – the outward signs that someone in the home had died. He knocked at the door, and it was opened by the grief-stricken father. Very quietly they greeted each other; and then the father said, “Would you like to see my little child?”

“Very much indeed,” answered the minister.

Together they went into the solemn room, and gently the father drew back the sheet, uncovering the little, peaceful, happy face.

“Would you like me to tell you what my little boy said to me the other day?”

“Very much,” was the reply.

“A week ago, when I came home from the city, I found him very poorly, lying in his little cot. I lifted him out and placed him on my knee. He said to me, ‘Daddy, it is my birthday next week.’ I said, ‘Yes.’ Then he said, ‘Daddy, I shall not want a cake for my birthday.’ (I always bring each of my little ones a cake from the city on their birthdays.) I said, ‘Why not?’ ‘Because I am going to live with Jesus. Won’t you come too, Daddy?’”

Tears were rolling down the father’s face. The minister said, “Let us have a word of prayer together.”

They knelt down by the side of the small coffin, and he prayed, as only a true servant of God can pray for a bereaved parent who knew not the personal consolation of the gospel.

After the child's funeral, things went on apparently much the same in the father's life; for about two years there seemed no alteration. Then a mighty change took place in him outwardly, a change so marked and genuine that his wife and children bore witness to his having become a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then he was taken ill, an illness which proved his last. On his death-bed, the clergyman stood beside him and spoke to him of the little boy who had been taken from them at such an early age. He reminded him of what the child had said before he died, "Won't you come too, Daddy?"

The minister said, "That question is answered now."

With a bright smile, the dying man replied, "Yes, I shall go to him; we shall be with our Saviour in heaven." And then he spoke of such spiritual things that positively assured his minister friend of the reality of his faith in Christ.

The clergyman's heart rejoiced in hope as he took final leave of this man for whom he had prayed so earnestly; the man to whom he had spoken so faithfully and by whom he had been repulsed so often. Yet God, in His sovereignty, had at length awakened him and revealed unto him his lost condition and the way of salvation through His blood.

Adapted from The Little Gleaner 1915

LITTLE THINGS

God often makes important events depend upon very small incidents, perhaps in order to show us that all things are in His hand. He holds in His grasp not only the earth and the sun, the great nations and the king's heart, but also all the tiny things that affect such ordinary people as you and me. Not a sparrow falls without our Father; and even the hairs on His children's heads are numbered.

I expect you will agree with me that by far the most important happening in the life of a child of God, is the time when the dead soul is quickened and born again by the power of the Holy Spirit. Many Christians cannot tell exactly when

this occurred; they have only gradually become aware of it, as a baby comes to know only by slow degrees of growth that he is indeed himself, a living person. This is often the way with those who have been brought up from their earliest days by believing parents, who have taught them line upon line, precept upon precept, from the holy Scriptures. In such cases, it may be that the new birth is brought about by the Spirit in the heart of a child while he is still too young to understand what has taken place. In others, especially those converted after years of conscious rebellion against God, the moment of the new birth marks a sudden change from black darkness to bright sunshine. These Christians are often able to trace all the providences of God which led to their release from the power of Satan, and often their stories are full of little things or events which are all ordered by the hand of God.

One day (about two hundred years ago) all was bustle and excitement in the house of Admiral Vaughan. An important social function was to be held that evening. Many important people were expected to attend; all the ladies were to appear in their beautiful gowns, and fashion and entertainment were uppermost in their thoughts. In her bedroom, the Admiral's daughter, a girl of nineteen, was dressing for the ball, her thoughts full of the pleasures before her. It was quite an event in her life, and she had been eagerly looking forward to the evening's entertainment. Imagine her before the mirror in the candlelight, her long hair beautifully arranged, as she puts the finishing touches to her gown. On her dressing table is a pincushion; she takes a pin to try to put things right. Both hands are needed to adjust her gown, so she puts the pin between her lips for a moment. Perhaps someone spoke to her, or something took her attention away; in a moment, the pin was gone – she had actually swallowed it! Oh, what a change in her feelings now! The poor girl was terrified. Supposing she were to die! She knew that death comes at last to all, but she was only nineteen, full of life and energy. Never once had she given a serious thought to the future. In that

moment when she knew she had swallowed the pin, the truth flashed upon her. She saw herself as she really was – a sinner entirely unprepared to meet a holy God. That tiny pin was the means, under the power of the Holy Ghost, of convicting this girl of her sin and leading her in her anxiety to seek for a Saviour.

Details of what followed are not given by Mr. Venn (a well-known minister), who is the authority for this story; but he says: "It was not long before she had an opportunity of hearing the gospel, which came upon her mind as the showers that water the earth. The love of Christ crucified constrained her; and in the years that followed, she became a shining light, laying herself out, in every way in her power, for the benefit and salvation of her fellow-sinners." Then Mr. Venn quotes from a beautiful letter, full of evidences of the change that had come upon her, and speaking of "Jesus, the sweetest name that ever was heard!" And he goes on to say, "What a marvellous transformation of character was effected by the swallowing of a pin, which became to her a loud call to prepare to die! But for this, dress, visits, cards, or pleasures, as they are called, would have engrossed her mortal mind."

The pin which caused such alarm, and led to such an unlooked-for change, apparently did no harm at all, for we hear no more of it. We do not even know whether the Admiral's daughter went to the party at all. But she never forgot the pin!

Adapted from Andrew's Prayer by Dr. Lydia Houghton

THE POWER OF A SHORT SERMON

A British soldier had caused his superiors infinite trouble and annoyance by his wild behaviour and attempts at desertion. He had been a brave man in battle, but he would not learn that simple first duty of obedience. His family, his comrades, his chaplain, and his officers had all tried to make him understand the sin of his wild life and bold contempt of

duty. They warned him of the consequences of his reckless ways, but it seemed to make no impression upon him. At last, having disobeyed orders again, he was placed in solitary confinement in a cell, whose only lighting came through a small grating in the door.

Two weeks were spent in this small, dreary prison. The silence and the darkness became unbearable to the restless nature of the young prisoner. Sinking into despondency, he passed the hours in bitter profanity against God.

The chaplain, after many weary failures, gave up the case as hopeless. However, another aged clergyman asked permission to visit the soldier. He was a wise man, skilled in working with those in the depths of human depravity, and one glance was sufficient to understand the nature of the man he was attempting to speak with. Kneeling in the narrow place of the prison cell, he prayed for the soldier, who ceased not to revile. With his own loud voice, he drowned out the feeble tones of the visiting clergyman. The prayer ended without any preaching. The minister departed, only turning at the doorway to give the soldier one last searching look.

The dim light shone upon the white hair of the aged minister and made it look like a halo about the saintly face, so oddly in contrast with the indignant, flashing eyes of the soldier. The striking picture caused the prisoner to cease from his abusive language for a moment, and the man of God seized the brief silence. Raising his frail forefinger menacingly, he cried in a stern voice, "Young man, *'the wages of sin is death'*" (Romans 6.23).

The door clanged heavily. The gloom and the solitude had returned. Only God knows what passed in that cell, but there was no more blasphemy. Through the darkness, the words of fire sounded: "*The wages of sin is death.*" Continually, through the awful quiet, echoed the words; now fierce, now tender; nothing added to them, and nothing taken from them. Over and over, into the sin-dulled brain and hardened heart, they forced their piercing way. There was no evading them, and it was impossible to forget them. They stabbed like sword-

thrusts and tortured his soul. At last, in his unbearable agony, the poor wretch knelt upon the floor and cried to the Lord for mercy.

As he knelt at the feet of that Helper who is always present, if invisible, a voice ineffably tender and comforting took up the word where the minister had dropped it: *“but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

That conversion was real and lasting. The soldier was set free and lived an honourable life. He became an active soldier of the cross, serving the Lord Jesus Christ who had redeemed him from his sins.

Adapted from The Little Gleaner 1889

PLEASED AND BLESSED?

Some years ago, a lady lay dying of cancer. In her childhood she had been brought up to attend a Strict Baptist chapel, but had long forsaken the paths of her youth. A friend went to see her, with whom she was reminiscing about earlier days, and to whom she said, “We used to sing the hymn beginning,

How pleased and blessed was I,
To hear the people cry,
Come, let us seek our God today.”

Then she added in an indignant tone, “But we *weren’t* pleased, and we *weren’t* blessed.” Her friend was very distressed – it was only too plain that she resented everything to do with godliness; the world was her home. He sat silent, unable to say a word, yet deeply feeling the words of another hymn,

Ah! but for free and sovereign grace,
I *too* had lived, estranged from God.

Soon after the lady died, “having no hope, and without God in the world.” When we come to die, will we be able to say from our hearts, “How pleased and blessed was I”? Or will our testimony be as the lady expressed it?

Contributed

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES**THE BOOK OF DANIEL Chapter 7****“The Ancient of Days”**

“But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever” (Daniel 7.18).

The first six chapters of Daniel are historical. They set forth various major events in the life of Daniel, who lived during the time of the Babylonian captivity. Daniel was blessed with much wisdom and was promoted to positions of authority by each of the kings under which he was called to serve. Despite many attempts to destroy him, Daniel remained faithful unto the Lord his God.

Chapters seven to twelve are very different and can be very difficult to understand. They set forth various dreams and visions that Daniel had, which were prophetic of events that were yet to take place. We will not attempt to go into the great mysteries of these prophecies, but we will try to keep to the fundamental truths that are set forth.

Chapter seven goes back to the time when Belshazzar was king. He was the king who witnessed the writing on the wall during that impious feast. It was during Belshazzar’s first year as king that Daniel had a most vivid dream. This dream was so realistic that he could write it down.

In the dream, Daniel saw four beasts arising, one after the other, from the great sea, which had been blown upon by the four winds. The first beast was like a lion, the second like a bear, the third like a leopard, and the fourth was almost indescribable. It is generally believed that these four beasts set forth four great kingdoms upon the earth; the first kingdom being Babylon, the second being the Medes and Persians, the third being the Greek Empire, and finally, the fourth being the Roman Empire. *“These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth”* (verse 17). The fourth beast, which was exceedingly fierce, devouring all before it, had ten horns. As Daniel considered these horns, he noticed another little horn: *“I considered the horns, and,*

behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things” (verse 8).

From the Roman Empire came the Roman Catholic Church, which can be said to be a kingdom diverse from all other kingdoms. In one way or another, the Roman Catholic Church has constantly opposed and attacked the true church of God down through the ages. We think of the cruelty of the Spanish Inquisition, the sufferings of the Waldensians, the Huguenots, William Tyndale, and Martin Luther, to name but a few.

But Daniel also saw this in his dream: *“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (verses 13 & 14).* All four of those earthly kingdoms would come to an end and be destroyed, but this kingdom would endure for ever.

The Lord graciously made known to Daniel the interpretation of this dream; yet, it greatly troubled him as he considered the sufferings the Lord’s people would experience here upon this earth.

Perhaps one of the most important lessons to be learned from this chapter is that although various kingdoms will arise in the earth, and those kingdoms will oppose and trouble the Lord’s people, yet those kingdoms will come to an end and be destroyed; but there is an everlasting kingdom that the saints of the Lord will come to possess, a kingdom that will never come to an end or be destroyed. *“I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom” (verses 21 & 22).* May it be our great concern to know that we are found numbered amongst the

people of God. May our desire be to worship God in spirit and in truth.

The Apostle Paul writing to Timothy states, "*Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*" (2 Timothy 3.12). Throughout Daniel's life, he was enabled to stand firm against the powers of darkness and the forces of evil. We are living in a very different day to that of Daniel, but there are still those who seek to persecute the people of God. In our day, Satan is being permitted to fight with terrible power against those who love the Lord Jesus, and especially against the authority of the Word of God, the Holy Bible. We need much grace not to compromise with public opinion or to capitulate to the "*oppositions of science falsely so called*" (1 Timothy 6.20).

The Lord Jesus warns us of being deceived: "*And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet*" (Matthew 24.4-6). All false religions will deceive and lead souls away from the truth. May the Lord, in His great mercy, be pleased to teach us the truth so that we, like Daniel, may be enabled to cleave to the Word of God and not be deceived.

A. T. Pickett

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about LITTLE THINGS. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to 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. Which place, often used as a chapel name, means "little"? (Genesis 19.20-22)

2. What "profiteth little", and what is "profitable for all things"? (1 Timothy 4.8)
3. Which place "little among the thousands of Judah" was very important, and why? (Micah 5.2)
4. What is "a vapour, which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away"? (James 4.14)
5. To whom did Jesus say "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt"? (Matthew 14.31)
6. Who said, "There ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand"? (1 Kings 18)
7. The Apostle John often referred to those he wrote to as "little children." What was the last thing he said in his first Epistle?
8. Jesus often spoke of "little children" as well. Why is it so important that we all "become as little children"? (Matthew 18)
9. Two people in conversing spoke of "a little water," "a little oil" and "a little cake." Who were they? (1 Kings 17)
10. Who spoke a parable about a poor man who had "nothing, save one little ewe lamb"?

ANSWERS TO JUNE QUESTIONS

1. David.
2. "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants."
3. "God be merciful to me a sinner."
4. "Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."
5. "Because they repented not." Bethsaida, Chorazin and Capernaum.
6. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13.3,5)
7. Judas Iscariot. (Matthew 27.3-5)
8. Saul. (1 Samuel 15.30).
9. The Corinthians "sorrowed to repentance" for they "were made sorry after a godly manner." (2 Corinthians 7.9)
10. "One sinner that repenteth." Luke 15. 7,10

A GRACIOUS SAVIOUR

Is there a little sinner here,
Who mourns because of sin;
And sees with grief and shame and fear,
How wicked he has been?

Is there a little aching heart,
Which does its vileness feel,
And groans beneath that deadly smart
Which none but Christ can heal?

Is there a little soul that pants
To taste redeeming grace,
And longs to pour out all its wants
Before the Saviour's face?

Fear not, poor little trembling thing,
With cruel scorn to meet;
To Christ your sins and sorrows bring,
And lay them at His feet.

He is a kind and gracious Lord,
Love fills His gentle breast;
"Come unto Me," is His own word,
"And I will give your rest."

Think how He answered praying Paul,
And sinking Peter too;
And so, if you for mercy call,
He'll hear and answer you.

Young People's Hymnal 111

The Friendly Companion



A Statue at Jerusalem of King David playing a Harp

“Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil” Ecclesiastes 8.11.

August 2019

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

One of the most overlooked or underestimated characters in the Bible might well be Joshua, the servant of Moses and later the leader of Israel. From a very young age, he was blessed with strong faith. His last public act was to set up a great stone as witness that the children of Israel had vowed that they would serve the Lord and obey His voice.

The first time we read of Joshua is in Exodus 17, where Moses commanded him to lead Israel into battle against Amalek. Joshua did as Moses told him, and he obtained the victory as Moses lifted up the rod of God in his hands. Afterwards, Moses was told by God to write of this victory in a book and to rehearse it before Joshua to encourage him.

We next read that Joshua was the minister or servant of Moses (Exodus 24.13). Joshua went with him up into the mount of God when Moses received the commandments and the instructions for the tabernacle, the furniture, and the offerings. This also would prepare Joshua for the office that God appointed for him.

Perhaps you remember that Joshua was appointed with eleven others to spy out the land of Canaan. He was the representative of the tribe of Ephraim. When the spies returned to give their report, Joshua and Caleb were the only ones who gave a good report. Thus, they were the only ones of their generation finally to enter the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

We are also told that Joshua, along with Eleazar (who would become the next high priest), would divide the land of promise between the tribes of Israel. This, too, was spoken by the Lord (see Numbers 34.16,17).

Then we are told that Moses was commanded by God to encourage Joshua to: *"Be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I sware unto them: and I will be with thee"* (Deuteronomy

31.23). We are also told that Joshua was “*full of the spirit of wisdom*” (Deuteronomy 34.9).

After the death of Moses, the Lord spoke directly to Joshua, saying that he and Israel must go over Jordan and take possession of the land. What a wonderful promise God gave to him: “*There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so will I be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee*” (Joshua 1.5). Joshua was shown the way for Israel and himself to prosper and succeed. It was by meditating on the Word of God.

As the Lord divided the Red Sea for Moses and Israel to escape from Egypt, so He divided the River Jordan for Joshua and Israel to enter the land of Canaan. After they entered the land, the Lord favoured Joshua with a revelation of Himself as Captain of the armies of Israel, with His sword drawn. This was to show that it was God Himself who appeared unto him, Joshua was told to take his shoes off, for the place whereon he stood was holy. Joshua had heard Moses tell of the wonderful appearing of God at the burning bush and how he took his shoes off. Now God was favouring him with a similar experience. Joshua would especially recall the words of Moses about that appearing when he blessed the tribe of Joseph, from which Joshua came: “*for the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush*” (Deuteronomy 33.16). When God appears to His people, it is His “*good will*” to them.

The victory over Jericho was a remarkable feat of faith. In obedience to the command of God, the Israelites walked around the city once for seven days and then seven times on the seventh day. When the priests blew the trumpets and the people shouted, the great walls of Jericho fell down flat. What a victory of faith! It was a token to Joshua and the Israelites of what was yet to come through the obedience of faith.

On another occasion, when five cities of Canaan with their kings joined together against Israel, God fought for Israel by casting great hail stones from heaven against the fleeing kings and their armies. Lest any should escape because of the night

coming on, Joshua spoke unto the Lord in the sight of Israel: *"Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. ... So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and basted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, THAT THE LORD HEARKENED UNTO THE VOICE OF A MAN"* (Joshua 10.12-14). What a man of faith Joshua was! What a miracle God performed for him! Naturally speaking, it would mean that the earth stopped rotating for a day.

The influence of Joshua upon Israel was profound; perhaps more than any other of all their leaders. We are told that: *"Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that He had done for Israel"* (Joshua 24.31).

Dear young friends, may the Lord grant that in your generation those of such influence and example may be raised up for you to follow.

With loving wishes from the Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

The harp is the first musical instrument that we read of in the Bible. One of the descendants of Cain was the first to make such an instrument. We read that Jubal was *"the father of all such as handle the harp and organ"* (Genesis 4.21). So, we see that from the beginning men were given understanding and skills for the invention of many useful things. We also see that music has always been an important part of man's life.

Years later, we are told of David, who made many instruments of music. The harp that David made had ten strings, while harps today usually have thirty-two strings. The front cover picture is of a statue in Jerusalem of David playing a harp. When making his son Solomon king of Israel, David

reminded him of those he had appointed to perform various parts of the worship of God. *"Moreover four thousand were porters; and four thousand praised the LORD with the instruments which I made, said David, to praise therewith"* (1 Chronicles 23.5). *"And the Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets"* (2 Chronicles 29.26). Many years later, the prophet Amos wrote of those who *"invent to themselves instruments of musick, like David"* (Amos 6.5).

When King Saul was troubled with an evil spirit, his servants suggested that they search the kingdom for a man who was skilful in playing on the harp, by which the king would be calmed. Another servant said that he had seen David the son of Jesse playing very skilfully. David was sent for and stood before Saul. The king was so pleased with him that he also made David his armourbearer. *"And it came to pass, when the evil spirit ... was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him"* (1 Samuel 16.23).

When the Israelites were brought to Babylon, the godly among them were so overcome with sorrow that they hung their harps upon the willow trees. There are times when the Lord's people are so distressed that they cannot *"make a joyful noise unto the Lord"* (Psalm 100.1). When the Lord's judgments are in the earth, then *"the joy of the harp ceaseth"* (Isaiah 24.8).

