

The

Friendly Companion



“Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, He it is that doth go with thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.”

Deuteronomy 31.6

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

There are certain things that we immediately associate with the month of January. Those of us who live in the northern hemisphere think of cold, darkness and snow, while those who live in the southern hemisphere think of warmer days, longer daylight hours and gardens. The one thing that we all associate with January is that it is a new beginning, a new year.

There is nothing that is really much different in January from the last days of December. The weather usually has not changed much. The conditions in the world have not changed; they remain as bleak as they were in December. Our outward situation remains as it was. Sadly, our hearts remain the same as they were in the past year.

However, the new year, like every other year of our lives, will bring changes. Some changes will bring happiness, while others will cause sorrow and grief. For a young couple who expects to be married, it will be a new beginning, which, for the time, brings happiness. Perhaps, in your family, a baby will be born. What a happy change that will bring! Some may have to move to a new home, which generally brings happiness and joy. Then, there may be a change in health, so that we cannot enjoy life as we once did. The year may bring death into our home and that is a change which causes so much sorrow.

There is one change that will truly produce a new beginning if it should come. May God, in His great mercy, grant that each of you may experience that change. It is the time when God quickens the soul; when He begins a work of grace and causes the soul to hunger and thirst for His righteousness. That person begins to pray and asks to feel the Saviour's love and to know that his sins are forgiven.

When God delivered the children of Israel from the oppression of Egypt, the terror of the taskmasters and the power of Pharaoh, He told Moses that it was to be "*the beginning of months*" (Exodus 12.2) unto them. From that time on, it was to be the beginning of their year. Thus, each succeeding year

would be a reminder of what God had done for them when He brought them out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, and when He at last destroyed the Egyptians.

The Apostle Paul never forgot the day when the Lord changed his life. Prior to that day, he was an enemy to Jesus and His people. He was filled with rage and malice against them. When the Lord changed Paul's heart, he immediately began to preach the Lord Jesus. It was such a great change that many who feared God did not believe that Paul was now a believer in Jesus.

You may not be able to understand much about this change that takes place when the Lord begins to work in the heart or how it is done, but may the Lord help you to ask for it in prayer. *"Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" – "Create in me a clean heart, O God"* (Psalm 51.7,10).

With loving wishes from the Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

The picture on our front cover this month shows a male American Cardinal with its feathers fluffed out to keep warm. This is a bird that is familiar where I live in the United States. The bright red colour is very beautiful in contrast to the white snow or green pine branches, where it is often seen.

During the months of January and February, there may be a cold spell that lasts for several days or even weeks. The temperature may dip as low as -20 degrees Fahrenheit, and the wind chill is actually much colder than that when there are strong winds. We marvel at how little creatures, like birds, can survive in bitterly cold winter weather. The Lord, in His perfect wisdom, has given birds the ability to adapt to low temperatures and keep warm through the winter.

We often see little birds with their feathers all fluffed out at this time of year. The feathers of birds provide remarkable insulation against the cold. Some species grow extra feathers in autumn to give them thicker protection in the winter. The oil that coats their feathers provides insulation as well as

waterproofing. Birds fluff out their feathers to create tiny air pockets for additional insulation in cold weather. This can make them look fat and puffy, while they are really toasty warm.

The legs and feet of birds are covered with specialized scales that minimize heat loss. Birds can control the temperature of their legs and feet separately from their bodies by constricting blood flow to their extremities, thereby reducing heat loss and preventing frostbite. It is not unusual to see birds standing on one leg or crouched to tuck their bills into their shoulder feathers for protection and to breathe air warmed from their body heat.

Even small birds build up fat reserves to serve as insulation and extra energy for generating body heat. Many birds will gorge during the autumn when food sources are abundant, giving them an extra fatty layer before winter arrives. Birds often flock to feeders just before a winter storm and again afterwards.

On sunny winter days, many birds take advantage of solar heat. They turn their backs to the sun, exposing the largest surface of their bodies to the heat, and raise their feathers slightly. This allows the sun to heat their skin and feathers more efficiently.

Birds may shiver to raise their metabolic rate and to generate more body heat as a short-term solution to extreme cold. While shivering requires more calories, it is an effective way to stay warm for brief periods in extreme conditions.

Many small birds gather in large flocks at night and crowd together in a small, tight space to share body heat. They may roost in shrubbery or trees. Birds may use tree cavities, empty birdhouses or roosting boxes. Individual birds may choose to roost in spots that have residual heat from the day's sunlight, or sit close to the trunk of a tree.

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**THE LAST KINGS OF JUDAH**

The people were very sad when godly Josiah was killed in battle. Jehoahaz, his son, became the next king, but after three months, he was carried away to Egypt. His brother, Jehoiakim, ruled for eleven years, and then he was carried away to Babylon.

Jehoiachin (also called Jeconiah), the son of Jehoiakim, became the next king. After ruling a short time, he was also taken to Babylon. The king of Babylon took ten thousand captives, including all the princes, mighty men and craftsmen. He also took away all the treasures of the house of the Lord. The king of Babylon made Zedekiah, another son of Josiah, king in place of Jehoiachin.

Zedekiah did that which was evil. The Lord sent Jeremiah the prophet to warn him, but he would not listen. After eleven years, the king of Babylon came into Jerusalem. The house of the Lord was burned with fire. The walls of the city were broken down and the people were taken captive. *"So Judah was carried away out of the land."*

QUESTIONS:

1. How was Josiah killed? (2 words)
2. Whom did the Lord send to warn Zedekiah?
3. What happened to the house of the Lord?

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 laws of the Lord.
2. The idols.
3. The passover.

*“But they
mocked the
messengers of
God and
despised His
Word”*

2 Chronicles 36.16

*BIBLE LESSONS***THE FINAL ACTS OF MOSES**

In the plains of Moab, on the border of Canaan, the life of Moses would come to an end. What an eminent life! He was the only man who spoke to God face to face. He went up to the top of Sinai, where God appeared as fire, while the smoke ascended up and the mountain shook greatly, and there he received the law of God. The life of Moses was divided into three distinct periods of forty years. For forty years, he lived in Pharaoh's house as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. The second forty years he spent as a shepherd of sheep in the wilderness. In the last forty years he led Israel out of Egypt, through the wilderness, up to the border of Canaan.

Now, the greater part of his labours on earth were finished, and the Lord commanded him to write an account of all the journey through the wilderness. Moses rehearsed all the events, the warfares, the murmurings of their fathers, and the wonderful provisions of the Lord. He told of the laws of God given on Mount Sinai, the instructions God gave for the building of the tabernacle, and all the offerings that pertained to it. He warned them of the curses God would bring upon them if they departed from the Lord and the blessings God would bestow on them if they followed Him.

In the book of Deuteronomy, we can read of all that Moses wrote unto the people. Before they entered the promised land and received their inheritance, Moses told them they were to provide cities for the Levites to dwell among them. The Levites were not given any possession of land, but they were given places to live among each of the tribes to teach them about the worship of God.

Moses also commanded the people to provide six special cities, called cities of refuge for the manslayer. Three of the cities were to be on the east side of Jordan and three on the west side in the land of Canaan. If a man killed another person by accident, not in anger or malice, he could flee to the nearest city of refuge, where he would be protected from the avenger of

blood (relatives of the slain man) until he could be judged by the congregation. If the congregation determined that he had not killed intentionally, he was to be delivered from the avenger of blood. He returned to the city of refuge, where he must remain until the death of the high priest.

The way to the cities of refuge must be kept clear of anything that would impede (hinder) the fleeing manslayers. These cities presented to the Israelites a beautiful picture of the Lord Jesus. He is a “city of refuge” for sinners such as we, who are manslayers because we have destroyed ourselves through sin. The avenger of blood, God’s holy law, cannot enter to slay any soul who has fled for refuge in the Lord Jesus.

Moses finished all his words by pronouncing a blessing upon the tribes of Israel. He declared unto them that God *“loved the people; all His saints are in Thy hand: and they sat down at Thy feet; every one shall receive of Thy words”* (Deuteronomy 33.3).

For each tribe, Moses pronounced a specific blessing. All those who are taught of God will feel their need of each of those blessings for themselves.

Moses began with the tribe of Reuben, who was Jacob’s oldest son. When Jacob spoke his last words to his sons, he said that Reuben was *“unstable as water, thou shalt not excel”* (Genesis 49.4). Moses now interceded for Reuben with the beautiful words, *“Let Reuben live, and not die; and let not his men be few.”*

You can read about these things in the book of Deuteronomy.

QUESTIONS:

1. For whom were the Israelites to provide cities to dwell among them?
2. What was provided for the manslayer? (3 words)
3. How many of these cities were to be provided?
4. What did Jacob say of Reuben? (7 words)
5. With what words did Moses intercede for Reuben? (first 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. In the land of Canaan.
2. Zelophehad.
3. A possession.
4. "The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance."
5. Because of his disobedience.

KEPT

The following is an account of the Lord's dealings with J.K. Stehouwer in early life, and especially his experiences as a soldier during the Second World War. It has been suggested by the former editor that we should reproduce the booklet "Kept" for the benefit of our young friends.

Chapter 1

Through the years, I have related some of my experiences while in the armed services during World War II. I have often been asked to write down some of those incidents which I feel show God's gracious leading, guiding, and keeping, for the benefit of the young people of our own little church and for future generations.