When John was given his revelation, he was shown great and awful judgments that would be poured out upon the earth. He was also shown what the church of God received through the Lord Jesus: *"victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, ... having the harps of God"* (Revelation 15.2).

ONE POOR STONE

Two masons were working together on the rear wall of a church, when one stopped the other just as he was putting a stone into its place.

"Don't put in that stone," he said. "It is flaky and will soon fall to pieces."

"I know it isn't a very good stone, but it is so handy and just fits in this place. Nobody will see it up here, and it is so much trouble to get another."

"Please do not use it. Take time to send for another. That stone will not stand the weather, and when it falls, the whole building will be damaged."

"I guess not. It will cause no real harm, so here goes." Then he lifted the stone into place, poor, loose-grained, and flaky as it was. He covered the stone with mortar and went on with his work. The stone could not be seen, and no one knew that it was of poor quality except the two masons. The church wall was finished, and their work was accepted.

But time and weather worked upon the stone, and it began to flake and crumble. Every rainstorm and every hot, sultry day caused it to decay a little more, and at last it crumbled away. But that was not all, nor the worst. The loss of the stone weakened the entire wall. A cavity was made, and a beam that should have been supported by the stone began to sag. Then a crack appeared in the roof, and the rain soon made sad havoc with the ceiling and fresco. A new roof and ceiling and expensive repairs were needed as the result of one poor stone being put in the place of a good one.

Each one of us, young or old, is building a structure for himself. The structure is our character, and every act of our lives is a stone in the building. Don't work with poor stones! Although it may not be noticed at first, every mean act, wrong deed, or impure word will have an effect upon your life or that of others. Strive to let your actions and words be pure and right, and your character will stand the test of time.

Adapted from The Little Gleaner 1888

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**ELIJAH TAKEN UP TO HEAVEN**

Elijah had been a faithful prophet of the Lord, and now his work was finished. Elisha had been chosen as the next prophet. Elisha knew the Lord would soon take Elijah away, and he did not want to leave him.

They went from place to place, until they came to the River Jordan. Elijah smote the waters with his mantle or cloak, and they divided; so they went over Jordan on dry ground. Elijah asked Elisha what he could do for him before he was taken away. Elisha said, "*Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.*" He had asked for a hard thing, for Elijah had been a great prophet.

As they walked and talked together, a chariot and horses of fire appeared, and "*Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.*" The mantle of Elijah fell from him, and Elisha took it up.

Elisha went back and stood by the River Jordan. He smote the waters with the mantle, just as Elijah had done. The waters parted, and Elisha went over. It was a sign that the spirit of the Lord was upon him.

QUESTIONS:

1. Who had been chosen as the next prophet?
2. They went over Jordan on what? (2 words)
3. What fell from Elijah that Elisha took up?

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. Ask help of the Lord.
2. Singers.
3. Valley of Berachah.

*“He took up
also
the mantle
of Elijah
that fell
from him.”
2 Kings 2.13*

BIBLE LESSONS**PAUL PREACHES JESUS TO THE JEWS AT ROME**

Paul must have felt very thankful for the Lord's goodness to him in giving him such favour before the captain of the guard. While the other prisoners from Caesarea were put in the common prison with very harsh conditions, Paul was allowed to stay in his own hired house.

Even so, he still had the evidences of being a prisoner. He always had a soldier watching over him, and he was also bound with a heavy chain. Once he had prayed to have the thorn in his flesh removed, and he was told that the grace of Christ would strengthen him. What grace he needed now to bear the weight of his chain. The Apostle Paul could see the wisdom of God in giving him that thorn in his flesh to prepare him for the chain of a prisoner.

Paul realised the importance of time and how quickly it passes. Three days after his arrival in Rome, Paul called the chief of the Jews to him. There were many Jews living in Rome at that time. Paul was afraid that the Jews in Rome had been influenced by a false report sent by the Jews from Jerusalem. He told them that he had not committed any wrong against the customs of their fathers. Yet, the leaders in Jerusalem had delivered him as a prisoner into the hands of the Romans.

Paul told them that he had been examined by Lysias, then Felix and Festus, the Roman governors, and finally by King Agrippa. They had all agreed that he had done nothing worthy of death. However, when the Jews spoke against letting him go free, he had been constrained to appeal unto Caesar.

Further, Paul added that it was not to accuse his nation that he had done this, and he would have the Jews in Rome know that it was *"for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain."* What a beautiful name for the Lord Jesus: *"the hope of Israel."* Paul knew that when they saw the chain and the soldier to whom he was bound, they would naturally think that he was guilty of some terrible crime. The things that are seen with the

eyes often have a greater force than the truth which is heard with the ears.

Paul must have been quite surprised to learn that the Jews in Rome had not received any letters from Jerusalem, nor had any of the Jews who came from Israel spoken any evil against him. However, they had heard many evil reports about those who believed in Jesus. They answered Paul: *"We desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against."*

They appointed a day to meet with Paul, and many filled the house where Paul lived. Although they had heard reports about the new sect called Christians, yet they knew very little about their teachings. Paul began to tell them of the kingdom of God. From the Scriptures which they knew and loved (the law of Moses and the prophets), he expounded the things concerning Jesus. From morning to night, they listened as Paul spoke of how Jesus was *"the end of the law"* and of all those prophecies. Jesus was the real Passover Lamb. It was His blood that was shed to cleanse from sin. It was His death and resurrection that brought victory over death and the grave.

For some, the hours must have passed very quickly. The Bible tells us: *"Some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not."* Those who did not believe began to argue with those who did, so that Paul spoke a last word of warning by quoting the prophet Isaiah: *"For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I [God] should heal them."*

You can read about this in Acts chapter 28 verses 17 to 31.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why was Paul bound with this chain? (5 words)
2. What did the Jews desire to hear of Paul? (3 words)
3. What did they say about the sect of believers? (9 words)
4. How long did Paul speak to them of Jesus? (4 words)

5. What did Isaiah say of the heart of this people? (3 words); the ears? (4 words); the eyes? (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. Publius.
2. He laid his hands on him and healed him.
3. Seven days.
4. He thanked God and took courage.
5. To dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.

TWICE MINE

Andrew loved watching sailboats glide across the water. He wondered if he could make a toy sailboat of his own to play with. He found a piece of wood that was just the right size and carved it into the shape of a boat. He sanded the wood until it was nice and smooth. Andrew put a tiny letter 'A' under the boat to show that it belonged to him. He painted his sailboat red and blue. Then he fitted it with a mast and small white sails. How Andrew loved the pretty little boat he had made!

A few days later, Andrew took his sailboat to a little stream flowing through the meadow. What fun he had watching it float in the water! All summer long, he played with his boat at every opportunity. He would tie his sailboat to a small tree at the edge of the water, just like fishermen tie their boats. Late one day, Andrew was suddenly called away and left his boat behind, intending to go back for it later.

That night there was a great storm. A strong wind tossed the little boat around. At last the string broke, and the boat was washed away. Andrew thought of the sailboat he had left by the stream, but he was unable to go after it in the storm and darkness of night. First thing in the morning, he ran to the place where he had left it tied to the tree. However, all he

could find was a broken piece of string. Andrew searched everywhere for his boat; along the banks, behind rocks, and among the reeds, but he could not find it. How sad he felt! His sailboat was lost.

Many months went by. Andrew went into a pawnshop one day to look at the toys, as he had often done before. "I wish I could find another boat," he thought. Suddenly he saw a little red and blue sailboat up on a shelf in a corner of the store. Could it be the one he had made and loved so much? The shopkeeper lifted it down for him to see. With trembling hands, Andrew turned the boat over; there was the tiny letter 'A' that he had carved. "That is my boat!" he shouted. However, now the sailboat belonged to the shopkeeper. Someone had found it and sold it to the pawnshop. Andrew would have to buy it back.

Andrew worked hard to earn the money. Finally, he was able to return and purchase his own little sailboat. How happy he was as he carried it out of the shop! "It is twice mine," he said. "First I made the sailboat, and then I bought it."

That is just what the Lord Jesus has done for His people. First, He made them in the beginning: "*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus*" (Ephesians 2.10). Then, when they were lost through sin, He paid the price to redeem them: "*the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood*" (Acts 20.28).

Ed. note: Over the past sixty years, Mr. J.K. Stehouwer has told this story many times to his Sunday School children. He does not remember where he first read or heard it.

THE BROKEN SAW

Many years ago, children often had to go out to work at a very young age. That was necessary when their families were poor and did not have enough money for food and clothing. Sometimes a father or mother died, and the children had to help provide for the daily needs of the family.

A boy named Sam Fisher went to work for a man named Mr. Jones. Sam would live at the home of Mr. Jones while working for him. Mr. Jones was considered a hard person to please, and most boys did not stay very long. They either ran away or decided to quit after a short time. The work was not really very hard. They were expected to open the shop, sweep it out, chop wood, go on errands, and give other help as needed.

"Sam is a good boy," said his mother.

"I should like to see a boy that had a spark of goodness in him," growled the new employer.

It is not pleasant to begin working for a man who has no confidence in you. No matter how hard you try, you are not likely to receive credit for it. However, Sam was determined to try. The wages were good, and his mother wanted him to work there. Sam had only been working for three days when the saw broke while he was cutting a cross-grained stick of wood. He was frightened. He knew that he had been careful, and he knew that he was pretty good at sawing wood for a boy of his age; but the saw had broken in his hands.

"Mr. Jones will punish you for it," said another boy who was in the wood-house with him.

"Why, of course, I didn't mean to break it, and accidents can happen to anyone," said Sam, looking very sadly at the broken saw.

"Mr. Jones never makes exceptions," said the other boy. "I never saw anyone like him. Bill might have stayed working here, but he happened to fall into the nest of a hen and broke her eggs. He did not dare to tell Mr. Jones about it. However, Mr. Jones kept suspecting him, and he blamed Bill for everything that went wrong, whether it was his fault or not. Finally, Bill decided to leave."

"Did he tell Mr. Jones about the eggs?" asked Sam.

"No," said the other boy. "He was afraid to; Mr. Jones has such a bad temper."

"I think he should have owned up to it," said Sam.

"I think you will find it easier to preach than to practise," said the boy. "I would run away before I'd tell him." He soon turned on his heels and left poor Sam alone with the broken saw.

It was after supper, and Sam was not likely to see his employer any more that night. The shop was closed, and Mr. Jones had gone to a town meeting. The next morning, Mr. Jones would be up early, go into the wood-house, and see what had happened, for Sam would never hide the saw.

The poor boy did not feel very comfortable or happy. He shut up the wood-house, walked out into the garden, and then went to his little room under the eaves. He wished he could tell Mrs. Jones, but she wasn't very sociable, and he didn't feel able to confide in her.

Sam went down on his knees, praying, "Oh God, please help me to do the right thing."

When Mr. Jones finally came home, the boy heard him. He got up, crept downstairs, and met Mr. Jones in the kitchen.

"Sir," said Sam, "I broke your saw, and I thought I'd come to tell you before you saw it in the morning."

"Why did you get up to tell me?" asked Mr. Jones; "I should think morning would be time enough to tell me of your carelessness."

"Because," said Sam, "I was afraid if I put it off, I might be tempted to lie about it. I'm very sorry I broke it, but I tried to be careful."

Mr. Jones looked the boy over from head to foot; then stretching out his hand, he said, "There Sam, give me your hand. I'll trust you, Sam. That's right. Now go to bed, my boy, and never fear. I am glad the saw broke; it shows the character that is in you."

Mr. Jones was won over. From that time on, Sam Fisher found him to be a kind master and a faithful friend. If the other boys had treated him honestly and above-board, he would have been a good man to work for. It was their conduct that made Mr. Jones suspicious and disagreeable.

The Bible says: *“Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right”* (Proverbs 20.11). Instead of hiding the broken saw, Sam told his employer what had happened right away, even though he was afraid Mr. Jones would be angry. How much greater is the mercy of God to poor sinners who confess their sins! *“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy”* (Proverbs 28.13).

Adapted from The Little Gleaner 1877

“LOVE NOT THE WORLD”

A pastor's wife, who had made the apostle's word, *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world”* (1 John 2.15), the rule of her life and actions, told us the following dream which she had in her youth, and which had made an impression upon her that had never been forgotten.

“In my dream,” she said, “I was in my parents' house and had been busy preparing the table for our simple dinner, when news was brought that the Lord Jesus and His disciples intended to pay a visit. I had hardly recovered from the intense, joyful astonishment which was stirred by hearing of such high and unexpected happiness, when the dear, holy guests arrived at the door and entered. At my shy request, they took their places round the table in a way full of grace and friendliness. An indescribable joy seized me at being so near these sacred friends, and my looks hung, above all, on Him whom I recognised as my Saviour, and worshipped with wondering awe. My joyful excitement was quieted into deep rest and peace through the words from His holy lips, as I listened with wonder; and I felt that the bliss of this hour was far beyond any which I had ever yet experienced. I was allowed to serve the Lord and His disciples and to hear every word from Him, which sounded to me like heavenly music. Thus passed hour after hour, and yet it seemed to me as

though the blessed time together had only just begun, and should not end for a long time.

“Suddenly there was a sharp, short knock at the door; then the door was half opened, and a little man looked in. He had a smiling, friendly air, and he bore a heavy pack upon his shoulders. He offered to show me his goods, but I at once refused the offer; for it was clear to me that I could not afford to lose one moment of enjoyment of the presence of our very special guests. But the pedlar was forceful, and he was not to be put off so quickly; unnoticed, he had pressed himself quite through the door and loosed his pack from his shoulders. ‘You shall at least see my lovely handkerchiefs, my silk ribbons, and my fine laces,’ he said, ‘even if you do not desire to buy anything.’ I was obliged to give in to him. I did not like to be rude to a stranger, but I thought I would only take a hasty look at his wares, and then again give my whole attention to the Lord Jesus, who was watching me all the time with a serious and searching look.

“But this did not satisfy the eager pedlar. With a ready tongue, he praised all his beautiful goods; more and more parcels were opened and displayed, and my eyes allowed themselves to be quite taken up by the sight of so many pretty things. ‘But this is now enough; I will just buy this handkerchief, and then pack up your goods and go,’ at last I cried in anguish; for I saw that the Lord had risen and was preparing to turn away with His disciples. ‘I will go if you wish,’ the pedlar said, flatteringly; ‘but there is still something which you have not seen, more beautiful than anything I have shown you yet; a real Chinese silk, which a queen would not be ashamed to wear, and yet you shall have it at the cheapest price; the colours are unfading and never pale; shall I show it to you?’ I hesitated one second, and instantly the pedlar had it out; yes, it was lovely and just what I had often longed for, but I dared not delay any longer. The chatter of the man had kept me all too long, and I turned away from him to hasten back to my guests.

"But how can I describe my dismay? The seats were all empty! The Lord had left the room with His disciples and was just closing the door. He cast on me a look of deep sorrow as He disappeared. With a cry of agony, I roused myself, and God be praised, it was only a dream! But deep in my heart was engraved the solemn meaning of the dream. Ever since, whenever there has come into my life the temptation to set my affection on the passing things of this world and to forget my Lord, I recall this dream and cling to Him. Let not your souls be fettered with the false brilliancy of this passing, unworthy life. It may cause the felt presence of the Lord to be withdrawn, leaving an empty place in your soul."

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2.16,17). The Lord Jesus said, *"Abide in Me, ... He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing"* (John 15.4,5).

Adapted from The Gospel Standard 1926

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

THE BOOK OF DANIEL Chapter 8

"But evil men ... shall wax worse and worse"

"In the third year of the reign of king Belsbazzar a vision appeared unto me, even unto me Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first" (Daniel 8.1).

Through another vision, God showed Daniel certain events that would come to pass in the future of the world. The vision left a deep impression upon him, and he wondered what it meant. Daniel knew that only God could interpret this vision, and he looked to the Lord God to make it known to him. *"And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a Man. And I heard a Man's voice*

between the banks of U-lai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision” (verses 15 and 16). This “Man” must have been the Lord God, for He alone can command the angels.

In the vision, Daniel saw a ram with two horns. This represented the kingdom of the Medes and Persians. Then there appeared a male goat that charged at the ram and broke both of his horns. That would represent Alexander the Great and the Greek empire. *“Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven”* (verse 8). After the death of Alexander the Great, the Greek empire continued, but it had four separate rulers in Macedonia, Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt. *“And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them”* (verses 8 and 9).

That little horn was a man called Antiochus Epiphanes. He came from Syria and overpowered the other three rulers. He was especially cruel toward the children of Israel. The famous Jewish historian, Josephus, wrote of those times, “And there will arise from their number a certain king who would make war on the Jewish nation and their laws, deprive them of the form of government based on these laws, spoil the temple and prevent the sacrifices from being offered for three years. And these misfortunes our nation did in fact come to experience under Antiochus Epiphanes, just as Daniel many years before saw and wrote that they would happen.”

“And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people”

(verses 23 and 24). That must have been an extremely distressing time for the children of Israel. They were under terrible persecution, and the temple in Jerusalem was desecrated to such an extent that it was impossible for the priests to offer up sacrifices to God. Antiochus Epiphanes showed bitter hatred against the Jews, and he went to an extreme degree in defying God. *"He shall also stand up against the Prince of princes"* (verse 25).

How long would God allow that wicked man to continue in his evil ways, causing so much suffering to the children of Israel? Daniel writes, *"And He said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed"* (verse 14). That is six years and four months; but his end would come. He would suddenly be removed from everything he had on this earth, to stand in the presence of the almighty God whom he had so blatantly defied. For all of his power, strength, might and aggression, he was still only "a little horn," and God quickly destroyed him.

There has always been and there always will be aggressive people who rise up against the people of God. They seem to go out of their way in opposing and causing misery to all who fear the Lord. It may be that some of our readers are suffering in their daily lives because of such aggressors. It seems hard when they cause so much pain and sorrow and appear to get away with it; when God does not come immediately to the assistance of those suffering souls who cry out unto Him: *"I will say unto God my rock, Why hast Thou forgotten me? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?"* (Psalm 42.9,10). It is extremely trying when we cry unto God for help or deliverance, but no answers come. May the Lord graciously enable us to continue praying, believing that our poor, weak cries are heard in heaven above and will be answered in due time. *"For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the*

needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him” (Psalm 12.5).

May we be helped to remember that although God is in heaven, He sees all the things that His people suffer. He will overrule those sufferings for their spiritual good, and He has a set time to deliver them. *“And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the band of the Egyptians” (Exodus 3.7,8).*

Daniel was greatly distressed at the thought of the Lord’s people suffering so much affliction and persecution at the hand of their enemies. *“And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king’s business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it” (verse 27).* In the book of Daniel, one thing that stands out is the spirit of prayer that Daniel was given. He was given grace to pray even when he was threatened with death if he did so. Daniel knew that his only refuge was in his God. What a precious example that should be to us; God has provided a never-failing throne of grace to which His people may continually resort! Daniel proved God’s sustaining help and presence in that heathen land, and he proved God’s faithfulness. *“He faileth not” (Zephaniah 3.5).*

Although Daniel was confounded by the vision, we may feel sure that he was led to cast this great trouble upon the Lord, asking Him to give grace and strength unto His people when the time of persecution came. When He revealed these visions to Daniel, God knew that it would cause distress and sorrow. Yet God never brings His people into trouble without bestowing sustaining grace, strength and spiritual profit. He has perfect wisdom and understanding to know what is best for His people and ultimately for the glory of God. *“The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him” (Nahum 1.7).*

May we each be given a burden to pray for those who suffer persecution in the present day. We do not know what may yet come upon us, and we may be troubled at times about the future. What a great comfort it is to know that the Lord Jesus in heaven above is praying for His suffering church on earth! He fully understands what it is to suffer at the hands of ungodly persecutors: *"Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered"* (Hebrews 5.7,8).

A.T. Pickett

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about PROPHECIES FULFILLED WITHIN A SHORT TIME. 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.

Perhaps the majority of the prophecies in the Old Testament were about events many years in the future. In the days just before Jerusalem was conquered by the Babylonians, the warnings of God's prophets went unheeded. People thought they were referring to a long time ahead and therefore there was no need to be concerned about them. God's word is sometimes fulfilled quickly, and when otherwise, its eventual fulfilment can come when least expected.

1. In Ezekiel 12.22, what was the proverb the Jews used to make it appear that the warnings of Ezekiel could be ignored?
2. Which proverb is mentioned in Ezekiel 18.2 and Jeremiah 31.29 which implied that God's judgments would fall on a following generation?
3. Elijah prophesied, "There shall not be dew nor rain these years

- but according to my word.” His prophecy was fulfilled immediately. For how long was there no rain? (James 5.17)
4. In 1 Kings 22.17 Micaiah prophesied the death of Ahab. What happened to Ahab very shortly afterwards?
 5. Samuel spoke of three things that would happen to Saul on the same day as a sign that God had anointed him to be king. What was given to Saul in fulfilment of the second sign? (1 Samuel 10.4)
 6. In 1 Samuel 2.34, a prophet warned Eli that his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas would both be killed in one day. What happened soon afterwards? (1 Samuel 4)
 7. To whom was Jesus speaking when He said, “The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice”? (John 13)
 8. What solemn judgment overtook Korah, Dathan and Abiram immediately after Moses had warned it was coming? (Numbers 16)
 9. What judgment did the Apostle Paul pronounce against Elymas, which was fulfilled immediately? (Acts 13)
 10. Write out the words which Jesus spoke to His disciples concerning His death, of which it was said, “They understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them.” (Luke)

ANSWERS TO JULY QUESTIONS

1. Zoar.
 2. Bodily exercise. Godliness.
 3. Bethlehem was important because Jesus was born there.
 4. Our life.
 5. Peter.
 6. Elijah’s servant. (1 Kings 18.44)
 7. “Little children, keep yourselves from idols.” (1 John 5.21)
 8. Only those who become as “little children” can enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 18.3)
 9. Elijah and the widow of Zarephath. (1 Kings 17.10-13)
 10. Nathan. (2 Samuel 12.3)
-

GOD IS ABLE

Soul, be still, thy God is able
Well to make a weak saint stand;
When the surging billows fold you,
He'll uphold you with His hand.

God is able well to succour
In temptation's strongest gale
Those who're fastened to hope's anchor
Cast within the heavenly veil.

God is able to deliver
From and out of troubles sore,
Till His children meet where troubles
Will surround them never more.

Able too, to keep from falling
Those who are His loved, His own,
And with joy exceeding set them
Faultless down before His throne.

Unto God, the God of wisdom,
Glory be and majesty,
Honour, power and dominion
Now and through eternity.

*F.G.T.
Cheering Words 1959*

The Friendly Companion



“Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers”
(2 Corinthians 6.14)

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

By J. R. Rutt

Dear Children and Young People,

Daniel was an outstanding servant of the only true God. He was one of the children of Israel that were taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. He was probably only about fifteen or sixteen years of age when taken into captivity. He lived right through the seventy years of captivity until the reign of Cyrus the Persian. This would make Daniel nearly ninety years of age when the children of Israel returned to Jerusalem. Some have suggested that he was at the building of the second temple under Zerubbabel, governor of Judah. This is uncertain, of course, but we do read in Haggai 2 verse 3: *"Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?"* It does appear that there were some very aged Israelites among those who returned from Babylon who had seen the original temple at Jerusalem in their youth.

Nebuchadnezzar ordered his officers to choose out young men from the children of Israel who were intellectually bright and capable of learning; just like it is today when you take exams and are separated according to your ability. This is recorded in Daniel chapter 1.

The Jews followed a very strict diet and were not permitted to eat certain meats which were considered unclean, such as pork. It is now that we see the fear of the Lord in Daniel; even at such a young age, he was not afraid to be different. This is a lesson for us today, as the children's hymn says: "Dare to be a Daniel." We read in Daniel 1 verse 8: *"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself."* My dear young friends, may the Lord give you this same spirit, so that you purpose in your heart not to depart from the ways of the Lord.

Let us now consider how the Lord honoured him. *“So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king’s meat. Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse. As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiab, Misbael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm. And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus”* (Daniel 1.14-21). They were, amazingly, ten times better in their intellectual abilities, as the Word of God declares: *“For them that honour Me I will honour”* (1 Samuel 2.30).

Let us look at the time when Daniel’s faith was tried, as we read in the Word of God: *“The Lord trieth the righteous”* (Psalm 11.5). So we read in Daniel 6 verse 3: *“Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.”*

This produced a terrible spirit of jealousy in the other presidents and princes. They conspired to bring Daniel down, but they could find nothing against him in his walk or conversation. This shows the remarkable consistency in his character and conduct. What a godly, gracious man he was! His enemies made a very telling statement in Daniel 6 verse 5: *“Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.”* So, they persuaded the king to pass a decree that

all men, with no exception, should petition or pray to no one except the king for thirty days, and if they did, they would be cast into the den of lions. They knew that Daniel prayed to his God three times a day.

We see the same consistent purpose in Daniel: *"Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime"* (Daniel 6.10). These men now accused Daniel and laboured to have him cast into the den of lions. The king tried to deliver him but was not able. When the king finally permitted them to cast Daniel to the lions, the king said to him, *"Thy God whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee"* (Daniel 6.16).

After a sleepless night, the king went and called to Daniel in the lion's den: *"And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?"* (Daniel 6.20) Daniel returned answer: *"O king, live for ever. My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before Him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt"* (Daniel 6:21-22).

My dear young friends, there are many lessons in the life of Daniel. He stood in the ways of his God without compromising and remained faithful to his God whatever the cost. The Lord honoured His servant and preserved his life in an impossible situation. We worship the same wonder-working God. May we "dare to be a Daniel."

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

What a picture of strength is that of the oxen on the front cover! In Psalm 144, David prayed for God's blessing upon his kingdom and upon all the people. He asked *"that our sons*

may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace: that our garners [bins of grain] may be full, ... that our sheep may bring forth ... ten thousands in our streets: that our oxen may be strong to labour." David knew that the oxen needed to be strong in order to pull the plough so that food would be provided for the people.

The oxen must be yoked together in order to harness their strength. If you look at the cover picture, you will see the piece of wood laying across their shoulders and the loops around their necks. When the yoke is on them, they are joined together; they can no longer go different ways, but only in the same direction. The Lord commanded that the people of Israel were not to plough with an ox and an ass yoked together, because the ox was much larger and stronger than the ass. They would be unequally yoked.

The children of Israel in the Old Testament were under the yoke of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. They were his bondmen, or slaves. When God brought them out of Egypt, He said, *"I have broken the bands of your yoke"* (Leviticus 26.13). Having delivered them from Egypt, the Lord warned them that if they turned away from Him, their enemies would rise up and put a yoke of iron upon their necks. Years later, God fulfilled that warning, for Jeremiah wrote: *"For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: I have put a yoke of iron upon the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and they shall serve him"* (Jeremiah 28.14).

The yoke of bondage and slavery is hard! Years ago, the poor people who were taken captive and then bought and sold as slaves also had a yoke upon them; not an actual yoke of wood, but a figurative one, because they were forced to serve their masters. Yet all mankind has the yoke of slavery upon them because of their *sin*. We are all slaves of Satan by nature. Yet, in our natural state, the state into which we are born, we love sin; thus we do not feel the pain of that yoke. When God, by His Spirit, begins the work of grace in someone's heart, that

soul begins to feel this dreadful yoke. The more his heart and understanding are opened, the heavier that yoke becomes.

The soul that toils under the yoke of sin longs to be set free from the curse of sin and from the judgment against sin. This is done for him by the gospel of Jesus Christ. This does not mean that he is now without a yoke. No, but the yoke of Satan is broken and the yoke of Christ is laid on him instead. What a difference between these yokes! Jesus speaks of His yoke in the most loving and tender words: *"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light"* (Matthew 11.28-30).

When yoked to Jesus, the soul is enabled to walk in His commands and to follow His steps. The yoke of Christ is made easy by His love constraining the soul. Paul warned the believers at Galatia to *"Stand fast ... in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage"* (Galatians 5.1).

Paul also warned the believers at Corinth that they should not be yoked together with unbelievers. That is true in many aspects of life, but it is especially true of the marriage state. The marriage union is a yoke that two (a man and a woman) take upon themselves. If one is a believer in the Lord Jesus and the other is not, how can they really walk in the same direction? One seeks to walk in the ways of God, desiring to obey His commands; the other walks in the ways of carnal flesh, striving to fulfil the lusts of the heart, preferring the pleasures of the world.

The picture of the oxen yoked together brings all of these admonitions and lessons to mind.

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**ELISHA BEGINS HIS LABOURS**

The people of Jericho told Elisha about a problem they had. Their water was bad, and nothing would grow on the land. Elisha asked them to bring a new jar and to put salt in it. Then he went out to the spring where the waters for the city came out of the ground. He cast the salt in the spring and said, *“Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters.”* What a blessing that was for the people of Jericho! Their water was no longer bad.

From Jericho, Elisha went up to Bethel. A large group of children or young men came out of that city and mocked him. They said, *“Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.”* They were making fun of Elisha’s bald head, but even worse, they were mocking God who had taken Elijah up to heaven and sent Elisha to take his place as a prophet.

Elisha turned and looked upon the young men. Then he spoke a solemn curse upon them in the name of the Lord. Soon two bears came out of the woods and killed forty-two of them.

QUESTIONS:

1. Where did Elisha cast the salt? (3 words)
2. What did the young men do to Elisha? (2 words)
3. What came out of the woods and killed forty-two of them? (2 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. Elisha.
2. Dry ground.
3. His mantle.

*“But they
mocked the
messengers
of God, and
despised His
words.”*

2 Chronicles 36.16

BIBLE LESSONS**PAUL'S VISITORS IN ROME**

While Paul was a prisoner in Rome, he was given many tokens, or signs, that God had not forgotten him. They were a means of encouraging Paul and strengthening his hands. During the early part of his imprisonment, Paul enjoyed the company of Aristarchus, who was from Thessalonica, and Luke, *"the beloved physician."* They had been his companions during the stormy journey to Rome.

We are told that *"Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him."* We are not given the names of all who came, but we know some of them by reading through the epistles or letters that Paul wrote. How his heart must have rejoiced when brethren appeared at his house from places where he had established churches!

One of those brethren was Tychicus, who had accompanied Paul on part of his third missionary journey. In his epistle to the Ephesians and also to the Colossians, Paul called him *"a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord."* Paul sent a letter to both of those churches by the hand of Tychicus. He told Tychicus to let the churches know how things went with him and to comfort their hearts in the Lord.

Even in Rome, Paul's great burden was to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Book of Acts closes with these words: *"Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."*

One day while preaching, Paul met a man named Onesimus, whom he never expected to see in the city of Rome. He was from Colosse in Asia Minor and was a servant (slave) in the house of Paul's good friend Philemon. He had wronged his master by stealing from him. No doubt, he fled to Rome to get as far away from Philemon as possible. Servants who behaved like Onesimus would face very cruel punishment if they were found.

How surprised Onesimus must have been when he found himself in a meeting place where Paul was preaching! It may have seemed like a chance meeting, but it was by the divine purpose of God. Although he had sinned so grievously and run away from his master, yet God had a gracious favour to him. There in Rome, through Paul's preaching, he was brought under conviction for his sins and repented of them. He proved to be a great help to the apostle. Paul would have kept Onesimus with him to help in his labours, but his love to Philemon prevented him from doing so.

How wonderful are the ways of God! Onesimus had run away from Philemon, but he could not run away from God. The name Onesimus means "profitable." He was far from that while in his unconverted state.

Paul felt compelled to write a letter to Philemon, urging him to forgive Onesimus for his wrongs. He wrote: "*I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, ... which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me.*" He asked Philemon to receive him, "*not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee.*" Paul requested Philemon to receive Onesimus as himself.

One day, another visitor that appeared at his door must have really gladdened the heart of the apostle. It was Epaphroditus, a minister at Philippi. The Philippians had often sent provisions to Paul on his many journeys. Now, during his imprisonment, they sent another gift to him by the hand of Epaphroditus. After arriving in Rome, Epaphroditus became very sick and was even near death. Yet through the prayers of Paul and others, God had mercy upon him and raised him up again. Paul then wrote an epistle to the Philippians to thank them for their kind gift, which he called "*an odour of a sweet smell.*"

You can read about this in Acts chapter 28 verses 28 to 31, Ephesians 6 verses 21 and 22, Colossians 6 verses 7 and 8, Philemon, and Philippians chapter 2 verses 25 to 27 and chapter 4 verses 14 to 18.

QUESTIONS:

1. Who delivered Paul's letters to the Ephesians and to the Colossians?
2. To whom was Onesimus a servant?
3. Paul asked that he be received not as a servant, but as what? (3 words)
4. Who came from the church at Philippi?
5. What did Paul call their gift to him? (6 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. For the hope of Israel.
2. "What thou thinkest" (or what he thought).
3. "We know that every where it is spoken against."
4. From morning to night.
5. Is waxed gross; Are dull of hearing; Have they closed.

ELISHA'S BEARS

"And he went up from thence unto Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head. And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them" (2 Kings 2.23,24).

This account has occasioned much criticism by sceptics, charging Elisha with petulant cruelty in sending bears to kill the little children who were taunting him. Actually, it was God who sent the bears, not Elisha.

The fact is, however, that Elisha did not curse little children at all. The Hebrew word for "children" used with the phrase "little children" can be applied to any child from infancy to adolescence. The word for the forty-two "children" torn by the

bears, however, is a different word commonly translated “young men.” Actually, both words are used more often for young men than for little children.

The jeering exhortation to “*go up, thou bald head*” was both a sarcastic reference to Elijah’s ascension, as well as an insult to God’s prophet. This was actually a challenge to God and could not be excused. So, God made good on a warning issued long before: “*And if ye walk contrary unto Me, ... I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children*” (Leviticus 26.21,22). It can be a dangerous thing for young or old gratuitously to insult the true God and His Word.

Days of Praise from Institute for Creation Research by H.M.M.

NUNNIA – A YOUNG MAIDEN USED OF GOD

The young Israelitish maiden who waited on Naaman’s wife expressed the desire, “*Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria!*” (2 Kings 5.3) What a wonderful effect that simple remark had, for it was accompanied with the Lord’s blessing. It may not have occurred to the little maid that the wish she uttered would be taken seriously by those whom she served. Through the wisdom and goodness of Almighty God, it was a link in the chain of events that finally brought Naaman to say, “*Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel.*”

There is another remarkable instance in which the Lord used a young servant girl to bring the gospel to a heathen nation. On Mount Caucasus in the country of Georgia, there was a people who were called Iberians. In the early part of the fourth century, when all around them was spiritual and moral darkness, the blessings of the gospel came to them in the following way.

The Iberians were at war with a people amongst whom Christianity was already known. They carried away captive a young girl named Nunnia with the intention of selling her for a slave. An Iberian family of rank purchased the maiden, but they had as little idea as Naaman’s wife what a blessing she

would be to them, for she was a vessel of divine mercy. Although she may have shed many tears in secret, she found consolation in her Saviour. She quietly and willingly performed all, and even more, than was required of her. By her sweet disposition and faithfulness, which were rare qualities among the Iberians, Nunnia soon acquired the confidence and affection of those around her.

It happened one day, according to the custom of the country, that a child with a very serious illness was carried about from door to door, hoping that someone might be able to suggest a remedy. But, no one could give any help, and most people thought there was no hope at all for the child's recovery. The parents continued to carry their dying infant around with increasing despondency and fear.

The idea suddenly occurred to them to show the sick child to the foreign maiden. They thought it was possible that in her country a cure for that disease might be known. Since there was no other hope, they decided to go to her as a last resort. The bed was carried to the house where Nunnia, the Christian maiden, lived as a servant. On hearing their request, Nunnia remarked with embarrassment that a poor girl like her was not able to help them. However, she cheerfully added that she could direct them to One, who was not only able to restore the child to health, but if it were already dead, could even recover it to life. The parents eagerly inquired who that Person was and where He might be found. She told them: "He is the great and mighty Lord who fills the throne of heaven, but He willingly humbles Himself to help those who seek Him, and He is all compassion and love." They implored her to fetch Him. Nunnia immediately went aside to bow her knees before the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom she prayed, "Manifest Thyself, O Lord, for Thine own glory; show Thyself and grant Thy help!" After praying, she returned with a joyful assurance in her heart that the Lord had heard her petition. Suddenly the child opened its eyes, smiled, and was fully restored!

With great joy, the happy parents returned home with their beloved child. They told everyone they met about the great

and glorious healing that had taken place. However, the miracle was not ascribed to Him that performed it, but to the little servant girl, whom they now regarded as a supernatural being. The report spread quickly through the country and even reached the ears of the queen.

Not long afterwards, the queen herself became very sick. She immediately thought of the little slave girl and sent messengers to request her to come. However, Nunnia refused, for she was greatly distressed that the people continued to ascribe to her the honour that belonged to the Lord alone. The queen determined to visit Nunnia in person and ordered herself to be carried to the house where she served. The maiden was greatly affected at seeing her. She prayed to the Lord again, and the queen likewise returned home in health. Miraus the king was overjoyed when he saw his beloved wife restored. He instantly prepared to send rich and costly presents to Nunnia, who was thought to have performed so great a miracle. However, the queen stopped him, saying that it would only grieve the young girl, for she despised all earthly wealth. She could only be rewarded when people bowed the knee and worshipped God with her. The king was greatly astonished at this, but it made no further impression upon his mind. The ray of heavenly light which these two extraordinary cures had brought into the darkness of Iberia, appeared to produce no lasting effects at that time.

However, not long afterwards, the king was hunting with a group of men. As he followed his game with great intensity, he became lost in the depths of a wood. Suddenly, a dense fog descended, which further separated him from his hunting companions. Every effort to find his way out only served to entangle him more in the lonely wilderness. Evening approached, and his trouble became extreme. He sounded his horn, but the only answer he received was from the echoes of the surrounding cliffs, which increased his feeling of despair. It was now that he remembered what the foreign maiden had said about the power of her great, invisible King, whose throne and habitation were on high, but who was present everywhere

with those that sought Him. If this is true, thought Miraus, what is there to prevent His appearing for me? As the thought arose, he bent his knee in the solitary wilderness and prayed, "O Thou whom the stranger calls her God! Jesus, if Thou art God, and art almighty, O show it now, and recover me out of this perplexity! If Thou openest for me a way of escape, my heart, my life, and all that I have shall be Thine." The words were no sooner uttered than the dark mist began to disperse. The sky appeared serenely blue, and the astonished king, having proceeded a few steps, regained his track, and recognised the place where he was. He returned home in safety, but deeply affected. He told every detail to the queen, and they no longer doubted that the God of the little servant was the living and true God, for they had experienced and felt Him to be so. The next morning, they went to see Nunnia; for they thought that she, before all others, ought to hear what great things had happened. With considerable emotion, the king related to her the wonderful event, and then both the king and the queen kindly took the maiden by the hand and entreated her to tell them more of Jesus.