I was brought up in a very godly home and, I would add, a "sheltered" home. My parents feared God, and we were taught to live clean, upright lives. As I look back, I feel the Lord mercifully kept me during my youth from entering into any gross sins and, for the most part, attending anything that was displeasing to my parents. However, I would emphasise the fact that every one of us born into this world is a fallen creature through our federal head, Adam, and we have no righteousness or goodness of our own.

As a young child, I was taught to ask the Lord that He might give me a new heart. In looking back now, as the Lord has given me further light, I believe that already at this time the Lord had planted the tender fear of God in my soul. Yet, in my early days, I could not say with any sweet assurance that it was well with my soul. I could not indulge in those sins and activities and entertainment other young boys were able to, as I felt a restraint upon me. The friends I associated with had good morals and were of a religious nature, although quite Arminian. They were often full of fun, and I could soon join them and become silly and foolish. Even so, I was often kept.

I remember very well when the war broke out and especially the day when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour in December of 1941. We received a phone call in the afternoon from some friends, telling us of the attack. I was then seventeen years of age, and the government had already begun to draft (call up) soldiers starting at twenty years of age. I can remember my father turning to my brother (who was just one year older) and me and saying: "I don't believe you boys will ever be involved in this. I believe the War will come to a close before you reach the age of twenty."

When the United States entered the War, there was a tremendous drain on young men aged twenty and older. They soon reduced the draft age to include eighteen and nineteen year-olds, and I was immediately drafted. I received my draft papers in the last part of 1942. The government allowed us to finish High School first. I had sufficient credits to receive my diploma in February of 1943, but I had hoped to finish the rest of the school year and graduate with my class in June. However, the government would not allow this, and I was inducted (enlisted) into the Army on February 25, 1943, just two days after my nineteenth birthday.

It was well known that young boys entering the Armed Services were often introduced to many sins, rough language, and a life completely contrary to that of home, especially to my own home. When I was inducted, I must confess that I had more fear of being overcome by sin than I did of the enemy. When

those who were in the Service came back, they related how they were soon introduced to many evils such as drinking, cursing, swearing, and sinful conversation. I can remember continually begging the Lord to keep me; yet I feared that I might easily be swayed. I was much plagued about whether or not I could stand against evil and do that which I felt was right, especially if I had to suffer persecution or mocking.

Because many young boys in the area were being inducted into the Service, one of the local churches had an army chaplain and an elder come to speak to them. I went with my father to hear the address. The army chaplain gave some description of what we might expect. Later, the elder gave a little word of exhortation and a word of warning. I don't recall all that the elder spoke, but I well remember that in his prayer he said this: "If the opportunity to sin is there, may there not be the inclination, and if the inclination to sin is there, may there not be the opportunity." This prayer went as an arrow into my heart. I kept begging the Lord that I might be kept; I was so fearful of being entangled in those sins with which I would be surrounded.

(To be continued)

A REBEL APPREHENDED

John Welsh was the great-grandson of John Knox. Under Middleton's Glasgow Act, he was ejected from his position as a minister. and a bounty of 500 pounds was set upon his head. Anyone who turned him over to authorities would be given that amount of money. John Welsh still maintained his difficult task of preaching upon the mountains of Scotland for nearly twenty years, many times to thousands. His preaching was with power.

Once, Welsh was chased unrelentingly, and he hardly knew where to flee. Relying on Scottish hospitality, he knocked at the door of a landlord. This man was bitterly opposed to field preachers, and to John Welsh in particular, although he had never actually set eyes on him. The stranger at the door, being unrecognized, was received with kindness.

As they were talking that evening, reference was made to Welsh, and the host complained about the difficulty of capturing him. "I am sent," said the visitor, "to apprehend rebels; I know where he is to preach tomorrow, and I will put his hand in yours."

Overjoyed, the gentleman agreed to accompany his visitor the next morning. When they arrived at the appointed spot, the congregation had assembled. The people made way for the minister, whom they trusted, and for his comrade. Welsh asked his host of the previous evening to sit down on the solitary chair which had been provided for himself. To his companion's utter bewilderment, Welsh took his own stand beside the chair and powerfully preached about sin and salvation. The Spirit of God was there, and the landlord was broken in heart. At the close of the service, Welsh, fulfilling his promise, gave him his hand, that he might do with him whatever he wished. The landlord said, "You told me that you were sent to apprehend rebels, and I, a rebellious sinner, have been apprehended this day."

Adapted from Men of the Covenant

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF JOHN WAITE

I was born at Chadlington in March 1803. My father died in September of the same year, and my mother married again to a very profane man with seven children, older than myself and very wicked. My stepfather and his children treated me very harshly. Being stubborn, I was seldom without bruises, and my language became awful. I have sometimes thought that I never knew anyone so wicked as myself at such a young age. Someone spoke to my mother about my bad language, and she told me how wicked it was. This had some effect upon me, and I could not swear as before. When I used an oath, it left a sting in my conscience.

Sometime afterwards, I went to a night school with several others. The master was a professed Christian. Sometimes his friends would come and talk about religion while the boys did their work. One night, they were talking about the publican,

and the words: “*God be merciful to me, a sinner,*” so fastened upon my mind, that night and day they were uppermost. It made a great change in all my words and actions.

At this time, I slept in a room with my stepfather’s three sons. I became convinced that it was wrong to get into bed without saying my prayers, but I feared kneeling down in front of them, thinking they would throw me downstairs. I paced the room until they began to threaten me. Then, I knelt down and prayed, though quaking with fear. To my great wonder, they were never permitted to harm me, and they were kept silent while I was upon my knees. This I was enabled to do as long as I was at home. In the field, under bushes, and in secret places, I was often on my knees, and my cheeks were wet with tears, crying, “*God be merciful to me a sinner.*”

Many years passed in generally moral living. Then, by degrees, prayer and reading the Bible were neglected. Youthful folly and company were sought after, until I was left to use bad language again. It is impossible to describe the cutting and piercing work in my conscience. I often feared I should go swearing to hell. I promised and tried to amend; but alas! It was of no use. But the Lord had mercy upon me, and did not deal with me according to my deserts.

Adapted from Friendly Companion 1965

THE LORD WILLING AND WE LIVE

Some time ago, a man known as Father van Luyken lived in a village in the Netherlands. He was known by almost everyone in the village. He was always ready to help others and was friendly toward everyone. He was especially known as an example of godliness. At a young age, he had been drawn out of darkness into God’s marvellous light.

The Lord’s people often gathered together in one of their homes in the evening. They spoke about the services that had taken place in the house of God and the ways in which the Lord had led them. As they met together, they often felt the blessing of the Lord upon them, and His name was praised.

At the end of such gatherings, they usually discussed where they would meet the next time. When they had agreed on a place, Father van Luyken would say goodbye with the words, "Well, dear friends, now we know when and where we will hope to meet the next time, the Lord willing and we live."

One evening, a man was in their midst for the first time. He had come to visit his sister, not knowing that she wanted to go to the fellowship meeting that evening. She told him that he was welcome to come along, and, out of courtesy, he had agreed to do so. However, he did not care much for religion or take spiritual things seriously.

This man started to laugh at the words of Father van Luyken, who asked him why he laughed. "Well," he said, "twice tonight I heard you say 'the Lord willing and we live.' I don't see why you add those words."

"My dear friend," said van Luyken, "do you think that is so strange? According to God's Word, our life is short and uncertain; we cannot be certain that we will come to the end of any day or any hour. The Word of God says, *'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).

The man became angry at his gentle rebuke and said, "I tell you, whether the Lord will or not, I will be in your midst the next time."

"Dear friend," Father van Luyken said calmly and seriously, "I hope that under those circumstances you don't have to experience that man is only vanity."

Then, the friends parted, and each went to their own home.

That same night, the man who had spoken so boldly died. He was like the rich man in the parable, of whom God said, *"Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee"* (Luke 12.20).

Adapted from "For the Generations to Come" Volume 1

SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF THE EARLY LIFE OF WILLIAM TIPTAFT

William Tiptaft, like his close friend J.C. Philpot, seceded (withdrew) from the Church of England, where he was a vicar in a small Oxfordshire village. He felt led to settle amongst the Strict Baptists. After having a chapel built in Abingdon, he remained there as pastor until his death in 1864.

William Tiptaft was born in February 1803 in a small village near Oakham in the tiny county of Rutland. His father was a landowner of some wealth and property. He died when William was only eight years old. William's two older brothers followed in their father's occupation, and almost certainly inherited the family business.

It was decided that young William would be a churchman, meaning that he would be educated to become a clergyman in the Church of England. With this aim, at the age of twelve, he was sent to the local grammar school in Oakham to prepare him for university. Ten years later, he entered St. John's College, Cambridge, to further his studies. He appears to have been a very sociable young man, fond of conversation and taking an interest in those around him.

At one time, William became seriously ill with typhus fever. In the wonderful providence of God, he was at home for a vacation when the symptoms began. His brother-in-law, who was a medical surgeon, was close at hand. Under his skill and care, using the strongest remedies available, with the Lord's blessing, William's life was spared from that terrible disease that took the lives of so many.

After his Cambridge studies, William put himself under a private tutor near Cheltenham to help him prepare for his final examination before a Bishop's Chaplain of the Church of England. If he passed, it meant that he could be ordained to the public ministry. Under this tutor, William studied divinity, the Greek New Testament, Bible history, the Church of England Articles and the Prayer Book. After passing his examination, William Tiptaft was ordained in Wells Cathedral in March 1826. After two short curacies in villages in Somerset, he was instituted

to the living at Sutton Courtney, Oxfordshire in February 1829. We would say that he became the vicar!