From that moment, the royal pair were seen sitting like teachable children at the feet of the lowly slave, and Nunnia proclaimed to them, with simplicity, all that she herself knew of her Saviour and of His wonderful works. They carefully listened to her words, and their hearts melted and burned within them. It was not long before a still more interesting sight presented itself. Both the king and queen thought that they could not confer a greater benefit on their people than proclaiming the blessed gospel and telling them of God, who was manifest in the flesh. The king therefore preached to the men, and the queen spoke to the women and maidens. The Lord blessed the message, and the people received the good news of the gospel with gladness. Jesus entered the hearts, as well as the habitations, of those formerly savage people, and light sprang up in the gloom of their moral desolation.

In what a striking way this occurrence resembles the history of Naaman! Jesus is *"the same yesterday, and to day, and for*

ever" (Hebrews 13.8). It is as easy for Him to accomplish His purposes by the smallest agent as by the mightiest one. And how well He knows when and where to find His sheep! *"I will call them My people, which were not My people; ... and in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people; there shall they be called the children of the living God"* (Romans 9.25,26).

Adapted from Elisha by F.W. Krummacher

DRAGONFLIES: SECRETS OF FLIGHT

Dragonflies often fly above wetlands and ponds in search of food. They do not bite or sting people, and contrary to some traditions, they do not sew together the lips or eyelids of bystanders! Instead, the dragonfly is an outstanding and useful example of the Creator's design.

Dragonflies are unusual insects in that they have four distinct wings. The up-and-down strokes of their wings allow them either to hover motionlessly, or shift quickly into forward or reverse motion. The forward speed of dragonflies reaches nearly forty miles per hour. On each downward stroke, a dragonfly twists its wings slightly. This causes a whirl of air above the wing and reduces the air pressure slightly, resulting in the needed lift for flight.

Dragonflies pursue their prey with manoeuvres that are far beyond the capability of jet fighters. By flying in a direct line with prey, dragonflies give the visual illusion of not moving at all. This disguise is highly successful in the hunting of smaller insects.

Military strategists hope to duplicate the dragonfly's flying ability. One possible application is a small, unmanned drone or surveillance aircraft that could hover motionless, then dart suddenly to a new location just as dragonflies do. On a larger scale, even helicopters could benefit from increased manoeuvrability copied from dragonflies.

Dragonflies are able to carry as much as fifteen times their own weight while in flight, while modern aircraft cannot carry

a load much heavier than their own weight. Clearly, dragonflies have much to teach us about successful flight.

*Adapted from Discovery of Design
by Donald DeYoung and Derrik Hobbs*

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

THE BOOK OF DANIEL Chapter 9

“The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much”

“And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes” (Daniel 9.3).

One important thing that stands out in the life of Daniel is that he was a man of prayer. We are told in chapter six that Daniel had three set times for prayer each day, probably early morning, noon and evening. He went into his house to be alone and kneel down before God in prayer. The Holy Spirit had taught Daniel that the God of Israel was the true, living God who hears and answers the prayers of His people. He also knew that without God’s continual help and presence, he could not be kept faithful and would most certainly fall.

Daniel knew that God had severely punished the people of Israel. When he was young, he had been amongst the captives taken away from Jerusalem into the foreign land of Babylon. He had spent the greater part of his life in Babylon. He knew that Jerusalem lay desolate, with the temple destroyed and all the city walls broken down. Daniel would surely have known of the prophet Jeremiah. He may have remembered that many of the people in Jerusalem had rejected the prophecies of Jeremiah. And yet, those prophecies had come to pass exactly as Jeremiah had spoken. It must have seemed very solemn to Daniel that the Lord had caused His people to be taken away into captivity because of their sins and wicked ways. Daniel knew that his heart was no different from others by nature.

One day when Daniel was reading the prophecies of Jeremiah, he noticed something that must have struck him with

awe and wonder. *"In the first year of his reign [Darius], I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem"* (verse 2). The seventy years were now coming to an end, and the Lord had promised that His people would return to Jerusalem. We wonder if Daniel knew the prophet Ezekiel or was aware of his prophecies, because he also spoke of the return of the children of Israel to the Promised Land: *"And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country"* (Ezekiel 34.13). Although the children of Israel were scattered throughout various heathen nations when they were in captivity, the Lord God had promised that He would cause them to return to their own land. There is another word in Ezekiel spoken by the Lord concerning His people returning to their own land: *"Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock"* (Ezekiel 36.37).

The Lord had promised that He would bring back His people; yet He would have His people call upon Him in prayer to do it for them. Daniel was given grace to understand the word of the Lord, and a spirit of wrestling prayer and confession was given to him. *"And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love Him, and to them that keep His commandments"* (Daniel 9.4).

Daniel came before the Lord in great reverence and godly fear. He confessed unto God his sins and those of his people, the children of Israel. Daniel acknowledged that it was because of the sins of the children of Israel that the Lord had most solemnly taken them away from their own land and caused them to suffer in the land of captivity. *"O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto Thee, but unto us confusion of*

faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither Thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against Thee. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against Thee” (Daniel 9.7,8).

After confession of sin, Daniel pleaded for God’s mercy. He had proved that God is merciful, and he was given faith and hope that God would have mercy upon His people. Yet, he could not take this for granted, but pleaded for mercy amidst God’s solemn judgments. *“To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against Him” (Daniel 9.9).* Daniel knew that there must be true repentance for sin before imploring God for mercy. The prodigal son did not go back to his father in the same spirit in which he left. He repented of his sins and wrongdoings as he sought for mercy from his father.

In his humble prayer, Daniel reminded the Lord how He had brought His ancient people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, even though it had seemed impossible. He knew that even with all their sins and iniquities, the Lord was still able to appear for His people and deliver them out of Babylon. Another great lesson that Daniel had been taught (a lesson that we also need to learn), was that it was not for the sake of the children of Israel that God would deliver them: *“O Lord, bear; O Lord forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, **for Thine own sake**, O my God: for Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy name” (Daniel 9.19).*

Again, in Ezekiel we read of how the Lord delivered His people for His own name’s sake: *“But I had pity for Mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for Mine holy name’s sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went” (Ezekiel 36.21,22).*

Daniel begged God to be very merciful and to perform His word, that His name might be glorified. Once again, Daniel was given a single eye to the honour and glory of God.

When we read the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, we see how the Lord fulfilled His promises and brought His people back into their own land.

We must remember that God is almighty, and nothing is too hard or difficult for Him. The Lord will chasten His people when they rebel against Him and grieve the Holy Spirit; yet He will never cast them off forever. When they are brought to see their sins and confess them, to repent and turn to the Lord with a broken heart and contrite spirit, He will be very gracious unto them and turn again in mercy.

A.T. Pickett

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about the FEAR OF GOD. Younger children need only do four questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 8 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.

In the Bible the “fear of God” can sometimes mean to be afraid of God, but far more often it means reverence and awe of God mingled with love, adoration and the desire to know and do His will. The questions are referring to this latter meaning.

1. To whom was it said, “Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me”? (Genesis 22.12)
2. What is the fear of the Lord the beginning of? (Proverbs 1.7; 9.10)
3. What are the effects of the fear of God? Write down the answers given in the following texts: Proverbs 8.13; 10.27; 14.26; 14.27; 16.6.
4. Jethro, Moses father-in-law, advised him to have men to help him govern the children of Israel. What qualifications did they

need to have? (Exodus 18.21)

5. What does God do to, or for, those who fear Him? Write out the answers found in each of these texts: Psalm 34.7; 103.13; 103.17; 147.11.
6. We should not “be wise in our own eyes,” nor “envy sinners.” What should we do instead? (Proverbs 3; 23)
7. Name the people who are described as:
 - a. “A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house.” (Acts 10)
 - b. One who “feared the Lord greatly.” (1 Kings 18)
 - c. “A perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil.”
8. Who said, “But so did not I, because of the fear of God”?

ANSWERS TO AUGUST QUESTIONS

1. “The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth?”
 2. “The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.”
 3. Three years and six months.
 4. Ahab was wounded in battle by an arrow shot at a venture by a Syrian soldier, and died later the same day.
 5. Two loaves of bread.
 6. Hophni and Phinehas took the ark of God into battle against the Philistines and were both killed, the ark being captured by the Philistines. (1 Samuel 4.11)
 7. Peter. (John 13.37-38)
 8. The earth opened and swallowed them up, and they died. (Numbers 16.31-33)
 9. “Thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season.” (Acts 13.11)
 10. “Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: and they shall scourge Him, and put Him to death: and the third day He shall rise again.” (Luke 18.31-33)
-

“KEEP ME AS THE APPLE OF THE EYE”

Psalm 17.8

Keep me, Jesus, every day
In the straight and narrow way.
Keep, O keep me all the day
Ever near Thee, lest I stray.

Keep me, Jesus, as I go
Daily travelling to and fro.
Keep me in temptation's hour
By Thy sweet resistless power.

Keep me 'midst the busy world;
May Thy banner fly unfurled.
Keep me 'midst the cares of life;
Keep me ever, Lord, from strife.

Keep me at the close of day,
As upon my bed I lay.
Keep me, Jesus, through the night;
Shine upon me with Thy light.

Keep me always, keep me near;
Keep me ever in Thy fear.
Thus, though weak, shall I be strong,
And His might shall be my song.

By Hilda M. Haynes in Cheering Words 1989

The Friendly Companion



“Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us”
(2 Corinthians 1.10)

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

What a wonderful trait is that of courage! Courage is the response one shows in a time of danger or in a difficult situation. It requires courage to act when one knows it will be painful. We cannot help but admire a person who acts with great courage. He or she leaves an impression on others, who desire to follow that person's example.

A wonderful example of courage is that of the firemen of New York City after the Twin Towers skyscrapers were struck by airplanes in 2001. A steady stream of people was going down the staircases to escape the terrible fires on the upper levels. However, the firemen were climbing the stairs in order to help those who were injured or trapped inside. Many of them were still climbing the stairs when the towers collapsed, killing thousands of people. Those firemen are still admired and remembered for their great courage in the face of danger.

Nehemiah showed courage in a time of great difficulty. The walls around Jerusalem had not been built, leaving the city vulnerable to enemies. His fellow Jews did not have the will to build up the walls because they feared their enemies, who seemed so powerful. These enemies were also very cunning in their opposition. Yet, God put a strong desire into the heart of Nehemiah to build the wall. Nehemiah leaned hard upon the Lord in prayer, and he was given courage to press on until it was finally accomplished.

David manifested real courage as a young boy when he killed a lion and a bear to protect his father's sheep. What mighty courage he displayed when he went out against the giant Goliath! King Saul and the mighty men of valour in his army were filled with fear when they saw Goliath and heard his words. They did not dare to go and fight him, but David ventured forth without any armour. He went out with only a sling and five stones, trusting in the Lord, and killed the giant.

Later, when David was in the Philistine city of Gath, his courage fled when the Philistines took hold of him. David

changed his behaviour, pretending that he was a madman. In writing about this time in Psalm 56, David said, *"What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee"* (verse 3).

Elijah was a man of great courage when he reproved the ungodly King Ahab and when he slew all the prophets of Baal. Yet, when Jezebel threatened his life, he fled into the wilderness and prayed that his life might be taken away.

Perhaps some younger friends have been or soon will be in places where you will need courage. The courage of your convictions is needed to do what is right before God, even when those around may act and behave in ways that are dishonouring to God. When tempted to follow others in sinful paths, such as failing to keep the Lord's day holy or failing to honour your parents, may you be given the courage to stand fast.

You will need the courage of conviction to hold fast against the dreadful teaching of evolution and to hold to the teaching of Genesis chapters one to eleven, where the foundations are so plainly set forth of the world's beginning and of the fall of man into sin.

Older ones will need courage to stand in opposition to ungodly practices that not only prevail but increase in their debasing nature. You will need courage to uphold the sanctity of marriage between one man and one woman, and to stand fast respecting the nature of the two genders, male and female, as created by God.

In these and in so many other aspects of society we need the help of God to take courage and to stand fast, holding to His Word.

With loving wishes from the Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

The terrified look of the fox caught in the trap portrays the pain, fear, and helplessness he feels. It is a solemn picture of that which is dangerous and cruel. Snares, traps and gins are all of the same nature and for the same purpose. They are set to capture an unsuspecting creature.

Often snares are hidden from the intended victims, so that they are caught before they realise the danger. Other snares are set in plain sight, but they are baited with something to lure the victim.

Solomon, who built the temple of God and prayed so beautifully at its dedication, was also snared by many temptations. In Ecclesiastes he wrote, *“For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them”* (Ecclesiastes 9.12).

The Lord Jesus taught the same truth: *“Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with ... cares of this life, and so that day [the day of judgment] come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth”* (Luke 21.34,35).

The riches of this world are snares to many who seek their happiness from them and put their trust in them. We can also be snared by the words of our mouth. When we begin to lie, we are indeed snared by our words.

There are also the snares (ways) of death, in which we are caught; yet even from these snares is a way of deliverance. First, *“The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death”* (Proverbs 14.27). Also, *“the law of the wise”* delivers from these snares (Proverbs 13.14). We are ensnared by death through our sins. The law of the wise is the gospel of the Lord Jesus. May the Lord help us to believe His gospel.

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**THREE KINGS IN TROUBLE**

Three kings and their armies went to fight against Moab. They were the kings of Israel, Judah and Edom. They went through the desert to reach Moab. Soon there was no water to drink, and they were afraid they would all die of thirst.

Jehoshaphat the king of Judah asked if there was a prophet who could ask the Lord what they should do. The prophet Elisha was near, and the three kings went to him. Elisha told them to dig many ditches in the valley. Without wind or rain, the Lord would fill the ditches with water for them and their animals to drink. The Lord would also give them victory over Moab.

In the morning, the ditches were full of water. The people of Moab came out to fight with the three kings. When the sun shone upon the water in the ditches, it looked red like blood. They thought the kings had slain each other and hurried on to the camp of Israel. Then Israel rose up and smote the people of Moab.

QUESTIONS:

1. To which prophet did the three kings go?
2. He told them to make the valley full of what? (one word)
3. When the sun shone, what did the water look like?

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 the spring.
2. Mocked him.
3. Two bears.

Contributed

*“And call
upon Me in the
day
of trouble:
I will deliver
thee.”*

Psalm 50.15

BIBLE LESSONS**PAUL'S LAST DAYS AND HIS WRITINGS**

The days that Paul spent in Rome were just as busy as those he spent in preaching the gospel and establishing churches during his three missionary journeys. He was able to preach the gospel to those that were in Rome, and he wrote many letters (epistles) to churches and individuals. A few of his letters in the Bible were written before he came to Rome as a prisoner. The letters he wrote were by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and they make up a major part of the New Testament scriptures.

The churches at Corinth and Thessalonica received two letters from Paul, while each of the churches at Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi and Colosse received one letter. Paul also wrote letters to some individuals, such as Philemon, Titus and Timothy. There was an epistle written to the Hebrews, or believing Jews; while the name of the author is not given, it is generally believed to be the Apostle Paul.

In 2 Corinthians 10 verse 10, we are told of two things that marked the letters of Paul: *"For his letters, say they, are mighty and powerful."* What a proof that his letters were of God!

Many truths that are recorded in the Old Testament scriptures are more clearly set forth in the New Testament epistles. The doctrine of the fall of man in Genesis chapter three is further expounded, to a greater or lesser degree, in nearly all of Paul's epistles. Paul wrote to the Romans: *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"* (3.23). In the same epistle Paul tells us: *"For the wages of sin is death"* (6.23).

The doctrine of repentance is described in the Epistle to Timothy: *"... if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will"* (2 Timothy 2.25,26).

Paul wrote so beautifully of the doctrine of salvation in his Epistle to the Thessalonians: *"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, ... because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth"* (2 Thessalonians 2.13).

The great doctrine of election was always in Paul's heart, his ministry, and his writings: *"Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God"* (1 Thessalonians 1.4). *"For the children [Jacob and Esau] being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth; it was said, ... the elder shall serve the younger"* (Romans 9.11,12).

What a precious doctrine is the doctrine of redemption, the Lord purchasing His people with His blood! *"In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins"* (Ephesians 1.7). The people of God need to be redeemed from the curse of the law. *"Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.... Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us"* (Galatians 3.10,13).

There are many more doctrines besides, such as the doctrines of atonement, justification, and the eternal security (or perseverance) of the Lord's people.

In his letters, Paul exhorted (instructed) the believers about how they were to behave among themselves; to walk in love, praying one for another, forgiving one another, esteeming others better than themselves. These and many more commandments would help them to walk in peace.

Paul also warned them of the devices of Satan, by which he would try to divide and destroy them. He warned of evil men who would endeavour to bring in false doctrines and lies.

The Bible does not tell us of Paul's death, although in his last letter to Timothy he wrote: *"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.... I have finished my course.... Henceforth there is laid up for me a*

crown of righteousness, which the Lord ... shall give me at that day" (2 Timothy 4.6-8).

QUESTIONS:

1. What two things marked the letters of Paul?
2. What did Paul write regarding the fall of man in the epistle to the Romans? (12 words)
3. Which two children did Paul refer to in the doctrine of election?
4. How did Paul say that Christ redeemed His people from the curse of the law? (6 words)
5. What did Paul say was laid up for him? (4 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. Tychicus.
 2. Philemon.
 3. A brother beloved.
 4. Epaphroditus.
 5. An odour of a sweet smell.
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LESSONS FROM DOVES

In the Bible, the dove is often a picture or type of the people of God. It has many characteristics that could also apply to His people.

It has a **mournful call**. There are many varieties of doves, but the dove most common in this area is the mourning dove. Most of you have heard its mournful sound. In this way, the dove is a good picture of the people of God, for they are brought to mourn over their sins and to mourn after the Lord Jesus. We have such an example shown by Hezekiah. He was told to set his house in order for he would die. Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed unto the Lord and wept

sore. His experience is described in Isaiah 38 verse 14: *"Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward: O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for me."* When the Lord works in the heart of a person, he brings him to mourn over his sins and to confess them before God.

The dove was one of the **clean** birds spoken of in the Bible which could be eaten and which could be used as a sacrifice unto the Lord. Mary and Joseph offered such a sacrifice when they brought the baby Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem. The dove also likes **clean** food and water. It is particular about the seed that it eats and will not touch that which is old. The people of God like to feed upon that which is good, even the pure Word of God. David says in Psalm 119 verse 103, *"How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! ... Thy Word is very pure: therefore Thy servant loveth it"* (verses 103, 140).

The dove is a **chaste** bird. Unlike many other birds and animals, it mates for life. When you see a dove, its mate is almost always nearby. If the mate dies, it is very reluctant to take another. We live in a sad day when marriage is too often taken lightly. Part of the marriage vow is "Till death do us part." Young friends, before you begin to date (court), you ought to pray for the Lord to guide you in that important matter which will affect you for the rest of your life. Pray that He will give you a true helpmeet, one who fears the Lord and will help you to walk in His ways.

Doves like to **congregate** together. Where there is one dove, there are usually more. The people of God delight to keep company with one another. That was a special mark of the early church in the Book of Acts. *"These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication"* (Acts 1.14). In Hebrews 10 verse 25, it says, *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together."* The people of God help, support and pray for each other. In Isaiah 60 verse 8 we read: *"Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?"* The doves were flying together as a cloud when there was danger.

They fled to safety in the clefts or holes in the rocks (called windows). Perhaps they were being pursued by an enemy or a storm was coming. What a beautiful picture that is of the people of God! They are often harassed by the enemy (Satan), and they often feel a storm of iniquity, temptations, and doubts within. The only place of safety is to flee to the Lord Jesus. He only is the rock and refuge for sinners.

The dove is a **peaceable** bird. It does not fight with other birds but swiftly flees away. The dove is often pictured as an emblem of peace. We see pictures of a dove with an olive leaf or branch in its bill. That is taken from Genesis chapter 8, the first time that the dove is mentioned in the Bible. After the waters of the flood ceased and the ark came to rest, Noah sent forth a raven and a dove from the ark. He wanted to know if the waters were dried up from the earth. The raven never returned, for it was able to feed off the floating debris or carcasses. That is a picture of man by nature. He happily feeds upon the corrupt or perishing things of earth. He has no desire after things that will profit his soul, such as reading the Bible or attending the services of God's house. The dove returned to Noah in the ark, for she could find no place of rest or food to eat. *"Noah put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark"* (Genesis 8.9). What a beautiful picture or type of the Lord Jesus! He puts forth His hand and pulls the sinner unto Himself. When the Lord begins to work in the heart, that person can no longer find rest in the sinful things of this world. He flees to Jesus and longs to find refuge and safety in Him. A week later, Noah sent forth the dove again, and she returned in the evening with an olive leaf plucked off. The third time, the dove did not return, so Noah knew that the waters had subsided, and there was new growth upon the earth to feed upon. The earth had been cleansed. It was a picture of the resurrection; the judgment was past. The child of God feeds upon His Word with new desires and a new appetite. He has *"peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Romans 5.2).

Just one more reference from Hosea 7 verse 11: “*Ephraim also is like a silly dove.*” The dove is easily trapped. Even when a dove has been set free, it will go right back to the same trap. There is a little story that illustrates this. Many years ago, I went to visit a family from the chapel, and one of the children had a number of doves. They were a special kind of dove, not the kind usually seen in the garden. As I came near the house, the doves could be seen on the roof-top. I asked the boy how he could get them back into the cage in which they were kept. “Oh, that is easy,” he said. He put some grain into a tin pan and swirled it around, making a loud noise. Immediately the doves flew down to eat the grain. He opened the door of the wire cage and placed the grain inside. The doves went inside the cage, he shut the door, and they were secured. Later, he opened the cage door, and the doves flew out and congregated again on the roof of the house. To get them back into the cage, he swirled the grain around in the tin pan; the doves immediately returned and went happily inside the cage and the door was closed. That is just like the children of God. They are so easily ensnared by Satan; they so easily fall into sin – over and over again. Like the “*silly dove*,” they are so slow to learn from their mistakes.

Taken from Sunday School lessons by J.K.Stebouwer

FIRST IMPRESSIONS – THE COLLIER

A highly-esteemed minister in the days of Kershaw and Philpot, Thomas Clough (1817-1879) always signed himself “The Collier,” referring to his days down in the pit (coal mine). The Lord’s remarkable dealings with him took place in the far north east of England. In the following words, he tells of his first impressions from the Lord.

“The time the Lord first opened my eyes to see myself as a sinner is a time to be remembered. I was then living in sin and loving it well. At that time, I was working at a coal mine in the north of England for my daily bread. I was then dead in sin

and cared for nothing. At the pit in which I worked, there was a law or rule that no collier (coal miner) should be allowed to go down into the pit within three hours if he was not on the ground at a given time in the morning. One morning, I was a few minutes late, and the banksman who had the care of the cage in the shaft refused to allow me to go down with the other men. As soon as all the men had gone down, I began to revile the banksman who refused to allow me to go down, and some oaths and curses were exchanged between us.

"I then went off the ground to a public-house (tavern) on the opposite side to get something to drink, proclaiming vengeance against my enemy, as I thought. In the course of an hour or two, I was singing merrily, and declaring I would not go to work that day. Then news was brought into the public-house that every man that had gone down into the pit that morning was killed; and it was soon discovered that the terrible news was true. In one moment, I felt as sober as if I had never tasted any intoxicating liquor that day. I trembled from head to foot and said to myself, 'If I had gone down into the pit this morning, I should have been a dead man; and what would have become of my soul?'

"That seemed to be the first time that I had an impression on my mind that I had a soul, either to be saved or lost. The '*arrows of the Almighty*' stuck fast in me, and the terrors of hell got hold upon me. I was then both a convinced and condemned sinner in the sight of God and my own conscience, and I cried out in the bitterness of my soul, 'Lord, have mercy upon me, a miserable sinner.'

"I passed many sleepless nights and very uncomfortable days in this state of mind, but at last the Lord spoke peace to my never-dying soul, and said, 'Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee.'

Sovereign grace o'er sin abounding!
Ransomed souls, the tidings swell;
'Tis a deep that knows no sounding;
Who its lengths or breadths can tell?

On its glories,
Let my soul for ever dwell."

Adapted from A Cloud of Witnesses by B.A. Ramsbottom

GOD'S MYSTERIOUS WAY

The late Mr. W. Gibb of Tenterden was a faithful minister of the gospel for many years. Originally, by trade, he was a builder and an undertaker (one who manages funerals). His exercises regarding the ministry became a very weighty burden, and he came before the church at Tenterden on May 31st 1926 to preach with a view to being sent forth into the ministry. However, after speaking for a few minutes, he felt so bound that he had to sit down. Nevertheless, the Church felt it was of the Lord and sent him forth into the ministry.

On the June 19th of the same year, a Saturday, he had to travel to Teignmouth for a burial on the Monday. After experiencing many delays on the road, he arrived at Newton Abbott in the evening, and he called on the deacon of the chapel. On the Lord's day morning, he walked to the chapel in company with the aged deacon. Since no minister was engaged, the deacon conducted the services with reading and prayer. During the day, the deacon became unwell, and by the time of the evening service was unable to conduct it. He told Mr. Gibb that he would have to take the service, and there were only four people present.

In his writings, Mr. Gibb says, "I was much put to it, but I commenced by giving out hymn 882 and reading Acts 10 and felt some liberty in prayer, continuing with hymn 610. After what had gone before, I ventured to read Acts 2 verse 21 as a text: '*And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*' I was much helped in telling of the Lord's leadings with me and exercises respecting the solemn work of the ministry, and of the various steps leading to my attempt to speak from those words before the church at Tenterden and of my failure. I then spoke of a few things connected with the text. The old deacon seemed quite

revived, and wishing me God-speed, prayed that I might be made useful in the ministry. Another friend expressed her pleasure at being present. Thus ended one of the strangest Sundays I have ever spent, yet feeling and hoping that the Lord's hand was in it all."

About three years later, Mr. Gibb was preaching at Ebenezer Chapel, Clapham and went to the home of a member after the service. At the lunch table, Mrs. R. mentioned that she had received a letter from a relative in Australia. This relative told Mrs. R. about receiving a letter from a friend in England who was much blessed under a sermon by an undertaker in Newton Abbott Chapel, the substance of the sermon being given in the letter. The relative of Mrs. R. received a blessing from reading the substance of the sermon and felt she must tell her about it. During the whole time this was being recounted, Mr. Gibb remained silent. Finally, Mrs. R. said, "Was it not wonderful?" Mr. Gibb replied, "It is more than wonderful, for I was that undertaker."

Thus, we prove the truth of the Word of God in Psalm 126 verse 6: *"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."*

Adapted from Friendly Companion 1977

JIREH CHAPEL, TENTERDEN – 100th ANNIVERSARY¹

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary, three services were held at Jireh Chapel, Tenterden, on October 15th, 1969. The morning sermon was preached by Mr. R.J. Morris, the afternoon by Mr. Frank Gosden, and the evening by Mr. Stanley Delves. At the close of the evening service, Mr. Delves recounted his first visit to the chapel fifty years before as a young minister full of fears.

The closing remarks by Mr. Stanley Delves were as follows:

¹ The 150th Anniversary will be held, God willing, on Saturday, 19th October.

"I feel it is a great privilege to take part in these services. I have a very special affection for this sanctuary. I remember so well my first entrance into this pulpit – I shall never forget it – for I had not been preaching very long. I was very young and inexperienced, though I felt the Lord called me to preach. Good Mr. Weeks, the pastor of the church, had been afflicted with a stroke and was unable to preach, and I was invited to this pulpit. Mr. Weeks was here at that time. I remember when I came to Tenterden, I felt very desolate in my spirit. I had never been here, and didn't know anyone here, and I knew this would be a congregation of experienced hearers of the Word, that they had been accustomed to a mature ministry, and altogether I felt very unhappy about myself. I remember that Saturday night was one of the most burdened and restless that I have had.

"The next morning, I came to this chapel. I didn't know how to preach. I could only think of a word in the Psalms that was expressive of desolation of spirit as I went into the vestry. I felt I was a stranger among a strange people. At the prayer meeting in the vestry that Sunday morning, a good man stood up and began to pray – I wasn't in the meeting but in the adjoining vestry, and as he prayed, I felt a change come over my spirit. He seemed to speak in such a way quite to attract my affection, and I began to feel enlargement of heart. I felt I should not be a stranger to this people, and I came into the pulpit with quite a different text. I laid my text aside that was expressive of desolation of spirit and preached from this instead: *'Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God'* (Ephesians 2.19), and the Lord was pleased to give me, I feel, entrance into the hearts and affections of the people here at that time.

"Most of them have passed away, for this was just on fifty years ago, and from that day to this I have felt an affection for this sanctuary. I felt the Lord came with me that Sunday morning, delivered me from my fears, gave me the opening of

the mouth in the midst of this congregation and commended my ministry, such as it was, to their hearts, and they received me very kindly. I am now in the evening of my days, but I have always felt, all through my long ministry, union to this people; and I have often felt the Lord to help me and enlarge me in feeling, in utterance, when I stand in this pulpit.

“Time with many of us may not be long. We do hope and pray that the Word of the Lord may continue in this sanctuary when we are gone; that it will have the same effect in future generations that it has had in the past, and in the present; that the Lord’s precious name may often be sweet and fragrant, with grace and love and mercy, that the gathering of the people may often be to His blessed and holy name.

“May the blessing of God the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, rest upon Jireh. Amen.”

Contributed

GENDER

Every cell in our body is either male or female. We are born as male or female. When you are on the operating table, the surgeon needs to know your original gender, the biological gender with which you were born.

However, we live in a time in which some feel that biology is irrelevant to gender. In other words, a biological man may feel psychologically female, or a biological woman may feel psychologically male. Some are beginning to tell children early in life that they can choose their gender. It goes so far that there are males would like to use girls’ bathrooms, and vice versa.

What to think? First, let us be clear that we should care for all people and with love are willing to help anyone, including those that are gender-confused. However, we do have a responsibility to be clear about the biblical difference between male and female and to show that we respect our own gender, the gender with which we were created. Christians should be

content with the body that the Lord has given them, and this should be reflected in their outward appearance, such as in hairstyle and clothing.

Pray that the Lord will direct us to be different in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. Pray that the Lord gives us all the tender fear of God in our hearts, and the renewing of our minds so that we *“may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God”* (Romans 12.2). May the love of Christ move us to holiness in all aspects of life, *“that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world”* (Philippians 2.15).

Adapted from Banner of Truth, August 2019

By Pastor P. van Ruitenber,

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

THE BOOK OF DANIEL Chapter 10

“In the world ye shall have tribulation”

“But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth” (Daniel 10.21).

This chapter is like an introduction to the following two chapters. Daniel was now a very old man, probably in his late eighties. King Cyrus had allowed the Jews to return to their own land in Judea and to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. We might think that Daniel was so pleased that the Lord had appeared for His people after the seventy years of captivity. Yet we read, *“In those days, I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine into my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled”* (verses 2 & 3). Why was this? Although the children of Israel had been given permission to return to their own land, only a few of them felt inclined to do so. The majority had settled down in the land of their captivity and saw no reason to return. Also, the few who had returned had met with much opposition from the Samaritans who were

now living there. Although the foundation of the temple had been laid, their enemies were threatening to prevent it from being rebuilt. News of this would have come back to Daniel, who would have been very troubled about all these things.

It was at the end of his three weeks of mourning that Daniel had this remarkable vision. Although others were with Daniel, only he heard the voice that spoke: *"And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves"* (verse 7). Daniel had experienced many remarkable events in his life, such as surviving a night in a den of lions, witnessing rulers and kingdoms come and go, as well as having previous visions; yet, this vision completely overwhelmed him. *"Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. Yet heard I the voice of His words: and when I heard the voice of His words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground"* (verses 8 & 9).

The Lord is always very gracious to His people. Although they may tremble before Him because He is so great, yet He condescends to allay their fears with a kind message of compassion. It was so with Daniel at this time when the Lord showed him great kindness: *"And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands. And He said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when He had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling. Then said He unto me, Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words"* (verses 10 - 12).

Even so, Daniel was so overwhelmed by the greatness of this sudden appearance of the One who stood before him, that he felt all his strength to drain from him; he also became dumb

and could not speak. Yet, again, he was spoken to in such a kind and tender way: *"Then there came again and touched me One like the appearance of a man, and He strengthened me, and said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when He had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my Lord speak; for Thou hast strengthened me"* (verses 18 & 19). It was only when Daniel was strengthened that he was able to receive what the heavenly Messenger spoke to him.

It might be questioned who this was that appeared to Daniel? Was it a created angel such as Gabriel? We have good reason to believe that it was a pre-incarnation visit of the Lord Jesus Christ. The description given in verses 5 and 6 are so similar to the description that the Apostle John gives of the Lord Jesus in Revelation 1 verses 13 to 17, that the two must be the same. There had been other times when the Lord Jesus had visited this earth in the form of a man before He was born in Bethlehem. The "Man" that wrestled with Jacob in Genesis 32, the "Son of God" who appeared with the three God-fearing men who were cast into the burning fiery furnace in Daniel 3, as well as the "Angel" that did wondrously before Manoah and his wife.

This visitation to Daniel by the Lord Jesus had a specific purpose. *"But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth"* (verse 21). Although they were not yet written down upon paper, they were written down in the mind and will of God, and so would eventually come to pass.

As mentioned earlier, Daniel had been very cast down because things did not seem to be going well for the people of God. They were in a very low state spiritually, and those who had returned to Jerusalem had met with much opposition. They had been hindered in rebuilding the temple. The following chapter speaks of great conflicts. The Lord was showing Daniel that His people would suffer many conflicts, and at times they would be in a very distressed state. The Lord's people primarily have three enemies: Satan, the world,

and self. These enemies continually seek to oppose and thwart the work of God in the hearts of His people. The Apostle Paul speaks of fighting the good fight of faith. We also read in Ephesians 6 of the weapons of our warfare. Amongst these, we read of the weapon of prayer. Daniel had used that weapon many times in his life and proved God's mercy and faithfulness. True prayer is always sent into the hearts of the Lord's people by the Holy Spirit through the Lord Jesus. There is not one child of God who knows how or what to pray for by themselves. God makes His people feel this very much, and He creates a cry to make them ask for prayer according to God's will. When we truly pray, we are conversing with the Almighty God. As the Lord's people "fight" with their spiritual enemies, they are taught that the most effective weapon they have is prayer. They know that true prayer is God's weapon against the enemies they have, and prayer alone can help them to overcome. The Lord Jesus has fought against His enemies and has prevailed. The greatest victory that He gained was at Calvary, where He destroyed the works of the devil. May we know something of what the apostle writes in the "*scripture of truth*," "*more than conquerors through Him that loved us*" (Romans 8.37).

A.T. Pickett

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about TRAPS. 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.

1. Who "fall into temptation and a snare"? (1 Timothy 6. 9)
2. What kind of person "spreadeth a net for his [neighbour's] feet"? (Proverbs 29. 5)
3. "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but ..." Finish the sentence. (Proverbs 29. 25)

4. What were the children of Israel commanded to burn, lest they should be a snare (or trap) to them? (Deuteronomy 7. 25)
5. Jesus told Peter to go to the sea and catch a fish. How was he to catch the fish? (Matthew 17.27)
6. What will happen to the man who digs a pit? (Ecclesiastes 10 & Psalm 7)
7. Write out two consecutive verses from Psalm 141 where David speaks of the snares, gins and nets of evil men, and his desire to escape from them.
8. The Jews came to Jesus trying to entrap Him in His words, but "He perceived their craftiness." What question had they asked Him? (Luke 20)
9. Read Ezekiel 12.13, which speaks of God setting a net and a snare for a king of Judah. Which king was it, and how was the prophecy in the latter part of the verse fulfilled? (Jeremiah 39)
10. Find two similar verses, each of which speaks of escaping two successive dangers, and then being entrapped by a third. (Isaiah 24 & Jeremiah 48)

ANSWERS TO SEPTEMBER QUESTIONS

1. Abraham.
2. Knowledge; wisdom.
3. The fear of the Lord causes us to "hate evil," it "prolongeth days," it is "strong confidence," "a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death," and by it we "depart from evil".
4. They needed to be "able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness."
5. For those who fear God, "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them," the Lord "pitieth them," His mercy "from everlasting and to everlasting" is upon them, and "the Lord taketh pleasure in them."
6. Instead of being "wise in our own eyes" we should "fear the Lord and depart from evil" (Proverbs 3.7). Instead of envying sinners, we should "be in the fear of the Lord all the day long" (Proverbs 23.17).
7. Cornelius (Acts 10. 2), Obadiah (1 Kings 18.3), Job (Job 1.1,8; 2.3).
8. Nehemiah (Nehemiah 5. 15).

THE LORD OUR HELP*(Psalm 124)*

On us in mercy, Lord, look down,
Put not our hope to shame;
We need Thy power to make us stand,
Our help is in Thy name.

Beset with snares on every side,
Depressed with anxious care,
Oh show Thyself, most gracious God,
And govern our affairs.

Hast Thou not power to help the weak,
Who cast themselves on Thee?
Shall not Thy grace be their support,
However tossed they be?

Yes, mighty God, who holdest all
In Thy own sovereign sway,
The darkest night shall by Thy love
Be turned to welcome day.

Thy needy ones, whose arm Thou art,
Shall ne'er be lost, though weak;
Oh grant us grace that we, dear Lord,
Thy promised help may seek.

By E. H. Preston in The Sower 1897

The Friendly Companion



“Oh...that Thine hand might be with me, and that Thou
wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me!”
(1 Chronicles 4.10)

November 2019

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

“What does it cost?” That is a very common question that is asked every day. Perhaps many of you have asked it. There was something you wanted to buy, but you wanted to know if you had enough money to purchase it or if it was really worth the price that was being asked.

Sometimes people have been so eager to obtain something that they paid much more than the item was worth. The value of something is determined by what good it will do us or how useful it will be. The value is also determined by how plentiful or rare the item is.

In the prophecy of Isaiah, the question was asked: *“Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread?”* (chapter 55 verse 2). What a searching question! It means that we spend so much of our time, our energy, and our money on things that cannot profit our souls.