It was during the period of his curacies that Tiptaft believed the Lord began that wonderful work of grace in his heart. He writes of this time, "I trust my soul was quickened in January 1827, and from that time, I have had marks of the fear of God in my heart, and earnest desires to be taught aright by the Spirit of God. But how dark, blind and ignorant I have been respecting spiritual things, and how I should have continued so, if it had not been for rich and sovereign grace. Blessed be God for the little I trust that I do know of myself as a vile sinner, and Jesus Christ as a precious Saviour. How gradually did the scales fall from my blind eyes."

One of the many doctrines that William was taught was of God's election of His people. His firm belief in the sovereignty of God was to have a major impact in his life. He became engaged to a very pleasant young lady, who was the daughter of a highly respected evangelical clergyman in the Church of England. They appeared to be a perfect match, sharing much in common. On a particular summer evening, they were sitting alone, speaking about religion. It is believed that they always had an open Bible before them. William made some remarks about election and his belief in this doctrine, and his fiancée took great offence. After some heated discussion, she got up and left the room. That was the last time he saw her, as she ended their relationship, despite her own father desiring it to continue. She wanted nothing to do with a man "who held such extreme views in religion." No doubt, this was a very sad time for William. However, he had a good conscience, knowing the Scripture, "*Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*" (Amos 3.3). He remained a bachelor for the rest of his life.

It was also around this time that William Tiptaft first became acquainted with J.C. Philpot. They initially met at a gathering for evangelical ministers in the Church of England. At a subsequent meeting, they went for a walk together. As they discussed various points of doctrine, they found that they agreed on virtually everything. They were both becoming very troubled

with their position in the Church of England. Their friendship was cemented after William invited J.C. Philpot to preach at his church for a week-night service and to stay with him for a few nights. They were both under the teaching of the Holy Ghost and being led forth by the right way.

Another event took place at this time that had a great effect upon William and many in his neighbourhood. He had been asked to preach the annual sermon on Christmas Eve at St. Helen's Church, Abingdon. The church was crowded in every part with many clergymen from the area, as well as the mayor and corporation of the town. It was a very big event in the town. Tiptaft preached from Matthew 1.21, *"And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins."* He very faithfully and boldly preached the doctrines of free and sovereign grace, backing up everything with Scripture. The effect of this sermon was tremendous, both at the time and afterwards. Many were very upset, speaking and writing against what Tiptaft had preached. But those *"whose hearts God had touched"* were drawn to his ministry, and many travelled to Sutton Courtney to hear him for themselves.

In November 1831, William Tiptaft felt compelled to leave the Church of England. In a letter to his brother-in-law, he wrote, "After frequent prayer to God and deep consideration, I sent a long letter to the bishop of Sarum (Salisbury), declaring my intention of resigning my living, last Thursday, and received an answer yesterday, saying he accepted it. You are aware that flesh is not favoured in this transaction, but a burdened conscience. The performance of the ministerial services constrained me to resign my living. I feel assured that only pride and covetousness have caused me to continue in it so long."

He moved out of the vicarage into lodgings in Abingdon, where he had a chapel built, being financially independent. He became pastor of the chapel and remained there for the rest of his life. Tiptaft was especially known for his generosity to poor people, his faithfulness in preaching, and his sharp, pithy sayings. The following are just a few of these pointed sayings:

"If I preach to please men, I am not the servant of Christ."

"A prayerless man is a careless man."

"Many of the Lord's people have troubles which they cannot tell at every corner of the street."

"We are not to choose our own crosses."

"I have no objection to your calling God your Father, if He has called you His son."

"If free grace will not save a soul, free-will will not."

"Children take more notice of what their parents do than what they say."

A.T. Pickett

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

MYSTERIES IN THE BIBLE – PART 4

A new year begins, and perhaps, for many, the unknown way ahead is itself a mystery. If you are anxious about the days and months ahead, turn to Ephesians chapter 1. The language may seem high, but it directs us to Jesus: *"In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace ... having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself"* (verses 7,9). If you and I are gathered up in this *"mystery of His will,"* we have nothing to fear.

This month, let us look at something which is one of God's institutions; yet, according to His Word, it is also a mystery. Yes, the institution of marriage: God's provision of a helpmeet for man. Also, God's provision for the continuing of the human race, and from the very first union between man and his wife, the promise of Jesus Christ. If you turn to Ephesians 5, from verse 21 to the end, there is set before us *"a great mystery"* (verse 32). The Apostle Paul speaks of the union between husband and wife, and in verse 25 is a very important and very wonderful truth: *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it."* The word then goes on to reveal further truths propounding the union between husband and wife as a type of the union betwixt Christ and His

church. *"This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church"* (verse 32). We see, then, how solemn it is to desecrate the marriage union between a man and a woman, since it is a type of the perfect union between Christ and His church.

This is one of the sacred doctrines which runs through the whole of the Word of God. For instance, in Genesis 24 is the account of a wife being sought for Isaac (the son of promise), and there is that lovely verse near the end: *"And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at eventide: and he lifted up his eyes"* (verse 63). How Isaac was watching out for his bride-to-be! How much more gladly, in anticipation of claiming and redeeming His bride, did Jesus come to this earth: *"Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of me, I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart"* (Psalm 40.7,8 – see also Hebrews 10.7).

The Song of Solomon, also known as the song of loves, sets forth the desires and longings of the Beloved (Christ) and His spouse (the church) toward and for each other.

At the end of the New Testament, which is also the end of the Word of God, there is a wonderful glimpse of this glorious union: *"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come"* (Revelation 22.17).

When two are truly joined together in marriage by God and in the tender fear of God, then the element of *"mystery"* will from time to time be evident. It is humbling to feel something of this, even naturally. It is much more so spiritually, as the poet Isaac Watts wrote in Gadsby's hymn 440:

Why was I made to hear Thy voice,
And enter while there's room?

To wonder at God's goodness and mercy in granting a lifelong spouse to an unworthy sinner is but a little glimpse of the wonder experienced by a living soul in viewing and knowing that the Lord Jesus is the lover of one's soul (Gadsby's hymn 303). The subject is inexhaustible.

Just two more points, and I will leave this subject. Both are expressed in the Revelation. A book has been written on the subject in Revelation 17.5: *“And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”* There is a connection here with the first mystery which I told you of, the *“mystery of iniquity.”* How solemn this is! It is to be noted in this 17th chapter of Revelation that the angel which talked with the Apostle John went on to say: *“Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns”* (verse 7). It is a truly humbling thought, and also a little glimpse into the greatness of God, that God has perfect knowledge and understanding of all the mysteries in His Word. In other words, they are not mysteries to Him. Yet, it has pleased God to present His Word and the truth of His Word in ways which are often mysterious to us. Surely, this is His purpose, to bring us to ask for His help to understand His Word? *“O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacles”* (Psalm 43.3). How we need grace to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God!

Finally, the Bible speaks to us in Revelation 10.7: *“But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets.”* This will not happen until it is declared *“that there should be time no longer”* (verse 6). Man will have to wait until the end of time, when the mystery of God will be finished. Until then, may it be our earnest desire to be gathered up amongst the “some” referred to in Gadsby’s hymn 66 verse 1:

Deep in the everlasting mind
The great mysterious purpose lay,
Of choosing some from lost mankind,
Whose sins the Lamb should bear away.

Brian Mercer

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are different – we have introduced some calculations to work out! Younger children need only answer five of the simpler questions (a to g) without doing the arithmetic. 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.

When God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, Moses said that “the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years” (Exodus 12.40). There have been discussions as to when this period of 430 years began, but in Galatians 3.16-17 the Apostle Paul says there were 430 years from the time God promised Abram of the blessing that should rest on his children, (Genesis 12.1-4) to the year that the law was given on Mount Sinai (which was the same year that the children of Israel came out of Egypt). So we can only conclude that the 430 years began when God first called Abram, and from which time he became a “sojourner” together with his family, with no homeland of his own. Even this time is difficult to pinpoint. Was it when God first spoke to Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees? Or was it when he left Haran and came into the land of Canaan? Most godly men have taken the latter time, and the questions here are based on this assumption, though it is by no means certain. There are three questions to answer:

1. How long did Abram and his family remain as wanderers in the land of Canaan?
2. How long were the children of Israel in the land of Egypt?
3. How many years were there from the death of Joseph to the birth of Moses?

To make the calculations easier, let's start with a few simpler questions.

- a. How old was Abram when he left Haran to come into Canaan, God having given him the promises in Genesis 12.1-4?
- b. How old was Abram (Abraham) when Isaac was born? (Genesis 21.5)
- c. How old was Isaac when Esau and Jacob were born? (Genesis 25.26)

- d. How old was Jacob when he went down into Egypt? (Genesis 47.9)

From this you should be able to find the answer to question 1 as ($b - a + c + d$) and the answer to question 2 as ($430 - b + a - c - d$).

The third question is more difficult. To do this we need to know

- e. How old was Joseph when Jacob went down into Egypt? To work this out, consider how old Joseph was when he became Governor of Egypt (Genesis 41.46), how many years of "great plenty" followed this (Genesis 41.29) and then how many years of famine had elapsed since then (Genesis 45.6).
- f. How old was Joseph when he died? (Genesis 50.26)
- g. How old was Moses when he brought the children of Israel out of Egypt? (Exodus 7.7)

From this the answer to question 3 should be ($f - e + g$) taken away from the answer to question 2.