Who can ever really describe “what it cost” Adam and Eve when they ate of the forbidden tree in the midst of the Garden of Eden? They lost their innocence (freedom from shame and guilt), they lost their communion with God, and they lost the beautiful garden that God had placed them in. They inherited sorrows, troubles, warfares (conflicts) and death. What a cost!

What a price Samson paid to satisfy his carnal lusts! He lost his strength and then his eyes. He also lost his freedom, as he was made to grind in the prison house. It is likely that for the rest of his days, he reflected on “what it cost” to yield to the lust of his eyes and of his flesh.

After Naaman had been cured of his leprosy, he returned to Elisha, offering him ten talents of silver, six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. Elisha refused to take anything, although Naaman urged him to do so. Elisha’s servant, Gehazi, could not understand why his master refused such valuable gifts. After Naaman left the house of Elisha, Gehazi ran after him and asked for a talent of silver and two

changes of garments, which Naaman was happy to give him. Upon his return to Elisha's house, Gehazi was asked if it was *"a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen?"* (2 Kings 5.26). The real desire of his heart was exposed. It is likely that the next words he heard would ring in his heart for the rest of his life: *"The leprosy ... of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed [children] for ever"* (verse 27). What a cost!

Judas Iscariot was called to be a disciple and an apostle of the Lord Jesus. He heard all the teachings of Jesus, saw His miracles, performed miracles in His name, and was sent forth to preach the Lord Jesus. Yet he coveted thirty pieces of silver so much that he betrayed Jesus to His enemies. Later, under a sense of tremendous guilt, he took his own life. What a cost!

The Bible is full of such warnings for us: Ahab coveting Naboth's vineyard; Lot's wife looking back to Sodom; Zedekiah, the king who refused to obey the Word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah. He was carried to Babylon, where his sons were slain before him, and then his own eyes were put out. These, and many more cases, all declare to us "what it costs" to reject the Lord and His Word.

Think what it cost the Lord Jesus to save poor, needy sinners. Such a cost is really known only to God. Paul spoke of *"the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood"* (Acts 20.28).

Dearly we are bought, for God
Bought us with His own heart's blood;
Boundless depths of love divine!
Jesus, what a love was Thine!

When Peter wrote his epistle, he was led by the Holy Spirit to teach the people of God the exceeding great cost of their redemption: *"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold... But with the precious blood of Christ"* (1 Peter 1.18,19).

Whenever you may be faced with a decision or a temptation, may the Lord bring this question before you: "What does or will it cost?"

With loving wishes from the Editor.

FORGIVEN AND FORGIVING

"And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses" (Mark 11.25,26).

In the Lord's Prayer, we ask God to *"forgive us our debts [trespasses], as we forgive our debtors [them that trespass against us]"* (Matthew 6.12). How often people have spoken these words when their hearts were full of unforgiving anger and revenge against those who have injured or offended them. Yet they asked God to forgive them as they have forgiven others – that is to say, not at all! They have reason to thank God that He did not answer that prayer.

We are called to show a different spirit; to show compassion towards others in the same way that we desire God to have compassion on us. Those whom God has forgiven should forgive one another, and they should forgive as God forgives – cheerfully, heartily, sincerely, readily, and forever.

People often keep a little grudge in their hearts against those who have wronged them, even after they have claimed to have forgiven them. They cannot quite forget the injury which was done. And they find it very hard indeed to forgive someone who continues to trespass against them time after time.

How few and small are the wrongs which our bitterest enemy has done to us, compared with our sins against God. Yet God has spoken in great mercy and compassion to His people: *"I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more"* (Jeremiah 31.34).

Adapted from Precious Truths in Plain Words

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**THE WIDOW'S POT OF OIL**

A widow woman came to Elisha, asking for help. Her husband was dead, and she was very poor. She owed so much money that her two sons were going to be taken away and sold as slaves. How could she pay her debts?

Elisha asked the widow what was in her house. She said that the only thing left was a pot of oil. He told her to borrow many empty vessels (jugs and jars) from her neighbours. Then Elisha told her to shut the door of her house and to pour oil into all those vessels.

The widow's sons brought the vessels to her, and she poured oil into each one. The pot of oil kept flowing until all the empty jugs were full. Then the oil stopped. The widow went to tell Elisha what had happened. He said, *"Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest."* In this wonderful way, the Lord supplied the needs of the poor widow. Her sons would not be taken away.

QUESTIONS:

1. The two sons were going to be sold as what?
2. What was left in the widow's house? (4 words)
3. What did Elisha tell her to borrow? (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. Elisha.
2. Ditches.
3. Blood.

Contributed

*“But my
God shall
supply
all your
need.”*

Philippians 4.19

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

The picture on the front cover for this month shows a bush with the scientific name of *Euonymus alatus*. It is a popular ornamental plant in gardens and parks. Most often, it is referred to as the “burning bush” because of the brilliant scarlet leaves that are displayed in the autumn. It is a very beautiful bush, and when the sunlight is reflected on the leaves, it truly has the appearance of fire.

It reminds us of another bush that was actually on fire. Of course, we are thinking of the bush that Moses saw in the backside of the desert. One day, as he was tending the sheep near Mount Horeb, Moses saw a bush that was burning. In itself, that was not strange or unusual in the hot desert. However, he soon noticed that the bush was not consumed, but kept on burning. We know the secret of its preservation – GOD WAS IN THE MIDST. God appeared to Moses “*in a flame of fire in a bush*” (Acts 7.30,31).

There are some very important lessons for us in this part of Moses’ life and in the wonderful appearance of the Lord in the burning bush. First, although he was “*learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*” (Acts 7.22), Moses must learn how to care for and lead a flock of sheep. That was necessary so that he could lead the people of Israel like a flock through the wilderness. What a lowly station that was for Moses, compared to the pomp of Egypt! Yet, he was very “*faithful in that which is least*” (Luke 16.10).

The second lesson for us to consider is how God was with Moses through all the years that he spent in the desert, although unseen. So it is in our times; the Lord is always with His people, even though they perceive it not. The bush that burned was nearby, and Moses was overcome with wonder at the sight.

The third lesson is how God waits patiently for His people. When He saw that Moses had turned aside (came near) to see why the bush was not consumed, God called his name: “*Moses, Moses*” (Exodus 3.4). He knows the names of all His people.

A fourth lesson to be learned is that when God's people come near to Him, there must be a distance between them, that they may perceive that He is holy. The Lord said to Moses, *"Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground"* (Exodus 3.5).

What a great mystery is displayed in the whole account! We are told in Deuteronomy 4 verse 24: *"For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire,"* and in Hebrews 12 verse 29 it says, *"For our God is a consuming fire."* Yet the bush was not consumed.

BIBLE LESSONS

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote that he had laboured more abundantly than the other apostles, though he was careful to acknowledge that it was through the grace of God which was given him. Paul had laboured in all his journeys to preach the gospel, especially in places where it had not come before. He laboured to establish churches, and then to correct the erroneous teachings that crept into the churches. He laboured in writing his epistles, which form a large part of the New Testament.

Even our youngest readers can no doubt name the writers of the four gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – and they may also know that Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles. The rest of the epistles were written by other men: James, Peter, Jude and John. Thus the whole of the New Testament Scriptures was written by eight men.

The writer of James was known by different names. Sometimes he was referred to as James "the less" or "the little" to distinguish him from James the brother of John. He was also known as James the son of Alphaeus.

In his epistle, James tells the believers that those who were rich (in the wealth of this world) were to rejoice in that they were made low, and the poor in that they were exalted. James here tells us that in Christ, rich and poor are on the same level.

Masters and servants are equal in the fear of God. He warned the believers not to hold those with riches in higher esteem than those who were poor. Oh, the lesson of humility!

James wrote of the royal law of Scripture: *"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."* James observed a fault among the believers, in that they professed to have a concern for the brethren who were in need of food or raiment, yet they never gave out of their abundance to supply that need. They were without the works to prove their faith. What a wonderful example he gave of how Abraham showed his love to God when he took Isaac and offered him up at God's commandment.

James had to expose another sinful practice that was wreaking havoc and destroying the unity of the believers. It dealt with a very little member that boasted great things: the tongue! What terms he used to describe it. A fire, a world of iniquity that defiles the whole body. Man can tame beasts, birds and creeping things, yet he cannot tame the tongue. *"Speak not evil one of another, brethren"* (James 4.11).

Again, he warned the believers lest they should presume of tomorrow as the ungodly did. He told them that their lives were like a vapour that appeared for a short moment and then vanished away. *"For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that"* (James 4.15).

James concluded his epistle by naming two very needful graces for the believers to endure the trials and temptations that would come upon them. First, they had need of patience, like the husbandman (sower) who after sowing his seed, waited for the precious fruit to appear. It required long patience through days and months of cold and heat, drought and rain. When suffering afflictions, they would need patience to wait on the Lord till He should turn their captivity.

The second grace was that of prayer. Whatever their state, whether sick or afflicted, "Let him pray," was the appointed way of relief. Likewise, when they sinned by speaking wrongly or by some unkind action, they were commanded to confess

their faults one to another and pray one for another, *“that ye may be healed”* (James 5.16).

QUESTIONS:

1. What were the rich to rejoice in? and the poor?
2. What did James refer to as the royal law of the Scriptures?
3. What little member wreaked havoc among the brethren?
4. What were they instructed to say regarding tomorrow? (18 words - write the whole verse)
5. What two graces did James say the believers needed to endure the trials of life?

Please send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail (See page 243 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

ANSWERS TO OCTOBER QUESTIONS

1. They were “weighty and powerful.”
2. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”
3. Jacob and Esau.
4. “Being made a curse for us.”
5. A crown of righteousness.

A DEFENDER OF CHRISTIANITY

In terms of the debt that Americans owe certain men for what they did for the Republic, no one stands taller than George Washington, rightly called the country’s father, and Abraham Lincoln, who is called its redeemer.

One of those of the second rank is John Marshall, who, more than anyone else, shaped and defined the authority of the Supreme Court and set its tone.

Chief Justice for more than thirty years, he delighted in travelling anonymously, usually in casual attire. Once, while in a hotel in Winchester, Virginia, some young men invited him to join their debate on Christianity. For an hour, he calmly

disarmed every argument brought against the teachings of Jesus Christ. Only after he left did they learn who he was.

Albert Beveridge (The Life of John Marshall)

A GOOD FOUNDATION

The first New England colleges were founded so that American candidates for the ministry need not return to England to be educated at Oxford or Cambridge. For this purpose, "it pleased God to stir up the heart of one Mr. Harvard, a godly gentleman and a lover of learning there living amongst us, to give one half of his estate ... towards the erecting of a college, and all of his library."

In 1642, *The Rules and Precepts* of Harvard stated: "Let every student be plainly instructed, and earnestly pressed to consider well, the main end of his life and studies is, to know God, and Jesus Christ, which is eternal life (John 17.3); and therefore to lay Christ in the bottom, as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning."

Old South Leaflets

A LESSON BY FATHER SNIP

In a village of England, there lived a labourer and his wife by the name of Ruffhed. They had one son named Tom, who was about nine or ten years of age. He was known in his own village and for miles around as a troublesome, naughty child. Even the animals seemed to know Tom, but not in a friendly sort of way. Hens scattered when they saw him, ducks took to the water, cats climbed trees, and dogs growled; even the geese hissed as he went by. So you can see that he was not a favourite in the village.

Not far from Mr. Ruffhed's cottage stood a small barber's shop. The barber was a kind old man who was commonly known as "Father Snip." He had a pretty good business among the villagers and farmers.

The barber had a neat little garden at the back of his house. In it was a fine apple tree that was laden with fruit. As autumn came on, the apples began to turn rosy red and glistened in the sun. Whenever Tom came out of school, he glanced up at the tree with longing eyes. The temptation grew stronger every day. Soon Tom felt that he could not rest until he had taken some of those beautiful apples.

One day, when he was quite sure the barber was busy with a customer, he crept around to the back and climbed over the low fence into the little garden. In a moment more, he was under the apple tree, filling his pockets and a little sack with the fruit. He was so busy that he did not notice he had dropped his handkerchief, on which his name was stitched across one corner. When Tom had picked as many apples as he could carry, he saw that he had nearly stripped the lower branches. "The barber will never find out who took them," he said to himself, as he climbed back over the fence and went towards home. However, Tom forgot that many secret things are brought to light through the overruling power of God. *"For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord"* (Proverbs 4.21).

A week or two after Tom had stolen the apples, Mrs. Ruffhed told him to stop at the barber for a haircut on his way home from school, for his hair had grown long and untidy. Tom made some objections, but his mother insisted, so he had to obey. Not having the courage to go alone, he asked a friend to go with him. As the two boys entered the barber's shop together, Tom said to himself, "I needn't be so afraid. No one saw me take the apples."

Father Snip's manner was just as usual; he was as pleasant and chatty as ever. Tom breathed more freely as the old man clipped the untidy ends of hair and talked so kindly to him. "Just wait one moment," said the barber, as Tom was going towards the door after paying for his haircut. "Wait one moment," repeated the old man. "I have something for you." Opening a cupboard, he took out a little basket and hastily left

the room. After a few minutes, he returned and put the basket into Tom's hands. "I have lately come to know," he said gently, "that you are fond of apples; please take them home and enjoy them."

Tom stared at the apples for a moment, and he managed to say, "Thank you." Then he ran out of the shop and home as fast as possible. He carried the basket up to his room, emptied the apples on his bed, and out fell his handkerchief. He had not once thought of it since the day he had taken it out by the apple tree. It was clean and neatly folded, with his name facing up. Now Tommy saw how his theft had been found out. How gently Father Snip had dealt with him! A good thrashing would have hurt Tom's feelings far less than this kind action; he was quite overcome. Sitting down on the side of his bed, he cried with shame and self-reproach.

"There is only one thing I can do," he said at length, drying his eyes. "I must go and tell Father Snip what a kind man he is and how sorry I am." Tom did not wait for second thoughts; seizing his cap, he ran downstairs and out the door. In a few minutes he stood at the door of the barber's shop. The old man was alone. Looking up as the boy entered, he saw the flushed, wet cheeks and eager eyes; he understood the repentance and softened feelings which Tom could not express. He held out both of his hands to Tom, showing that he was forgiven.

During the next quarter of an hour, the barber talked to Tom as the boy had never been spoken to before. Tom never forgot the lesson of the apples. After a while, there was a change in his character and conduct, so that everyone loved him rather than disliked him.

Adapted from The Little Gleaner 1877

THE DISHONoured GUEST

Jenny Randall was a poor widow woman who lived alone in a tiny cottage on the moor. She had only one living relative, a

nephew named John Randall. He lived about a mile away, but he had no love or respect for his aunt. Even though he was quite wealthy, he would do nothing to help her or make her more comfortable. Even worse, he often mocked her and said unkind things about her to his friends. She had never done him any harm, but she was a Christian, and that is what annoyed John. He hated religion and could not bear to see his old Aunt Jenny so happy and content in the Lord, in spite of poverty and loneliness.

One cold, dreary, winter day, Jenny had no food left in the house. She had eaten for breakfast the last bite of potatoes and last drop of milk left over from the day before. Snow had fallen heavily, and she was unable to get out of her little cottage. As evening came on, Jenny felt very hungry. How she wished she could have a little bread before bedtime. The Lord had always supplied her needs in the past, and she felt sure He would do so now. She could not see how bread could come to her that snowy night, but the chapter she had just been reading had this verse in it: "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21.22). So Jenny knelt down and asked her Father in heaven for bread. She waited a little while and prayed again; after another pause, she prayed for bread again, trusting that the Lord would provide.

That same evening, John Randall had been shopping in the town. Friends were coming for dinner the next day, and his wife had a dozen loaves of bread on her list. As he drove home with these and many other good things, he went by his aunt's cottage. It looked so dark and deserted that John thought he would just peek inside to see if she was dead or alive. He crept to the house and looked inside.

It was just when Aunt Jenny, with eyes closed, was praying her third prayer for bread. John was highly amused and thought he would play a trick on the old lady. He took one loaf, gently opened the door, and put the loaf on the table. Then he crept quietly away, chuckling to himself. Tomorrow

his aunt would be telling everyone that God had sent her a loaf by a miracle, but he would soon correct her! He would show that it was not God, but he himself who had supplied the loaf.

The next day, Mrs. Randall was astonished to see her nephew's horse and cart at the door. The boy who drove it brought an urgent invitation from John to go back to his house for dinner. Aunt Jenny could not understand it, but as quickly as her trembling hands would let her, she dressed herself in the shabby old things that were her best clothes.

The drive was delightful, with the snowy trees and hedges sparkling in the sunshine. Jenny's heart was rejoicing in her God, and she did not trouble herself by thinking of her nephew's motive for inviting her.

The door opened, and the servants received Mrs. Randall with such excessive politeness that she saw at once that it was not sincere. She was shown straight into the dining room, where John, his family, and his friends were already seated at the table. Her nephew greeted her in his usual mocking way and motioned her to a seat.

"The Lord be praised," exclaimed the old lady as a plate of hot dinner was set before her. She felt that her nephew and his friends were sneering at her, but she was filled with thankfulness to God and ate her meal joyfully.

After dinner, the company remained seated, and John addressed his aunt directly. "Well, Aunt Jenny," he said, "you have had a good dinner today; but what about yesterday? I thought perhaps you were starving, being shut up in your cottage by the snow."

The old lady looked up and said sweetly, "I have never been forsaken; the Lord Himself provides for His children."

"Oh, that is what you always say," said John. "But how does He provide? Can you give one instance of it?"

"Indeed, I can," said Aunt Jenny. "Last night I was fed in my little cottage, as miraculously as Elijah was fed by the brook!"

There was laughter around the table, for John had told all his guests what to expect. "Tell us about it," he said, glancing

around to see that everyone was listening. "Perhaps you will do our souls good too!" His voice was full of mockery.

Aunt Jenny looked up bravely and said, "Last night I had nothing at all to eat in the house, and I was very hungry. So I asked my Lord to send me bread. I was some time praying, but at last I got up from my knees. You will probably only laugh and refuse to believe me, but the truth is that on my table was a loaf of bread."

"A loaf!" exclaimed the whole company, trying not to laugh.

"I divided that loaf into three parts that it might last for three days," went on Aunt Jenny, "and how I thanked God at every mouthful as I ate my first portion!"

"But it is me you need to thank," said John, bursting out into a loud laugh, in which all his friends joined heartily.

When the mocking laughter had subsided a little, Aunt Jenny said quietly, "Elijah did not thank the ravens, John." That was all she said, but a sudden silence followed, and John's face flushed.

"You are just an old hypocrite," he said. "You can leave now – forever, I hope."

Jenny's response was made with quiet dignity: "I would not have come if you hadn't sent for me, John. For what you have given me, I think you; for the rest you must answer to God." She then got up and withdrew quietly.

One of the guests, a young lady, whispered to the gentleman beside her and ran out into the hall. "Let me help you with your coat," said the girl eagerly. "I hope you are not going to walk home!"

Poor Jenny was trembling all over but answered that, of course, she must walk home. By this time, the other guests were subdued and regretful and had come to watch. Seeing how he appeared to his guests, John tried to redeem his character by ordering the horse and cart again; so his old aunt was taken home in comfort.