ANSWERS TO DECEMBER QUESTIONS

1. Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah.
2. Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-nego.
3. Nebuchadnezzar promoted Daniel's friends over the affairs of Babylon.
4. The princes, governors, captains, judges, treasures, counsellors, sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces.
5. Any who disobeyed would be cast into a burning, fiery furnace.
6. God was able to deliver them from the burning, fiery furnace. (Daniel 3.17)
7. God would deliver them out of the king's hand. (Daniel 3.17)
8. They would not bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's idols, even if God saw fit not to deliver them from the furnace. (Daniel 3.18)
9. They were killed by the fire. (Daniel 3.22)
10. Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, fell into the fire, but it did not hurt them and only released them from that which bound them. The Son of God was with them in the fire. (Daniel 3.23-25)
11. Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged, "There is no other God that can deliver after this sort." (Daniel 3.29)

NO THOUGHT FOR THE MORROW

Be not careful for the morrow,
Look not fearful at the way;
He who sends the grief and labour,
Strength apportions for the day.

We are foolish, often fearing
Trials which will never come;
When we should enjoy the sunshine,
Buried in unthankful gloom.

Doth not every faithful shepherd
Choose the pasture for his sheep?
Doth not every jewel seeker
Safe his dear-bought treasure keep?

Shall not the eternal Shepherd
Go before and lead His own?
Shall not the eternal Seeker
Keep the jewels for His throne?

Yes, oh yes! Then trust thou child-like
In the thorn-crowned Shepherd King;
For the way He'll make provision,
And to glory safely bring.

A Villager

The Friendly Companion



“O LORD, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast
Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches.”
(Psalm 104.24)

February 2022

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

There was a man who lived in the time of David, the king of Israel, who had a great influence upon people, even though he was not listed among David's mighty men. He was not a mighty warrior who obtained victory over a powerful enemy or who brought a special deliverance to the people. However, he was just as important as those who had obtained great victories. His influence was really of a more exalted nature, because it dealt with the worship of God. This man's name was Asaph. He was from the tribe of Levi. Thus, his daily work pertained to the tabernacle. When the people sang praises to God, he was one of the chief singers.

Yet, Asaph had an even greater influence. Being a Levite, he was not allowed to go into battle against the Philistines or other enemies of Israel, but he was called to fight a battle that is known by all of God's people: a battle against sin, Satan and their own flesh. Asaph's sword was the Word of God. He was inspired by the Holy Ghost to write several Psalms (50 and 73 to 83) which have been a means of comfort and strength to poor, tried, tempted souls.

Asaph wrote in Psalm 50:15: *"And call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me."* There is a gracious exhortation, *"Call upon Me,"* and a sure promise, *"I will deliver thee."* This has been a real help to trembling, fearing souls in many of their conflicts.

I wonder if some of our young friends have felt a need to pray, leaning upon this beautiful verse.

In Psalm 73, Asaph tells of a snare into which he had nearly fallen. He had become very envious of wicked men. In the eyes of Asaph, the wicked seemed to prosper in everything; they never seemed to have troubles like he had. It made him think that it was of no profit to seek and worship God. Many people who truly fear God are tempted with the same thoughts. But, Asaph declared in verse 17, *"Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places: ... How are they brought into desolation, as*

in a moment!" In the sanctuary, Asaph was brought to see the Lord's goodness toward him. What a deliverance he had when he confessed, *"My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."* Through this Psalm, many who fear God have been helped to overcome the dreadful temptations of Satan.

In Psalm 77, Asaph describes the struggle that the Lord's people have because of their sinful natures and the working of unbelief. They are tempted to think that God has cast them off, that He will *"be favourable no more,"* that His mercy is *"gone for ever,"* and that He has *"forgotten to be gracious."* How many have been tempted to despair under such fears! Asaph tells of the place of deliverance in verse 13: *"Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God?"* It is important for us to remember that the sanctuary represents the Lord Jesus. May God, by His Spirit, lead us into Him.

In all of his Psalms, Asaph deals with similar conflicts. The enemies seem to prevail; yet, the Lord never fails those who put their trust in Him. In these ways, the Lord teaches His people to pray, to wait, and to see His great salvation.

Of all the mighty men of David's time, in many ways, we might say that Asaph exceeds them all.

With love from the Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

Our front cover picture this month shows a magnificent, single snow crystal. We are filled with wonder at the beautiful design! Each individual crystal of snow begins with a tiny speck, smaller than the eye can see, that floats in the wind and ends up in a cloud. It may be a particle of soil, a speck of ash from a fire, a speck of salt from the ocean, bacteria from a plant, or even a grain of pollen. When the speck gets cold enough, water vapour sticks to it. Then, more water vapour sticks to the wet speck, forming a water droplet. The droplet freezes into a ball of ice. More water vapour sticks to the ball of ice, and it grows into a hexagon-shaped ice crystal. As more vapour sticks, six branches

begin to sprout. The branches keep growing, sprouting little arms of their own, until a snow crystal is formed. Many snow crystals stick together to form a snowflake. Hundreds, or even thousands, of snow crystals can be found in a single snowflake. The structure of snow crystals is endlessly varied, always intricately symmetrical and incredibly beautiful.

The Lord asks Job, *"Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?"* (Job 38.22) The Book of Job, often considered the oldest book in the Bible, has more references to snow, ice and frost than any other book of the Bible. Besides being beautiful, snow is a treasure in many other ways. The winter's snowpack in the mountains is often called "white gold" because of its indispensable water storage capacity. It is released each spring, providing much needed irrigation. While snow feels cold, it provides a warm blanket to the ground, protecting the dormant vegetation. When snow is melted by the sun or a soft wind, the moisture sinks deep into the soil, preparing it for a new growing season. Snow helps to maintain the chemical cycles of the earth. Various elements that form the substance of the nuclei of snow crystals are returned back to the land from which they came.

In the Scriptures, pure white snow is often used to symbolize the cleansing of a sinful heart: *"Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow"* (Psalm 51.7). The Lord gives a wonderful promise to those who look to Him for salvation: *"Though your sins be as scarlet; they shall be as white as snow"* (Isaiah 1.18). He gives another promise concerning His own Word: *"For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither ... so shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it"* (Isaiah 55.10,11).

Adapted from Treasures of the Snow by H.M.M. for ICR

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**FOUR CHILDREN FROM JUDAH**

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, told his servant to look over the children who were taken captive from Judah. He should bring those with wisdom and ability to be taught at the palace and fed from the king's table. After three years, they would come before the king.

Among those chosen were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Daniel did not want to eat the king's meat or to drink his wine, for they were unclean by the laws of God. He asked to be given water and pulse (vegetables or legumes, like peas and beans). The king's servant was afraid to disobey the order of the king, for he was responsible for their health. Daniel asked to try it for ten days. After ten days, Daniel and his three friends appeared healthier than all the others who ate the king's food.

"As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill." At the end of three years, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah had more wisdom and understanding than all the other wise men of Babylon.

QUESTIONS:

1. Which four children were chosen?
2. What did Daniel not want to eat? (three words)
3. What did God give these four children? (three 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. In battle.
2. Jeremiah.
3. It was burned with fire.

Contributed

*“God gave them
knowledge
and skill
in all
learning and
wisdom”*

Daniel 1.17

BIBLE LESSONS**THE BLESSINGS OF MOSES FOR ISRAEL**

Last month, we noticed the blessing that Moses pronounced upon the tribe of Reuben. Now Moses looked at the tribe of Judah. Jacob had exalted Judah above all his brethren, and Moses did not alter the blessing. He added to it by asking that Judah might be brought *"unto his people,"* which was fulfilled, first in David, and later in the Lord Jesus. He prayed that Judah might be delivered from all his enemies. Having been made the head of all the tribes, Judah's victories would be theirs.

The next tribe that Moses blessed was Levi. You may remember that Moses came from this tribe. Jacob did not bless his sons Levi and Simeon, calling them *"instruments of cruelty."* Their anger was fierce, and they killed without any pangs of conscience. We cannot help but wonder if these two brothers were the leading instigators in the ill treatment of Joseph. Jacob said that they would be scattered in Israel. It would seem that Simeon had caused so much trouble in the wilderness that Moses left this tribe without any blessing. What a curse the tribe of Simeon had brought upon itself!

The blessing that Moses pronounced upon Levi was not because he had come from that tribe, but rather because God had chosen that tribe to perform the duties of the priesthood. He said that the men of Levi *"shall teach Jacob Thy judgments, and Israel Thy law: they shall put incense before Thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon Thine altar."* The tribe of Levi would attend to all the holy things pertaining to the law and worship of God.

The blessing of Moses upon Benjamin was very short, but very expressive of the desires of God's people: *"The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by Him; and the LORD shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between His shoulders."* In this blessing, Benjamin's portion, protection and position are all described.

The blessing that Moses pronounced upon Joseph was very similar to that given by Jacob. Both spoke of many wonderful

things, especially the wonderful blessings of heaven. Moses was so overcome with them that he kept using one word, "*precious*," to describe them. "*Blessed of the LORD be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew ... for the precious things of the earth and fullness thereof.*" All these things are for the church of God in the person of Jesus. "*Unto you therefore which believe He is precious*" (1 Peter 2.7).

Moses declared that Zebulon would be blessed in his going out by the sea, and Issachar when abiding in his tents, with his crops and lands.

The tribe of Gad would be enlarged and dwell in safety. The tribe of Dan would be strong and victorious in war. The tribe of Naphtali would be satisfied with the favour of God, the fulness of God's presence with them. These are special blessings that the Lord's people long for.

Then, Moses looked at the tribe of Asher. We might wonder what more could be said by way of blessing, but a peculiar (special) blessing was given for this tribe: "*Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil.*" When such a blessing is given, special grace is needed. This special grace was assured with a wonderful promise: "*Thy shoes shall be iron and brass: and as thy days, so shall thy strength be.*"

Lastly, Moses declared that God "*rideth upon the heaven*" for the help of all His people. "*The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.*" What a portion for those who believe in the Lord Jesus!

After Moses had written these parting words of blessing for the people, his heart was so enlarged that he finished with this statement about them: "*Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency!*"

You can read about this in Deuteronomy chapter 33.

QUESTIONS:

1. Which tribe did Moses leave without a blessing?
2. What two things would the men of Levi teach?

3. What word did Moses use to describe the blessing of Joseph?
4. What wonderful promise was given to the tribe of Asher? (16 words)
5. Moses declared that God was the help of all His people in what verse? (12 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. The Levites.
2. Cities of Refuge.
3. Six.
4. "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel."
5. "Let Reuben live, and not die."

KEPT

(Continued from page 12)

Chapter 2

The day came that we had to leave Grand Rapids and go to Fort Custer for further medical examinations and our uniforms. We would be there for about a week and then be sent to another camp for basic training. I can well remember bidding goodbye to my parents at the Union Depot and going by train to Fort Custer, which was about fifty miles away. Most of us on the train were eighteen and nineteen-year-olds. Although there was no cursing or swearing, there was a lot of foolish talking, and some were playing cards. While looking out the window of that train, I remember continually begging the Lord that I might stand firm upon those convictions I was brought up with.

As we were growing up, our family frequently sang hymns on Sundays and through the week, while my mother, and later my sister, played the piano. We were all very fond of singing and taking various parts. There was one particular hymn we would

often sing in which there was good instruction. Some of the verses were:

Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin,
Each victory will help you some other to win;
Fight manfully onward, dark passions subdue,
Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you through.

Shun evil companions, bad language disdain,
God's name hold in rev'rence, nor take it in vain;
Be thoughtful and earnest, kind-hearted and true,
Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you through.

The chorus went this way:

Ask the Saviour to help you,
Comfort, strengthen, and keep you;
He is willing to aid you.
He will carry you through.

It was these particular words which kept coming to my mind: "Each victory will help you some other to win." I had determined in my mind that on my first night in service, I must take my Bible and look to the Lord in prayer. I felt if I could get over that first obstacle on the first night, from then on it would be much easier. I was convinced in my own mind that if I failed on the first night, I would be likely to fail throughout the whole of my army life.

As we came to Camp Custer, it was a day of business, as well as examinations and receiving of uniforms. We were soon assigned to barracks, which were very crowded. There were double decker bunks, and I was assigned to the top bunk. After our evening meal, we returned to the barracks to sort out clothing, folding it up and putting it into bags, knowing that within a few days we would be leaving that camp and assigned to another one for our basic training. As evening came on, I kept looking around to see if anyone had a Bible open or appeared to have an interest in the things of God. I did not notice any

who appeared concerned. I saw and heard a lot of foolishness, and I also heard some things that I found very shocking. I had never heard such language before. It was announced that at a certain time, all the lights would be out. The man made it very, very emphatic. As you can well imagine, they wanted to put fear into us, and the discipline was needful. I continued looking around, hoping to see someone else taking out his Bible and reading it. Then, finally, over the speaker we were told again in a very harsh way that in fifteen minutes the lights would be put out. How I inwardly begged of the Lord that I might not be ashamed to take out my Bible and read it! I felt miserable, and again I looked around. One person in the bunk below kept talking to me, and I just felt ashamed to take my Bible out and read it in front of all those around me. Again, the speaker came on and said that in five minutes the lights must be out, and finally the lights were turned off. As I lay on that bed, no one could have been more miserable. I felt that already I had been a total failure, and this would be the beginning of my downfall. Having failed the first night, the second night would only be worse and so on. I felt that I would be overcome with all the sins and evils that were around me.

Only the light over the door and steps into the barrack was left on. Two young fellows were gambling by the door with their dice, and nearby was an empty chair. Finally, I could bear it no longer. I reached into my bag and climbed out of my bunk with my Bible and sat on that chair. I do not know whether those two boys remained while I was there or finally left. As I sat there, I begged the Lord to forgive my sins and cowardice. I felt completely ashamed of myself before God. Not knowing where to turn, I just opened my Bible randomly. It opened at Matthew 10 verses 32 and 33: *"Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven."* Oh, how powerfully these verses struck me and remained with me! Before that time, I wasn't aware they were in the Word of God.

They were completely new to me. Now, it is true that the verse has two parts: the blessed promise to those who confess Him, but also the sad part concerning those who deny Him. As I look back over the three years that I was in the service, I feel that I failed many times, not only in confessing Him, but I may have even denied Him through silence. So, that particular text gave me comfort, as well as a solemn warning. Still, in looking back, I believe the Lord helped me on many occasions to confess Him.

(To be continued)

GOD'S WAY OF PROVIDENCE FOR A MINISTER

Many years ago, in the early 1900's, a young man was called to the ministry. It was in the early days of his marriage, and as time went on, they had the happiness of seeing several young children added to the family.

The ministerial call also led him, in time, to leave his former daily occupation and to rely solely upon the good hand of the Lord in providence. *"Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel"* (1 Corinthians 9.14). It was indeed a big step of faith, especially with an increasing family. Not every minister has to walk in the same pathway as another, and we need to be very careful about judging others, especially when they are fit and have the ability to work. We need to *"prove all things"* (1 Thessalonians 5.21) and to prayerfully watch the Lord's hand. It was indeed a venture of faith for this minister to rely upon the Lord for the needs of his family.

No doubt, there were times when circumstances appeared bleak, and he was tried as to where the next supply of food would come from. One day, while pondering his position, this young minister, in his calculations, decided that if he purchased a goat, it would be easy to keep, it would supply milk for his dear family, and it would have the added benefit of being a pet for the children. With this pleasing prospect, a goat was

obtained, and he expressed his hope for these benefits to his family and friends.

However, as time went on, sadly and strangely for the young minister, the goat did not produce any milk. Eventually, with much disappointment, the goat was given to a neighbour. Then, the new owner, to his great delight, was supplied with an abundance of milk from the very same goat.

After the neighbour told him about this, the young minister felt that, in this instance, he had been looking to the goat to supply his needs, and he had taken his eyes away from God.

The means could have been used, but, in this case, it was not God's way for him. What may appear to be a pleasing idea to us at first, we may later find is overruled for our teaching and good. This young minister lived to be a well-accepted minister of the gospel, and he proved that "*God is faithful*" (1 Corinthians 1.9). He often saw the fulfilment of the promise: "*But my God shall supply all your need.*" (Philippians 4.19).

Contributed

A PRAYER OF FAITH ANSWERED BY PROVIDENCE

Thomas P. knew a Christian lady in York, who told him the following story about the providence of God.

One day, this lady sat down to breakfast, when it came very forcibly into her mind that she must immediately carry a loaf of bread to James, a poor man who lived about half a mile from her house. Her husband suggested that she should wait until after breakfast, or have a servant bring the bread to James. However, the lady felt constrained to take it herself at that very moment.

As she came near the little house, the lady heard someone talking. Wishing to hear what was being said, she stepped softly up to the door. Now, she heard that the poor man praying, and she heard him say, "O Lord, help me; Lord, Thou wilt help me; Thy promise cannot fail. We have no bread to eat, and it is now a whole day since we have had any food; yet, I know Thou wilt

give us something to eat, although Thou must again rain manna from heaven to send it.”

The lady could not wait any longer. She quickly opened the door, saying, “Yes, God has sent you food. Take this loaf, and be encouraged to cast your cares upon Him, for He cares for you. If you ever again need a loaf of bread, please come to my house.”

Adapted from Religious Stories for Young and Old, Volume 2

ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD

An upright, honest and godly grocer got into debt with his wholesaler through no fault of his own. The wholesaler insisted that in order to increase his turnover and solve the debt, he should take out a license to sell bottled beer. The grocer felt he could not do this, as he believed it would be dishonouring to God. However, the grocer did not know how to get out of debt. A debt collector had been told to go and get the money that was owed. He was a man who feared God. When he heard the details of the case, the collector prayed that in some way the debt might be resolved. However, he was given orders again to go and collect the money, and he was obliged to obey.

The night before he proposed to call on the grocer, the debt collector stayed overnight at a hotel, and he had a remarkable dream. In this dream, he thought he called upon the grocer early in the morning, just as the family was about to sit down to breakfast. He was warmly asked to come in and share the meal, which he did. After breakfast, the grocer reached for his Bible and asked the visitor if he would join them in family worship. The guest readily consented, and the host read Psalm 23. The words were somewhat different, but suitable to the case of the grocer. “The Lord is my banker, I shall not fail; He maketh me to lie down in gold fields; He showeth me the combination of His truth; He restoreth my credit; He showeth me how to abide lawfully in faith; yea, though I walk through the valley of debt, I will fear no evil for Thou art with me. Thy gold and Thy silver

shall comfort me; Thou shalt furnish a way for me before the collector. Thou fillest my barrel with oil, and it runneth over; surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will do business in the name of the Lord.” The collector awoke and greatly wondered at this strange dream.