There was an astonishing sequel to this attempt to mock at Jenny's religion. The next morning the kind-hearted girl came

to Jenny's cottage. She asked her to pray for her; the scene at the table had brought conviction to her soul, and she was filled with concern about her sinful state. Most gladly did Jenny tell her the good news of the gospel; that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. It was the beginning of a wonderful work of the Holy Ghost; for every one of that scoffing company was eventually brought to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour; the One who gave His life to save His people from their sins. Even John was humbled at last. When his heart was changed, he came humbly to Aunt Jenny, asking her forgiveness, and offered her an honoured place in his own home for the rest of her life.

Adapted from A Link in the Chain by Lydia M. Houghton

“BURY THE HATCHET”

What does “Bury the hatchet” mean? It is an old American/English expression, meaning “to make peace” [with an enemy].

One of the tribes of North America had a custom they followed when there was a quarrel between two tribes. When they came to a peace agreement and wanted to heal the division, they would take a hatchet (a tool with a sharp blade on one side and a hammer on the other side) and they would bury it. This meant putting the quarrel aside, agreeing to settle any differences, turning away from further argument, and carrying on as friends again.

It has been said that some people left a marker where the hatchet was buried so that they could dig it up again later. Friends, do not leave a marker like that! If you forgive, may the matter of contention be done. Bury the hatchet, but do not leave a marker behind. We are such fallen creatures; we are quick to resurrect old quarrels and faults to suit our flesh. At times we try to justify ourselves all over again.

True forgiveness is forgetting. When the Lord forgives, He forgets His people's sins in a judicial sense. He has covered

them up, and we should be ready to do likewise. It is at the foot of the cross where we find such matters are put right. When we come there, then we are ready to forgive others. The exhortation is given in Colossians 3.13: *“Forbearing one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.”*

We need God to give us a true spirit of forgiveness, like the prodigal son’s father, whom we read about in Luke 15. He was ready to forgive his son when he returned. *“When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.”* He saw the spirit of repentance and covered all the faults of his son – he was ready to forgive. O may we be ready to forgive, as we are forgiven. The Lord Jesus said, *“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses”* (Matthew 6.14,15).

Other relevant Scriptures are found in Proverbs 17 verse 9, Proverbs 28 verse 13, and Mark 11 verse 25.

From an address by G.D. Buss

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

THE BOOK OF DANIEL Chapter 11

“And it came to pass”

“Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help” (Daniel 11.34).

Although this chapter is extremely difficult to understand, may the Lord grant His gracious help as we try to explain simply some of the things recorded in it.

Last month we noticed how the Lord gave Daniel a vision that completely overwhelmed him. It was only as the Lord strengthened Daniel that he was able to understand the vision. The Lord revealed to him things that would soon come to pass and that would greatly affect the children of Israel.

Primarily, this chapter speaks of two kingdoms, the north and the south, with two kings over each. These two kingdoms would be at war with each other, and at times, each would conquer the other. The two kingdoms were Egypt (the Ptolemies in the south) and Syria (the Seleucids in the north). The wars would take place over a long period of time, with different kings coming to power on both sides. If you look at a map of this area in the world, you will find that Israel lies right between both kingdoms. As each of these kingdoms fought with each other, the land of Israel would be constantly caught up in these wars. Thus, what was being revealed to Daniel in this great vision would have a serious impact upon the children of Israel in the future. All that was revealed to Daniel came to pass according to the word of the Lord. The children of Israel suffered much; while fighting against each other, the kings sought to control the land and people of Israel.

From verse 21, Daniel was shown that a particular king of the northern armies would arise who would stand out from the other kings before him on either side. *"And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries"* (verse 21). That person would be Antiochus Epiphanes, whom we briefly noticed in chapter 8. He was extremely clever, very subtle and crafty, and he would often get his way by flattery. We read of the warning God gave to His people of the flatterer in the Book of Proverbs. *"He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips"* (Proverbs 20.19). Many people reach high positions of authority by using flattery. To flatter is to praise insincerely in order to persuade others to think well of us. Antiochus Epiphanes was a master at this and used it to work his way to the top. Once there, he showed his true colours and was a ruthless, cruel tyrant, wielding his power over all who were under him. May the Lord give us much grace to flee from the deceit of flattery and also to deliver us from casting the same

net at the feet of others. Flattery feeds the sin of pride, which God hates.

However, in seeking to further his ambitions and attack Egypt, Antiochus Epiphanes was thwarted by *"the ships of Chittim"* (verse 30) and forced to retreat. These *"ships of Chittim"* were the fleet of Roman ships carrying their army to assist the Egyptians. So he retreated back to Israel and attacked Jerusalem, where he overthrew everything to do with the true worship of God. *"And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate"* (verse 31). That is, he erected a pagan idol in the place of the altar.

By his flattery, persuasive and smooth talking, he sought to turn the Jews to his own way of thinking and to fall under him. However, there was a little remnant of Jews who sought, by the grace of God, to keep to the true worship of God and refused to yield to the evil ways of Antiochus Epiphanes. These God-fearing Jews suffered much. *"And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days"* (verse 33). Sadly, there were those of whom we read in verse 35, who still believed the flatterers and fell away; yet the faithful were helped with a little help. That is, they were upheld by the Lord God in all the sufferings they were called to pass through, for He has promised never to leave nor forsake His people. The Lord so often proves His lovingkindness at times when His people feel at their wits' end. Sometimes they feel that they are at the end of everything, but at times they are shown that they are sustained by an almighty God. His power alone brings them through.

Verses 36 to the end of the chapter are very deep and mysterious. Some say they continue to speak of Antiochus Epiphanes and his times. Others say that Daniel is now being shown that the Antichrist will rise up in the very final days of the world and that Antiochus Epiphanes is but a type of the

Antichrist. This we must leave. One thing we do know is that the Lord's people will suffer persecution during their lives on this earth. *"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived"* (2 Timothy 3.12,13). What a great mercy it will be if we are found among the godly! Whatever we may be called to suffer, the Lord is faithful to give sufficient grace to bear what He calls us to pass through, despite all our doubts and fears and sinful misgivings. The Lord does warn in His Word: *"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [the day of Christ's glorious return to this earth] shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped"* (2 Thessalonians 2.3,4). Although there will be a great falling away of many professing Christians in the latter days, may it be our mercy to be made real Christians and to be kept faithful unto the end.

A.T. Pickett

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about FORGIVENESS. 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. Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" What did Jesus reply? (Matthew 18.21)
2. Who is described as "blessed" in Psalm 32.1?
3. Finish the verse in 1 John 1.9, beginning, "If we confess our sins..."
4. What solemn warning did Jesus speak in Matthew 6.15 about forgiving others?
5. King David sinned deeply and afterwards wrote Psalm 51 as an

expression of his repentance. Which two words, which mean “forgive,” did he use in both verses 1 & 9?

6. On the cross the Lord Jesus prayed for those who in ignorance were cruelly treating Him. What was His prayer? (Luke 23)
7. Similar verses in Ephesians 1 and Colossians 1 both say “we have redemption ... the forgiveness of sins.” Which three words in the middle show how God can forgive sinners?
8. What did Jesus say to the man sick of the palsy who had been let down through the roof in front of Him? (Luke 5)
9. When God answered Solomon’s prayer at the dedication of the temple, He promised to forgive those in whom four things were seen. What were those four things? (2 Chronicles 7)
10. Name two people who asked for forgiveness or pardon, but never forsook their sin, and finally perished. (Exodus 10, 1 Samuel 15)

ANSWERS TO OCTOBER QUESTIONS

1. They that will be [i.e. are determined to be] rich.
2. A flatterer.
3. “The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.”
4. The graven images of the heathen gods.
5. Peter caught the fish by using a (baited) hook.
6. He shall fall into it. (Ecclesiastes 10.8 & Psalm 7.15)
7. “Keep me from the snares which they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity. Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst that I withal escape.” (Psalm 141.9,10)
8. “Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or no?” (Luke 20.20-23)
9. Zedekiah; his eyes were put out by Nebuchadnezzar so he never saw the land of Babylon, even though he died there.
10. “And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare.” (Isaiah 24.18)
“He that fleeth from the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that getteth up out of the pit shall be taken in the snare.” (Jeremiah 48.44)

Contributed

THE WORLD

See, the world for youth prepares,
Harlot-like, her gaudy snares!
Pleasures round her seem to wait,
But 'tis all a painted cheat.

Rash and unsuspecting youth
Thinks to find thee always smooth,
Always kind, till better taught,
By experience dearly bought.

So the calm, but faithless sea
(Lively emblem, world, of thee)
Tempts the shepherd from the shore,
Foreign regions to explore.

While no wrinkled wave is seen,
While the sky remains serene,
Filled with hopes and golden schemes,
Of a storm he little dreams.

But ere long the tempest raves,
Then he trembles at the waves;
Wishes then he had been wise,
But too late – he sinks and dies.

Hapless thus, are they, vain world,
Soon on rocks of ruin hurled,
Who admiring thee, untried,
Court thy pleasure, wealth, or pride.

Such a shipwreck had been mine,
Had not Jesus (name divine!)
Saved me with a mighty hand,
And restored my soul to land.

Now, with gratitude, I raise
Ebenezers to His praise;
Now my rash pursuits are o'er,
I can trust thee, world, no more.

John Newton

The Friendly Companion



Snow-capped Mountains in Montana, USA

“Let us now go ... and see this thing which is come to
pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.”
(Luke 2.15)

December 2019

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

“What time is it?” That is a question that is asked many times over. It shows how we are regulated by time. Perhaps one of the first things children learn about time is when it is bedtime. As they grow older, they learn how time governs many areas of life, such as mealtime, playtime and schooltime. There are many routine daily occurrences that are regulated by time and carried out with little thought.

The Bible gives an answer to the question, “What time is it?” Hosea wrote in his prophecy: *“It is time to seek the LORD”* (Hosea 10.12). This was written to the people of Israel in a time when they had forsaken the Lord. The Lord, in mercy, sent this word to stir them up. How applicable is this word for us at the present time! When nations are turning from the Lord, and people are hardening their hearts against the Lord, then perilous times shall come. *“IT IS TIME TO SEEK THE LORD.”*

It is time to seek the Lord, for He is yet to be found. This is God’s great mercy to poor, needy sinners. It is a time to pray! *“For this shall every one that is godly pray unto Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found”* (Psalm 32.6). David wrote in Psalm 69 verse 13: *“But as for me, my prayer is unto Thee, O LORD, in an acceptable time.”* Whenever the Lord gives a spirit of grace and supplication (prayer), it is a time when He may be found and when a poor sinner is accepted by Him. The Lord spoke to His people of old: *“I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured [helped] thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation”* (2 Corinthians 6.2).

It is time to seek the Lord, for the great day of His coming is drawing near. *“And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory”* (Mark 13.26). As the Lord told the people of the signs that would precede that day, He gave this counsel: *“Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is”* (Mark 13.33).

It is time to seek the Lord when one is brought into great need, whether it be in soul, body, or circumstances. How encouraging is the Word of God to a person who feels the need to seek the Lord: *"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need"* (Hebrews 4.16).

"It is time to seek the Lord." The time of our sojourning here upon earth will soon be over. Like Jacob, we have to say, *"Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been"* (Genesis 47.9). In writing to the Corinthians, Paul told them, *"The time is short"* (1 Corinthians 7.29). When writing to Timothy, Paul declared that *"the time of my departure is at hand"* (2 Timothy 4.6). This time of departure will come to every one of us and will bring an end to the time of seeking. All that is known on earth of relationships, possessions, sorrows and joys, will be known no more.

May the Lord help you each to seek Him now, in the time He has given you.

With loving wishes from the Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

What do you associate with the month of December? Most of us would mention three things without any hesitation. First, it is the last month of the year. It is a reminder of the fleeting nature of time. Perhaps you have heard some say, "It seems like the year has just begun and now we are at the end." Even some of our young readers may have felt how quickly the year has passed.

I feel sure that many of our younger friends think of the Christmas season when hearing of December. Perhaps you like to think of the beautiful Christmas hymns or the gatherings with family and friends. Indeed, it is a lovely time of the year.

Also, December is the month in which winter begins. The daylight is short, the temperatures are declining, the trees have lost their leaves, and the first snowfalls have come.

As we write this piece (in October), our friends in Chateau have experienced an early winter storm with nearly forty inches of snowfall. It was anticipated that nearly fifteen feet of snow would fall in the mountains nearby. What a lovely sight it is to see the snow-capped mountains! When the sun shines upon them, they glisten and sparkle. Because of its whiteness, the snow conveys to us the emblem of purity. When David, the king, was convicted of his dreadful sins, he prayed, "*Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow*" (Psalm 51.7). You may remember that hyssop was used to apply the blood to the doorpost on the great Passover night in Egypt. Perhaps referring to that picture, David longed for the application of the blood of the Saviour to his heart and conscience. That alone could cleanse him of such black, defiling sins. If God would be pleased to wash his soul with that blood, he knew that he would be whiter than snow. All of his sin, shame and guilt would be washed away.

THE KING'S BIRTHDAY

During his last illness, the well-known Scottish minister, John Brown of Haddington, heard the church bells ringing. He enquired what it meant, and he was told that it was to celebrate the birthday of King George III.

He replied, "Blessed be God, however worthy our king is, we have a better King's birthday to celebrate. '*For unto you is born ... in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord*' (Luke 2.11). On account of that event, the gospel bells have been sounding for ages past, and they will ring louder and louder still. O the Saviour! The Son of God, our Saviour! O His kindness, His kindness! A Saviour to sinners; to me!"

John Brown of Haddington by Robert Mackenzie

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**A LITTLE ROOM FOR ELISHA**

A woman saw Elisha passing by on his way to Shunem. She urged him to come into her home to eat bread. From that time on, Elisha would come in for a meal with this woman and her husband whenever he passed by.

The woman saw that Elisha was a “*man of God.*” She asked her husband to make a little room for Elisha to rest in when he came that way. Inside the room, they put a bed, a table with a stool, and a candlestick to give light. What a comfort that was for Elisha when he was weary!

Elisha wondered what he could do for the woman who was so kind to him. She was happy in her home and did not want any special honour. However, Elisha’s servant saw that she had no child, and her husband was old. Elisha called the woman and told her that she would be given a son. It seemed too great for her to believe, but the Lord brought it to pass. He rewarded the woman’s kindness to His servant Elisha.

QUESTIONS:

1. The woman saw that Elisha was what? (4 words)
2. What did they make for Elisha? (3 words)
3. Elisha told her that she would be given what?
(2 words)

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. Slaves.
2. A pot of oil.
3. Many empty vessels.

Contributed

*“Be not
forgetful
to
entertain
strangers”*

Hebrews 13.1

BIBLE LESSONS

THE EPISTLES OF PETER

One of the most well-known of the Lord's disciples and apostles was Peter. We have sometimes thought that Peter was like Samson in the Old Testament. Sometimes he was so strong and bold, and at other times he was weak and afraid. One of the first dealings the Lord had with Peter was in Luke chapter 5, when He preached to the people from Peter's boat. When the Lord had finished His sermon, He told Peter to launch out into the deep and let down his nets. Although they had toiled all night and taken nothing, yet by obeying the Lord, Peter, Andrew, James and John filled both of their ships with fishes. Peter came and fell down before Jesus, saying: "*Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord*" (Luke 5.8). Through the rest of his life, Peter would be taught much more of the truth of his confession. What a sinner he felt himself to be on one occasion when the Lord reproved him by saying, "*Get thee behind Me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men*" (Mark 8.33). How ashamed Peter must have felt!

On another occasion, when he ventured out of the ship and walked on the water to go to Jesus, how strong his faith was! But soon he took his eyes off Jesus and looked at the wind blowing the waves, and he began to sink. The Lord reproved him for his unbelief. What a sinner he felt himself to be!

Later, when Jesus was taken to the judgment hall of Pilate, on three different occasions, Peter denied any knowledge of Jesus. Yet, through God's mercy, the crowing of a rooster shook him out of his careless state. More than ever before, he felt himself to be "a sinner."

These painful, yet necessary, lessons would help Peter in writing his two Epistles. He began in the first Epistle to write of the elect of God who are "*kept by the power of God*" (1 Peter 1.5). Peter was not kept from falling into those sins, was he? But he was kept from falling away. He was kept from continuing in them. He was kept from hardening his heart in

his sins. The Lord gave him a broken heart, by which he was brought to godly sorrow and repentance for his sins.

He wrote of the salvation of God for such sinners and how they were redeemed by *“the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot”* (1 Peter 1.19). As Peter continued writing his first Epistle, he told how the Lord Jesus was set up as *“a chief corner stone, elect, precious ... unto [them] therefore which believe He is precious”* (1 Peter 2.6,7). What a beautiful word is the word “precious.” If something has a great value, a great worth, it is esteemed very precious. Peter used this word more than all the other writers of the New Testament.

Peter addresses his second Epistle to all who *“have obtained like precious faith”* (2 Peter 1.1). The Bible tells us that faith is a gift of God. Not only is it a gift of God, but without it, we cannot please Him. Peter had learned this truth by the trials through which he passed. He wrote again: *“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire”* (1 Peter 1.7).

Peter wanted the New Testament believers to know that the faith which enabled them to believe on the Lord Jesus, follow in His steps, profess His name before those who would mock, and which made them willing to bear His cross, was the same precious faith that he and the other apostles possessed. It was also the same faith that was given to the Old Testament saints. In the great chapter of faith, Hebrews 11, we read of many wonderful works of faith in the Old Testament saints. All these things are to be most surely believed because the men of God who wrote of them *“spake [wrote] as they were moved by the Holy Ghost”* (2 Peter 1.21).

To these believers, whom Peter called strangers and pilgrims, were given *“all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him [Christ] that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises”* (2 Peter 1.3,4). What a picture Peter draws for us in his Epistles of how precious the

Lord Jesus is, as He is laid as the foundation, in the fulness of His Person, in the faith given to believe on Him, and in the promises that are performed by Him.

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Peter say the elect of God were kept by? (4 words)
2. What were they redeemed by? (5 words)
3. What was Jesus set up as? (6 words)
4. What did Peter say they had all obtained? (3 words)
5. Peter described the promises given unto them as being what? (4 words)

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. That they were made low. That they were exalted.
 2. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."
 3. The tongue.
 4. "For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (James 4.15).
 5. Patience and prayer.
-

A BRAND PLUCKED FROM THE BURNING

In the early years of the twentieth century, a group of boys was passing the time by playing a game of football on the village green. These lads were from godly homes and had been taught never to swear or curse, even in the heat of the moment. Watching from the sideline was a lad of the same age whom they did not know. After a while, he asked to join the game, which they willingly allowed him to do.

It was not long before the lad began to swear when the game was not going the way he wanted. The other lads stopped the game and said, "You are ever so welcome to play with us, but not if you swear."

The lad had never heard that it was wrong to swear, and a question arose in his mind as to why this group of boys was different. In conversation, they told him that they attended the local Strict Baptist chapel with their parents and that, if he wished, they would take him along with them.

The Lord was evidently in this matter, for the lad became a regular worshipper. He was taught of God under the ministry and brought by God's grace into the way of salvation. He later was baptized, and a few years after that, he became a minister in our churches and eventually a well-loved pastor.

How wonderful and sure are God's dealings!