Rising early, he went down to the house of the grocer. Upon arriving there, he was warmly welcomed by his friend, who invited him to join them for a meal. The collector, marvelling that his dream was being carried out, went into the room. When the meal was ended, the grocer said that they were now going to have the morning worship and asked if he would stay. The collector readily assented.

The grocer opened his Bible and read the 23rd Psalm, not as in the dream, but as in the Word of God. Then, kneeling down, he prayed in exactly the same words of confidence that the collector had heard in his dream. As he was on his knees, there was a ring on the shop bell. Going into the shop, the grocer found a young man at the counter who presented him with a roll of notes and said, “My father has sent me to pay you a bill which only you and he knew about, and he is sorry that he has had to keep you such a long time.” The amount was more than necessary to pay the collector, who was now able joyfully to write the receipt and discharge the debt. The grocer was able to go on his way with new hope and courage in God. *“Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it”* (1 Thessalonians 5.24).

Adapted from The Friendly Companion 1995

SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF THE EARLY LIFE OF CHRISTMAS EVANS

Many readers will, no doubt, have heard of Mary Jones, the young girl from Wales who saved all her money to buy a Bible. How many have heard of another Christian from Wales called Christmas Evans?

Christmas Evans was born on Christmas Day, 1766, in a cottage near the village of Tre-groes, approximately twenty miles north of Carmarthen, South Wales. This would have been a very

remote spot with only a few inhabitants. His father made a living as a shoemaker. He had an older sister and a younger brother. Christmas did not speak much about his family, but one comment that he made while preaching is quite instructive: "I remember my godly mother saying to me, 'Christmas, my boy, think of your soul.'" She must have had some concern over her own soul to say such a thing to her child.

Christmas was only ten years old when his father died. Not only did he keenly feel the loss, but he also began to have religious impressions for the first time, being "much terrified with the fear of death and the day of judgment." The little family was now in abject poverty. However, after a time, a brother of his mother offered to give Christmas food and clothing in return for duties on his farm. Christmas spent the next six years of his life in utter misery. His uncle was a drunkard, and he was very cruel and selfish. He forced young Christmas to work extremely hard. Christmas received no education, either moral, academic or religious! By the age of seventeen, he could not read a single word.

During this sad time, Christmas had at least two remarkable deliverances. He was riding a horse which suddenly bolted and raced into a stable through a very narrow door. Sometime later, he measured that stable door and could not understand how he had escaped unscathed. He wrote, "It was through God's good providence that I was not struck dead at the entrance door." On another occasion, he was climbing a tree with a sharp knife in his hand. The branch he was on broke, causing him to fall from a great height along with the branch. He lay there for some time until a passer-by noticed him, barely conscious. Once again, he had been spared without a single broken bone. It was after this that he wondered if God was preserving him for some future special work!

He left employment with his uncle to move to another farm where he was treated better. Around this time, there was quite a stir about a Presbyterian minister, named David Davies, who ministered in the village where Christmas lived. Very little is known of how Christmas became interested in going to this

church, but it does appear that God used the ministry of Mr. Davies to bring Christmas into more solemn concern about his own never-dying soul. In writing of other young people who professed faith at that time, he states: "What became of the major part of these young converts I have never known, but I hope God's grace followed them as it did me, the meanest of them all." He also wrote of this time years later: "The fear of dying in an ungodly state especially affected me (even from childhood), and this apprehension clung to me till I was induced to rest upon Christ. All this was accompanied by some little knowledge of the Redeemer, and now, in my seventieth year, I cannot deny that this concern was the dawn of the day of grace on my spirit, although mingled with much darkness and ignorance."

He now had to separate from his previous friends and would not go along with their wicked ways any more. While he was walking along a road, six of his former acquaintances jumped out on him to beat him up. One of them struck him in the eye with a stick or small bar. The result was that he lost that eye.

The minister, David Davies, began to notice the genuine enthusiasm Christmas showed in the things of God. He noticed on one occasion that Christmas came to the service at the last minute, sat all the way through with his head bowed down, and then disappeared quickly at the end. It must have been mid-summer, as Mr Davies went to the farm where Christmas worked and enquired about him. The farmer told the minister to quietly follow him. From behind a hedge, they saw Christmas "preaching" to a congregation of cows, sheep and horses, almost word for word the sermon he heard that day. Mr Davies, who had a school for training young ministers, decided to take in Christmas free of charge for six months. At this school, Christmas, who never had any proper schooling in his whole life, made incredible progress. He also began to "preach" at cottage meetings around this time, although many of the sermons he had memorised and repeated as before.

Christmas passed through a time of darkness in which he often became very depressed. He felt the services of the chapel

where he was a member were somewhat dry and formal. At times he went to a Baptist chapel where the theology was more Calvinistic. The more he studied the Bible, the more he began to understand the truths of God and that salvation was by grace alone. He eventually left the church where David Davies was pastor to join with the Baptists. After searching the Scriptures and understanding the true meaning of believers' baptism, he was baptised in a nearby river and received into church membership.

In June 1789, when twenty-three years of age, Christmas went to an Association Meeting of Welsh Baptist churches. He was encouraged to join a small group of ministers to go to North Wales on a missionary tour. As he journeyed with them, he was further constrained to preach in the Llyn Peninsula. It appears that as soon as he began preaching there, he proved the gracious help of God, enabling him to preach without notes either on paper or in his head. The Lord was pleased to own and bless his preaching with many being converted.

He only stayed in the Llyn Peninsula for about two years before being led to go up to the Isle of Anglesey, where he remained for over thirty years. Although the Lord greatly blessed his preaching, inasmuch as many joined in church membership, Christmas suffered from all sorts of troubles during his years in Anglesey. After leaving that area, he held a few short pastorates around Wales, but ended his days in Swansea where he had been on a preaching tour.

Christmas Evans was an unusual man. No doubt, his experiences as a child and youth left their marks upon him. He was eccentric in both his character and preaching, yet he was greatly used of God and attracted large congregations. He was evidently not a good administrator or organiser, and his weaknesses in church government led to troubles. However, they were used of the Lord to keep him humble. He was a most faithful and popular preacher of the Gospel, even if he never succeeded as a pastor or deep theologian.

A. T. Pickett

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES**THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH - PART ONE**

Apart from the Psalms, the writings of Isaiah the prophet are cited more times in the New Testament than any other book. His prophecy also has the distinction of being mentioned at the beginning of the public ministry of both John the Baptist (Matthew 3.3) and the Lord Jesus Himself in Luke 4.17-21. Isaiah 53 was the portion of Scripture being read by the eunuch who was returning from Jerusalem (Acts 8.32,33). We read: *"Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus"* (Acts 8.35).

John Gill says that "no one writes so fully and clearly of the person, offices, grace and kingdom of Christ; of His incarnation and birth of a virgin; of His sufferings and death and the glory that should follow, as he [Isaiah] does." As I take up my pen to begin this month's lesson, we are almost upon the season when we especially remember Christ's birth. How well known are the words of the prophet Isaiah in chapter 9, verses 6 and 7!

I venture, feeling greatly my need of help from above, to go through the book of the prophet Isaiah in as many lessons as the Lord sees fit. In doing so, I feel much as Isaiah writes in the 6th chapter: *"Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips"* (verse 5). However, I cannot claim the vision (Isaiah 1.1) that the prophet had, nor any of the Spirit of prophecy. Nonetheless, my dear young friends, God knows if you and I have been given a little glimpse by God-given faith, so that we are constrained to come in with the last clause of verse 5: *"for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."* At least, the hymnwriter desired it:

Had I a glance of Thee, my God
Kingdoms and men would vanish soon;
Vanish as though I saw them not.
As a dim candle dies at noon.

Gadsby's 480

This longest of the prophecies is a mixture of historical narrative and prophecy, which enhances the sense of reality in the prophecy. It certainly would have borne weight with the early readers of the Scriptures before Christ was born.

In the first chapter, the prophet laments the sad state of the times in which he lives, exposing the emptiness of the mere outward form of worship prevailing in his day. Yet, his authority as a true messenger of the Lord soon begins to come out in verses 16-20. He is especially God's messenger in verse 18: "*Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*" Then follows in verses 19 to the end, a pattern of prophecy repeated often later on: the Lord's judgments upon them for their sins, intermingled with His mercy and compassion, and yes, the promise of a Redeemer for Zion (verse 27). This pattern occurs again and again throughout this prophecy, but what hope would there be, but for the mercy and compassion of God?

Chapter 2 begins with a blessed promise for the future: "*And it shall come to pass in the last days*" (verse 2), but is soon followed by further reproaches upon "*the house ... of Jacob.*" The chapter concludes with solemn prophecy regarding the second coming of Christ, beginning at verse 10: "*Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of His majesty.*" We may well observe that surely there is no other rock which will afford a safe hiding place in that day, but the Rock, Christ Jesus? This is beautifully taken up later in Isaiah 32.2. The prophet is instructed at the close of chapter 2 to give us that solemn injunction: "*Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?*" Perhaps, it could be said that the first two chapters in this prophecy embrace in outline the whole span of the rest of it?

After that solemn reminder of our true state as mortal creatures: "*whose breath is in his nostrils*" and our insignificance in the sight of God: "*for wherein is he [man] to be accounted of?*", the prophet moves on to further judgments

and visions from the Lord of hosts (3.1). Chapters 3 and 4 really run together. What a contrast there is in chapter 3.10 to much of the rest of it! *"Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him."*

Much detail regarding the conduct of the daughters of Zion is given in the latter part of chapter 3, which may be of interest to our young ladies. It is evident that all the fine clothing and ornaments worn by the women were not approved by God, who says in verse 18: *"In that day the Lord will take away [all these things]."*

In the beginning of chapter 4, though, there is a figure of a turning to the Lord Jesus: *"Only let us be called by Thy name"* (verse 1), and the promise of cleansing and restoration to follow, with the return of the glory of the Lord upon Mount Zion. The chapter closes with reference to *"a place of refuge."* Also, there is another link to chapter 32 in the final words: *"For a covert from storm and from rain."* Dear young friends, as this new year continues, surely, we need the prayer of the hymn-writer (Gadsby's 143):

Rock of Ages, cleft for me;
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

Brian Mercer

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about BROKEN THINGS. Younger children need only answer five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 9 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. The last question may need help from an adult.

1. What did Moses break beneath the mount of God when he saw the golden calf? (Exodus 32.19)
2. What does Solomon liken to “a broken tooth”? (Proverbs 25.19)
3. Which godly man died from a broken neck? (1 Samuel 4.18)
4. What did Jesus say “cannot be broken”? (John 10.35)
5. What does David call, “The sacrifices of God”? (Psalm 51.17)
6. Who did God send against the Midianite army with 300 pitchers, which were to be broken? (Judges 7)
7. What, in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, broke in pieces the image he saw? (Daniel 2)
8. When Jesus instituted the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper, He took bread and broke it. What did He say this symbolised? (1 Corinthians 11)
9. On one occasion a broken roof showed the faith of a sick man and his four friends. What did Jesus first say to the sick man when He saw their faith? (Mark 2)
10. Jesus said, “And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.” (Matthew 21.44). Try to explain who the “stone” is, who those who fall on the stone are, and in what sense they are “broken.”

ANSWERS TO JANUARY QUESTIONS

1. 215 years
2. 215 years
3. 64 years
 - a. 75 years
 - b. 100 years
 - c. 60 years
 - d. 130 years
 - e. 39 years
 - f. 110 years
 - g. 80 years

MY TIMES ARE IN THY HAND

My times are in Thy hand,
I'd wish them to be there;
Leave all at Thy command,
And cast on Thee my care:
Trust not to erring reason's eye,
But look by faith beyond the sky.

My times are in Thy hand;
What if my path appear
Too dark to understand?
True faith can hush my fear:
Help me to trust with Thee my soul
When furious billows round me roll.

My times are in Thy hand,
Let faith behold them there;
And cast, at Thy command,
Myself and all my care
Low at the feet of Thee, my God,
Trusting that all shall work for good.

My times are in Thy hand;
My journey and its end
I'd leave to Thy command,
Thou never-changing Friend:
Clouds are around to reason's eye;
All's bright to faith above the sky.

Thy precepts be my guide,
Thy promises my stay;
Oh, keep me near Thy side,
And help me every day
Through grace, Thy precepts to fulfil,
And leave to Thee Thy sovereign will!

S. Sears

The *Friendly Companion*



“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest.”
(Matthew 11.28)

March 2022

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

I wonder how many of our young friends enjoy reading the Book of Ruth. It is a book that is full of God's providence, His ordering of all events. It is a book of God's solemn judgment against the nation of Israel by sending a famine, and against Naomi, one of His chosen people, who had departed to Moab. It is a book that reveals God's sovereign, distinguishing grace in the person of Ruth. It also gives a beautiful representation or type of the Lord Jesus in Boaz.

There are four chapters in the Book of Ruth, and each chapter reveals a different aspect of the work of grace in the souls of those who are called by God. In chapter one, we are introduced to Ruth as she is married to one of the sons of Naomi. She and her sister-in-law, Orpah, became part of Naomi's family. After the death of her husband and two sons in Moab, Naomi was determined to return to the land of Israel.

This brought a conflict for Orpah and Ruth, for they both loved Naomi. They went with her as she began her journey. Naomi tried to convince each of them to return to the house of her parents. Orpah soon went back, for she did not really want to leave the people of Moab and their gods. That became part of the trial for Ruth. Naomi urged her to follow the example of Orpah. However, God had begun to deal with Ruth. She could not go back to the gods of Moab; she would cleave (hold fast) to Naomi. Some might say that she came to a moment of decision. However, I feel it is more scriptural to say that she was constrained by a strange, mysterious love that she did not yet fully understand. This constraining is the sweet experience of every sinner drawn after the Lord Jesus. Ruth was made willing, and she was determined to go with Naomi. The vital point of chapter one is the **constraining** of Ruth to go with her mother-in-law.

In chapter two, we find Ruth in the land of Israel and going to glean after the reapers. In the wonderful providence of God, she was directed to one of the fields of Boaz. Gleaning was hard

work under the hot sun. It required great toil and perseverance. It is the same with those who are constrained to take up the cross and follow Jesus in the way. This constraining is the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart. They labour to enter in at the strait gate. They labour at the throne of grace to obtain mercy and peace for their souls. When Boaz came to see the reapers, he asked who the young woman was that was gleaning so diligently. The servant whom he had set over the field told Boaz that it was Ruth the Moabitess, who came back with Naomi. The servant then described Ruth's character in the beautiful words: *"She came, and bath continued even from the morning until now."* Thus, the vital point of chapter two is the **continuing**.

In chapter three, Naomi told Ruth that she would seek rest for her in the house of a husband. She told Ruth to go down to the threshing floor where Boaz was winnowing barley (separating the grain from the chaff). She was to watch for the moment when Boaz became aware of her presence. Then she was to make known her state to him and to ask him to do the part of the kinsman. Boaz assured Ruth that if no one else was able and willing to do the part of a kinsman, he would do so. To do the part of a kinsman was to marry her, to raise up seed (a child) in the name of her dead husband, and to pay all the debt that was owed. It required a great sacrifice on the part of the kinsman. When Ruth returned to Naomi and told her all that Boaz had said, Naomi instructed her: *"Sit still [rest], my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day."* What a blessed season it is when a seeking soul comes to the place where it can rest and watch while Jesus does all things for it. So, the vital teaching of chapter three is **resting** by faith.

In chapter four, Ruth is brought to experience the reward. In Psalm 58.11, it is written: *"Verily there is a reward for the righteous."* Those who, like Ruth, are constrained, continue, and rest are righteous and shall receive the reward. *"But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him"* (Hebrews 11.6). Ruth's **reward**

was manifold. First, she experienced the love of Boaz that filled her with joy and gladness. Second, the sorrow and reproach of her widowhood was removed. Third, she was given a son who would become great in Israel. His name was Obed, and he was the grandfather of David, Israel's great king. He was in the line from which Christ would come. Ruth proved the truth of Psalm 127.3, "*The fruit of the womb is His [God's] reward.*"

May the Lord help you each to understand these four vital parts of the experience of God's people: constraining, continuing, resting, and reward.

With loving wishes from the Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

Rainbow lorikeets are a beautiful Australian parrot species (*Trichoglossus haematodus*). Their numbers in the wild have surged in recent years, much to the consternation of fruit growers, for rainbow lorikeets can decimate an orchard in three days. However, backyard bird watchers are delighted, for they have been leaving food out for them and other bird species, so as to be able to admire them feeding up close.

Almost every type of habitat in Australia is home to these brilliantly coloured parrots; from the tropical areas of Western Australia and Northern Territory, down through the temperate zone of the east coast states of Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria, across to South Australia, and into the cool, remote gum forests in the island state of Tasmania. They seem to be everywhere.

Rainbow lorikeets have usually been known to feed solely upon fruit, seeds, nectar and pollen. For some years, a property owner north of Brisbane, Queensland, has set up feeding stations for the local birdlife. He puts out seeds for vegetarian birds like lorikeets, galahs and king parrots, while carnivorous birds such as kookaburras, magpies, butcher birds and currawongs are catered for with minced meat (in the form sold in shops specifically as pet food). The farmer remembers that

initially, the rainbow lorikeets appreciated the seeds he put out for them on the feeder trays. However, once they tried the meat and evidently liked it, they not only sought out the meat in preference to the vegetarian offering, but they even began aggressively to exclude other birds from accessing it! “At first they went for the seed, but then they started chasing the other birds away from the meat, which surprised me,” he recalls.

Every kind of animal and bird that eats meat today was, in fact, originally vegetarian. They have all made the switch from a completely vegetarian diet at some point in history. According to the accurate account that the Bible gives us of history, we know that it could only have happened in the years after the fall of man, about six thousand years ago. Before that time, God the Creator said, *“To every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so”* (Genesis 1.30). It was truly a “very good” world (verse 31), just as God said, in which there was no death, no pain, no suffering, no eating of meat.

So, the Aussie lorikeets, availing themselves of easy meat, are really just another example of the fact that we now live in a fallen world.

Contributed by A. Seymour

Sources: Creation.com/meat-eating-lorikeets

A LIVING SOUL

[A living soul is] one whom God has quickened when dead in trespasses and sins; a man that has life and feels the terrors of the law, the bondage of the law, and the plague of his own heart; who feels a mighty famine in the land, and has an appetite for the Bread of Life, and a thirst for the living God; who feels divine motions towards the Almighty, the comfortable rise of a good hope, and the conflicts of faith, and who is indulged with an expectation that shall never be cut off.