G.D. Buss

"KEEP THE STAR IN SIGHT"

In a wild spot on the coast of Cornwall, I became acquainted with an old sea captain named Will Treherne. He was getting to be an old man when I would see him sitting on the beach after his work was done, smoking his pipe and gazing at the evening star. He would tell stirring stories of sea life and adventure to the boys who gathered around him. One evening he narrated the following story:

"Thirty years ago, on just such a night as this, the wind was whistling as it does now, and the sea was rising. We were in as poor a craft as seamen ever sailed in, and we found ourselves drifting along a dangerous coast. Our captain was an experienced one. When he saw the kind of weather we were threatened with, he took his place at the wheel and did his best to keep our courage up. He was in terribly poor health, but his spirits rose above his bodily weakness. He gave his orders with such courage and determination that it had a positive effect upon every one of us.

'Will Treherne,' he cried, 'stand by me if you can be spared. My strength is going. Do you see that star right ahead?'

'Yes, sir,' I replied.

‘If my strength should fail, steer right ahead toward that star, and you will be safe. And oh, remember, Will, that there is another Star you must always keep in view if you are to get safely into port at last.’

‘I knew what he meant. He was pointing me to the Lord Jesus Christ, for he was as good a Christian as he was a captain. He never lost an opportunity of saying a word that might steady us youngsters and make us think of our souls. I have heard many sermons since that night in the storm, when he told me to keep the star in sight; but none took more hold of me than that one, when I lost my truest and best friend.’

‘Did you lose him that night?’ I asked.

‘Yes, my lad,’ the sailor answered sadly. ‘His hour was come. When he could stand the gale no longer, he shouted as loud as he could, ‘Keep the star in sight, my lads; keep the star in sight!’ Then he was helped down to the cabin, and I never saw him alive again. I was lashed to the wheel. Though the spray nearly blinded me, yet I managed to keep the star in sight while the first officer gave orders for managing the ship. After two hours of steering through a narrow and dangerous channel, we found ourselves in a friendly sea at last. The star had guided us right.’

‘When the ship was in safety, and my turn at work was over, I went down to the captain’s cabin. A flag was thrown over his body, but his manly, resolute face was still visible. I knelt down there and prayed for God to guide me through the storms of life. I believe I can say that from that night, in spite of my faults and failings, I have kept the Star in sight. Now you will know why I am such a stargazer. If I may give you a bit of counsel, my lad, let me advise you to seek grace to begin and steer your course by the Star of Bethlehem. If your eye is fixed on that Star, you will come safely through the dangers of life into the port of peace at last.’

Adapted from The Little Gleaner 1888

GOLD, FRANKINCENSE AND MYRRH

During the Christmas season, we often read the account of the wise men from the east who came to see the Lord Jesus, presenting to Him the well-known gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

What was the significance of these particular gifts? The two spices were used at Christ's burial, but it is also interesting to note that the first time these three items are mentioned together in the Bible is in Exodus 30. In this chapter, the Lord was instructing Moses on how to make and use the altar of incense.

Gold was a principal material used in the construction of this altar. It is sometimes called the "golden altar," because it was completely covered with gold. The Lord told Moses that it was to be overlaid with "*pure gold*" and to have a "*crown of gold round about it.*"

The golden altar of incense was to be anointed with a special oil. Myrrh was the first ingredient in the spices used to make this oil, by which the altar was made holy before God.

The incense burned on the altar was made of three sweet spices, which were then mixed with frankincense. This made a sweet-smelling perfume, which was also holy; the Lord said, "*It shall be unto you most holy.*"

Furthermore, this altar was to be placed "*before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee.*" This clearly points to "*God with us,*" or "*Emmanuel*" (Matthew 1.23) – the dear Lord Jesus.

So gold, frankincense and myrrh were all mentioned in the Old Testament in connection with the altar of incense. Like many other things in the temple, the altar of incense pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ. The altar of incense showed the Israelites the way in which they could be accepted before God, which is just what the Lord Jesus does for His people. The Bible tells us that "*by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*" (Hebrews 10.14). Just as the anointing oil and incense made the altar holy to God and to

man, the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus is holy in His sight and most holy and precious in the sight of a child of God. This sacrifice makes His people holy and acceptable before God. Once a year, the horns of the altar were sprinkled with blood, which symbolised the atonement that the Lord Jesus made for His people by shedding His blood for them.

So, these well-known gifts pointed to the fulfilment of the prophecies and that this Babe born in Bethlehem was the Messiah, coming to fulfil the law and to suffer for His people.

There is no further need for the altar of incense, but may we each come to know our need of the true sacrifice, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is *“more precious than fine gold”* (Isaiah 13.12). If we are shown that He came to earth to be that sacrifice for us, then we will know the true blessing of Christmas.

Contributed

MY MOTHER'S CHAPTER

There is one chapter of the New Testament which I always read with special pleasure because of the early memories it brings to mind. I call it my mother's chapter. It is the second chapter of Luke, which relates the interesting account of the birth and early life of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

By my mother's wish, I memorised this chapter when I was about seven years of age and repeated it to her on Christmas morning. She sat with the Bible in her hands while I stood before her and recited the chapter, and I still remember her looks of approval. My memory was good, and my mother desired to store it with the best knowledge, such as might prove to be a blessing in my future life. I still remember some of the remarks which she made to me that morning on the nature of the gospel tidings and my own need of a Saviour to wash away my sins; I also remember her affectionate kiss and her praise for following her wishes in learning such a long chapter for the sake of giving her pleasure.

My mother was not in the habit of rewarding me for repeating a lesson correctly, except by her approval. However, since it was Christmas day, she gave me a bright new half-crown (large coin). I was so delighted that I showed it to everyone who came into the house. That half-crown was spent long ago, and I have forgotten for what purpose it was used. The possession of it gave but a passing enjoyment, while the remembrance of my mother's love often returns as a pleasant memory whenever I read the second chapter of Luke.

Let me advise my young readers always to try to give prompt and cheerful obedience to the wishes of their parents. By doing so, they will lay up memories that will be sweet and soothing in time to come; perhaps when those who now care for them so tenderly may be laid in the silent grave. Learning the scriptures from an early age may be the means of an even greater spiritual blessing. It may be spoken of our young friends, as it was of Timothy: *"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"* (2 Timothy 3.15).

Adapted from The Little Gleaner 1933

A WITNESS AT WORK

In the year 1986 I was responsible for computing at the laboratory where I worked. At that time, the first Apple Mac computers had not long been released; Microsoft Windows had been available for about a year but was not widely used, and computers generally were not like the personal computers we have today. Most computing was done on terminal screens which could only display fixed-width characters and no graphics, and the common screen size could display twenty-four lines of text with eighty characters per line.

Being very concerned at the increasing frivolity during the Christmas season, it came to my mind to try and write a poem expressing my concerns. I have never had any gift for poetry

but wrote the following lines, arranged so that they would just fit side by side on the computer screen, and made them so they were displayed as a message on everyone's screen when they logged on in the morning, for just a few days before the Christmas break.

Thoughts on Christmas

No pageantry or pomp is here;	The peace which Jesus came to bring,
No feasting, wine or drink,	If this the case, is not
A little babe; a stable drear –	For such as you. His Name you'll sing,
Should we not stop and think	Yet in your heart you've got
How we should act when we appear	No room for Him. As when on earth
To celebrate Christ's birth,	He still is set at nought,
In name at least? Is He so dear	Despised, rejected. Why the mirth
To you, that you on earth	Then, if salvation wrought
Would go and leave your chief concern,	By Him, for sinners lost and poor,
As shepherds did of old;	Is still to you a dream?
To go to Bethlehem and learn	But there are some, who evermore
There, e'en as angels told	Will bless the Lord, and deem
Of Christ the Lord, a King to reign?	It worthy of their highest praise,
Or do you simply use	That Jesus Christ came down
His name – which oft you take in vain	To save from sin, and sinners raise
Just as a lame excuse	To an eternal crown.
For every kind of vain delight?	Such only, truly have good ground
To eat, to drink, to find	His birth to celebrate.
Your only happiness in sight	And all but such will be disowned
Of things you'll leave behind.	Of Him, whose name they hate.

I must confess I was worried about what effect the message would have, but no one objected; and to my surprise, several staff commented on it appreciatively. When I finally left the laboratory in 2004, one of the staff presented me with a copy of the poem which he had kept for over seventeen years.

Not long afterward, in early March 1987, was a week I shall never forget. We were looking for an additional person to help with computer programming and had interviewed and appointed a person to join us. He was due to start on Monday, March 2nd. As soon as I reached work that day, the personnel officer called me into her office to tell me that she had just received a phone call to say that the person concerned had been murdered over the weekend. I was deeply shocked.

Two days later, all the laboratory staff were called together to a meeting, to be told that one of our colleagues, whom I knew very well, had been found dead, having committed suicide.

In deep concern, I wrote the following verses, again to be displayed as a computer message.

A Sad Reflection

How awful is the news we heard;	To each in measure still will come
Within just five short days,	Life's trouble, loss and pain.
Two grievous, violent deaths occurred –	But where's your treasure? Are you dumb
Well might we stand and gaze	Because your only gain
In sad concern, so deeply shocked,	Is money, riches, on this earth?
Not knowing what to say.	No love to God, His ways,
For still in memory's view are locked	His truth. No hope of heaven. A dearth
Those times when, day by day	Of humble awe betrays
We spoke to those who are no more.	The fact your heart is here below.
But is there not a voice	You have no God to cheer,
To us? We act as if by law	To comfort in distress; to go
Tomorrow comes. A choice	To in your greatest fear.
Of what we do, of how we live.	Your sorrows you may try to brave,
Are now the days unfurled	But back to you be hurled
Which will this solemn witness give:	They will, if written on your grave:
"Without God in the world?"	"Without God in the world."

Many times since, I have wondered how it was I did what today would hardly be tolerated in most workplaces; and whether God had any gracious purpose in it. The poetry may be poor, but the solemnity of those occasions has made me many times to "*stand in awe*" (Psalm 4.4). We do not know when we might be called upon to bear witness to the truths we love, and in paths we would never have chosen to walk in.

J.A. Kingham

"A TIME TO SPEAK"

Ecclesiastes 3.7

When I first went to work at the hospital as a young man, I shall never forget how God answered one of my prayers. In those days, there were comparatively few Christian men in that institution. I knew my own weakness, and I simply prayed for

God to keep me and to help me to confess Him. That prayer was answered on the first day I was there in a striking way. I mention it because it may help to strengthen other young friends.

On that first day, I happened to meet a kind fellow who said, "You are a newcomer, aren't you? Will you come to our debating society? We call it the Clinical Society."

"When is it?" I asked.

"It is tonight, and we like to get new men. There is nothing religious about it." He seemed to think that anything religious would be a terrible thing to me. He further said, "One of our rules is that nobody is allowed to allude to a religious thing."

I went to the meeting, and I shall never forget that night! Taking the chair was one well known by name, Mr. (now Sir) Frederick Treves. In the course of the proceedings, they talked about many things which I did not understand at all, medical things. When one man was upon his feet, he took occasion to say something about Jesus Christ that made my blood boil and my ears tingle. I was astonished and horrified. After a while, he sat down. I wondered what ought to be done. I think that my brain had not "made up its mind," but my legs had automatically made up their mind, and I found myself standing on my feet. Of course, I had to say something, so I said, "Mr. President and gentlemen, I do not know whether it is in order for a first-year man to speak."

"We shall be glad to hear you," they said.

"Well," said I, "when I came up here, I was informed by the gentleman who invited me that it is against the laws of your society to allude to religious matters. Is that so?"

"Quite right," they said.

"If that is so, Mr. President; if we are not allowed to refer to religious matters, then I beg to protest against the words of the speaker who just sat down. He has spoken against One who is my Lord, my Saviour, and my King, in a way that deeply offended me, and I protest." I sat down, not knowing what

would happen; whether there would be a tremendous hissing or not. Instead, there was loud approval.

At the close of the meeting, Mr. Treves came up to me and asked my name. "Now look here, Guinness," he said. "I am glad to know you. You come back to these meetings, and if ever a man does what that one did tonight, you do exactly what you did tonight." Sir Frederick Treves has remained my friend from that day to this.

By Dr. Harry Guinness
Adapted from Friendly Companion 1972

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

THE BOOK OF DANIEL Chapter 12

"Then cometh the end"

"But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." (Daniel 12.13)

We now come to the last chapter of the Book of Daniel. It continues on from the previous chapter, where Daniel was given a vision by the Lord God of things that would come to pass on the earth that would greatly affect the children of Israel.

In the opening verse, Daniel is told of a time when the people of God would endure great suffering. It would be a time of immense persecution, *"such as never was since there was a nation"* (Daniel 12.1). But then, when the trouble seemed that it could not get any worse, there would be deliverance, *"and at that time Thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book"* (verse 1). What is that book? *"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels"* (Revelation 3.5). The book of life contains all the names of the Lord's people from the beginning of the world to the end of time. Daniel's name

would be found amongst that great number written therein; but the vital thing for us is whether our name will also be there.

From his youth, Daniel was given grace and faith to serve the Lord God. The tender fear of God greatly influenced all that he did, causing him to do that which was right and to flee from the very appearance of evil. Throughout his life, under different rulers and regimes, Daniel was kept faithful in seeking to walk humbly before the Lord his God. At times, he had to stand firm and refuse to obey when commanded to do things that he knew were sinful. He knew that the eye of the Lord was always upon him. The Lord had preserved him in the faith thus far and would continue to do so until the end of his life. The source of his strength was the help of God, which he continually relied upon in every time of need. At least three times a day, Daniel would turn towards the holy temple in Jerusalem, where God had promised to commune with His people and to hear and answer their cries for His great name's sake.

In verse six, a question was asked about how long it would be until the events spoken of in the great vision would come to pass. The answer in verse seven is very mysterious: *"And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by Him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when He shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished."* What is meant by *"time, times, and an half?"* Biblical scholars and commentators differ on their understanding of what is meant. Some would have "time" to be a year; others say that it is a prophetic year (360 years). Perhaps the wisest reply is that of Daniel: *"And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?"* (verse 8) Daniel, who was favoured with great wisdom in so many things, said that he did not understand. He asked the Lord to make it known unto him.

However, the Lord did not give Daniel the answer he sought: *“And He said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end”* (verse 9).

Daniel, by the grace of God, must continue to live his life serving the Lord. The Lord had shown him this great vision, and he was told to write it down so that it would be found in the sacred Scriptures. When the time comes for these prophecies to be fulfilled, the people of God living at that time will be strengthened in their great afflictions. Just as the many prophecies concerning the coming of the Lord Jesus must have seemed shrouded in mystery until they were all fulfilled, so will it be with the prophecies in the book of Daniel.

Almost all biblical scholars agree that the vision Daniel was shown in chapter 11 relates to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, but that it also pertains to the very last days of the earth before the return of the Son of God in His power and glory. Evil men will become worse and worse, and Satan will be permitted to cause great grief and suffering to the church of God, so that the Lord's people will be in great affliction towards the end of the world. Yet, the Lord will always be with His people to strengthen and support and give all needed grace for such things as will come upon them. All the Lord's people will suffer tribulation during their lives, as God will try their faith and separate them from the world and from their own sinful corruptions. God will cause those very tribulations to work together for their spiritual good. Heaven will be an eternal rest and comfort for every child of God who suffered during their lives upon this earth. In the Book of the Revelation, we read this description of the Lord's people: *“These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb”* (Revelation 7.14).

In attempting to write this series on the Book of Daniel, we have been concerned to keep things simple and not to speculate on prophetical points where the meaning is not

clear. Sadly, many professing Christians have been taken up with studying the latter-day prophecies, to their spiritual detriment. Our great concern should be the salvation of our never-dying souls, by obtaining the mercy of God, through the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. All the prophecies of God will come to pass in their appointed time. As there were certain things that Daniel did not understand in his life, so there will be certain things in our lives that we do not understand. May we, like Daniel, be enabled to commit all unto the Lord and seek grace to trust in Him alone. What the future holds for us each, we simply do not know. As it was with Daniel, so may it be with ourselves: *"But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days"* (verse 13).

A.T. Pickett

Carnal reason always traces everything from God to second causes and leaves them there, floating upon uncertainties; but faith traces them up to the first great Cause and fixes them there, by which means God's hand is known and Himself glorified.

William Huntington

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about QUESTIONS IN GENESIS. 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. All references are from the Book of Genesis.

1. "Who art thou, my son?" What answer was given to this question and was it true? (27.18)
2. "Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" What was Abraham's

- answer, and what was offered as a burnt offering? (22.7,13)
3. "Why art thou wroth? [angry] and why is thy countenance fallen?" God asked this question of Cain. Why was Cain angry? (4.4-6)
 4. "Where is Abel thy brother?" What did Cain reply, and what had he done? (4.9)
 5. "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Who said this and to whom was he speaking? (39.9)
 6. "Wilt thou go with this man?" To whom was this question addressed, and what was the answer? (24)
 7. "How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son?" What solemn yet deceitful answer was given to this question? (27)
 8. Pharaoh asked Jacob a question, to which the answer was "an hundred and thirty years..." What was the question? (47)
 9. What is the first question in the Bible, and to whom was it spoken?
 10. "What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves?" Who said this to whom, and why was he in such a predicament?

ANSWERS TO NOVEMBER QUESTIONS

1. "I say not unto thee, until seven times: but, until seventy times seven."
2. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."
3. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
4. "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."
5. "Blot out."
6. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23.34)
7. "Through His blood." (Ephesians 1.7, Colossians 1.14)
8. "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee." (Luke 5.20)
9. Humility, prayer, seeking God's face, turning from their wicked ways. (2 Chronicles 7.14)
10. Pharaoh (Exodus 10. 16-20). Saul (1 Samuel 15. 24-26).

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

I want to be certain my sins are forgiven;
I want a good title to mansions in heaven;
I want to know Christ, as my Lord and my God;
I want to be cleansèd from sin in His blood.

I want to inherit the treasures of grace,
Laid up for the chosen, regenerate race;
I want to be like my Redeemer in mind,
And in His embraces my heaven to find.

I want His good Spirit to witness in me
That I am His purchase and with Him shall be;
I want the sweet liberty He can bestow;
I want in His likeness and knowledge to grow.

I want in His life-giving presence to walk,
And with Him and of Him forever to talk.
Yea, nothing can satisfy wants such as mine,
Until I'm quite like Him and with Him I shine.

Not all that creation affords can impart
Relief to my conscience or joy to my heart,
Till Jesus assures me He's mine and I'm His;
This only commences my glory and bliss.

Hail, happy believer! My God shall supply
The whole of your needs, from His treasures on high,
His covenant mercy and kindness are such
That you cannot request of His bounty too much.

He taught you your need of the blessings you crave;
The blessings themselves He in covenant gave;
They are labelled and dated, and must be sent down,
With grace to enrich you, and glory to crown.

Joseph Irons

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OUR MAGAZINES

It is of God's mercy that we have been brought through another year. We can only hope that there has been some real good, some little help, some instruction received, and that all has not been in vain. It has required a significant amount of time to bring together the many articles needed month by month.

Again, we offer sincere thanks to the friends who have been so faithful and willing in their help given each month. For each of them, it has meant a great sacrifice of time and effort. We are very thankful for the articles friends have sent, giving us the liberty to amend as may be needful.

It is our prayer that the Lord may be pleased to grant His blessing upon the magazine for the good of souls and for the glory of His name!

We understand that the price of the magazine will remain the same as in the past year. Knowing that the cost of everything, including paper, printing, and postage, is increasing, we would thank the trustees for their commitment to keeping the cost as low as possible.

Brethren, pray for us.

G.L. TenBroeke