William Huntington

THE HELMSMAN

When sailing in a steamer one day, the captain's son was on board. He was a bright young fellow of five or six years of age. The little boy wanted to take the place of the man at the helm. The good-natured helmsman put the spoke of the wheel into his small hand, which was hardly able to grasp it. At the same time, he was careful to put his own big hand on the child's tiny fingers, and he took a firm hold of the wheel. The boy was in high glee, imagining that he himself was steering the huge steamer.

Now, God deals with you in a similar way. He puts His almighty hand upon your feeble hand, and His strength is made perfect in your weakness.

Adapted from The Little Gleaner 1915

CONFESS YOUR SINS

Some years ago, a Roman Catholic Irishman lay near death. A Bible had been given to him, and the truth had reached his heart. The parish priest, being told that the man was dying, hastened to his bedside with oil to administer the last rites of the church. "Confess your sins to me," said the priest.

Raising himself from his pillow, the dying man replied, "Your reverence, you are more than two thousand years too late. Jesus Christ put all my sins away by the power of His blood, and now my soul is at peace and satisfied."

Adapted from The Little Gleaner 1916

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**THE KING'S DREAM IS SHOWN TO DANIEL**

King Nebuchadnezzar had a strange dream. When he woke up, he could not remember the dream, but he felt sure it had an important meaning. He called all the wise men in the land and asked them to tell him what he had dreamed and the meaning of the dream. Of course, they could not do this. Then, the king became very angry. He commanded that all the wise men in the land should be slain. They came to slay Daniel and his friends also.

When Daniel heard of the king's command, he asked for a little time. He and his three friends prayed to God to show them the dream and its meaning. *"Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision."* He gave thanks and praised God for showing him the king's dream.

Arioch, the captain, brought Daniel before the king with haste. The king asked Daniel if he was able to make known the dream and what it meant. Daniel told the king that it was not possible for any man to do what he had demanded. *"But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets,"* and God had shown the dream to him.

QUESTIONS:

1. What did King Nebuchadnezzar have? (3 words)
2. What did Daniel and his friends do? (3 words)
3. There is a God in heaven that reveals what? (1 word)

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. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.
2. The king's meat.
3. Knowledge and skill.

*“But there
is a God in
heaven that
revealeth
secrets.”*

Daniel 2.28

BIBLE LESSONS**THE DEATH OF MOSES**

The Book of Deuteronomy records the final words of Moses to the children of Israel. Moses rehearses all the wonderful works of God for the new generation, the greater part of whom were born in the wilderness. He told them of all the wanderings and conflicts *"in the waste howling wilderness."* He rehearsed for them the law of God given at Sinai, with all its warnings and exhortations. He reminded them of the three main feasts they were to keep each year. The first of these was called the Passover feast, sometimes called the feast of unleavened bread, which was kept in the spring of the year and lasted for seven days. At this feast, they would remember their deliverance out of Egypt. The second feast was called the feast of Pentecost, or feast of weeks. It was kept on the fiftieth day after Passover and lasted for one day. The third feast was called the feast of tabernacles, or the feast of ingathering. This feast was kept in the seventh month and was a time of thanksgiving for all the crops being safely brought in.

In the keeping of these feasts every year, the people were taught to remember their dependence on the God of heaven. When the children of Israel began to depart from God, it could be traced to their failure to keep these feasts in the fear of God.

Long before the children of Israel had any thought of setting up a king, Moses wrote laws of guidance for themselves and their king. They were not to set up a stranger (someone who was not an Israelite) to be their king. Their king was not to multiply horses in the land, lest they should be tempted to return to Egypt. Their king was not to multiply wives to himself, lest his heart be turned away from God. How many of their kings fell into this snare! Thirdly, he was not to multiply silver and gold to himself, lest riches would become his confidence. Also, Moses commanded that when any of their kings was established on his throne, *"He shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life:*

that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them" (Deuteronomy 17.18,19). They were not just to read the law of God, but they were to write it out. In doing so, they would prolong their kingdom.

Moses commanded them not to join with the inhabitants of Canaan in any union, but to remain **separate** from all the Canaanites. They were not to let their sons marry the daughters of Canaan, nor their daughters marry any of the men of Canaan, for the Canaanites would turn the Israelites away from the Lord.

Moses rehearsed all the animals they were allowed to eat, as well as the fish and birds; likewise, the unclean animals, birds and fish that they were forbidden to eat. There were so many ordinances, rules and commandments to guide them in their daily lives. By their obedience, they would obtain God's blessing. If they disobeyed, God would humble them before their enemies.

When Moses had finished blessing each tribe and teaching them all the commandments of God, he went alone out of the camp. Joshua, his successor, and the elders of Israel remained in the camp. What a sight it must have been for the people to see their venerable leader make his way up the side of the mountain! Moses climbed up Mount Nebo to the top of Pisgah. There in the mount, out of the sight of all the people, the Lord appeared to Moses and showed unto him all the land promised to Abraham. Moses experienced what Abraham had spoken on another mountain so long before, *"In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen"* (Genesis 22.14).

As Moses looked northward, he saw the land that Asher and Naphtali would possess. The Lord gave him special help to see across the land of Judah, right out to the Great Sea (Mediterranean). Looking down to the valley just below him, he saw the River Jordan, winding down to the Dead Sea. Across the river, he saw the great walls of the city of Jericho.

We might well believe that the Lord showed him Mount Moriah, where Abraham offered up Isaac, and where Christ

would later offer up Himself on the cross at Calvary. *"And the LORD said unto him, This is the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither"* (Deuteronomy 34.4). The long, historic life of Moses came to an end. God Himself buried His faithful servant, and no one was allowed to know the place. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is recorded, *"And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after"* (Hebrews 3.5). The Bible tells us that there was *"not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face"* (Deuteronomy 34.10). For thirty days, the children of Israel mourned and wept for Moses.

QUESTIONS:

1. What three feasts were they to keep in their new land?
2. What three things were their kings not to multiply to themselves?
3. What was their king to write out when established on the throne? (first 12 words)
4. Who buried Moses?
5. For how many days did the children of Israel mourn for Moses?

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. Simeon.
2. Thy judgments and Thy law.
3. Precious.
4. "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be."
5. "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

KEPT*(Continued from page 37)***Chapter 3**

When I learned that I was going to be placed in the infantry, I felt so disappointed. I had hoped to be given another position, such as quartermaster or something of that nature. Immediately after our thirteen weeks of basic training in Camp Roberts, California, we were sent to the coast. Everything was under strict military secrecy, so we seldom knew what was going to happen. Soon we were put on a boat to be sent overseas, not knowing where. From that port, we were sent into the Pacific area, where the war was in full force with the Japanese. After twenty-one days on ship, we landed in Australia. There I met a couple of other persons who had some religious convictions. They were upright young fellows (probably Arminian), but at least I could have some type of fellowship. In our simple way, we had a little Bible Study.

When I went into the service, I had prayed that I would not have to endure mockery or any type of persecution. Looking back, truly I have to say what a coward I was; but even in this, the Lord wonderfully answered my prayer. For the most part, I was able to read my Bible quietly alone, while others said very little. After I was in the service a while, I did receive a promotion in rank, and this helped very much. I well remember one occasion in a tent in the Dutch East Indies. I was reading my Bible in the little rest area, and some other fellows were playing cards, laughing and joking. One of the men turned to the others and said, "Why don't we go over to the other tent and play cards, so Jay can be quiet here reading his Bible." It quite humbled me to think that those ungodly boys, given to cursing and swearing, playing cards and foolishness, would make such a suggestion as that and leave me alone. I often found that they had respect for me in the stand I took. As I look back, I marvel at the Lord's wonderful care for me, though I often had to confess my failings and sins before Him.

Altogether I was on six to eight beachheads or landings. I was on either the first or the second wave. The second wave was only a matter of seconds behind the first, so it was almost equally dangerous. Again, I look back at how marvellously God kept me. The Japanese had heavily fortified a particular area in New Guinea called Wewak, and the U.S. military was heavily bombing that area. It appeared as if the Japanese thought we were going to land there. We left one part of New Guinea with a one hundred-ship convoy. To the best of my recollection, there was at least one aircraft carrier, as well as several navy destroyers, cruisers, assault ships and the troop transport ships. Everything was under strict military secrecy. As troops, we had no idea where we were going, but some thought we were going to land at Wewak and make a beachhead there. Suddenly, in the middle of the night, the convoy turned and went to an area up above Wewak, called Aitape, and there we made our beachhead. The Japanese had concentrated their forces in Wewak, but we went above them and cut off their supply. Thus, as we came upon the beach, we met with very little resistance and were quickly able to take the airstrip. Of course, the purpose of the attack was to get the airstrip and use it for further invasions upon areas still controlled by the Japanese.

On another occasion, we were about to make a beachhead on a small island off the coast of New Guinea, called Wakde. There was much preparation, and the army engineers were to take us from one part of New Guinea to this little island (which was about one mile off the coast). It had been very heavily bombed. I was meditating and trying to look to the Lord to keep me. In my own mind, I wondered whether I could face God. This particular word came to me out of Psalm 91 verse 7: "*A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.*" It did not give me the assurance that nothing would befall me, but I felt as if the Lord was able to preserve me. Again and again, I sought to commit my pathway to the Lord, yet I realised that I was no different from others. A dear friend from the same city where I was

brought up, and from a good family, had already been killed. It was hard for me to comprehend his loss. Without a doubt, death was round about us. As we entered the landing craft and looked toward the island of Wakde, everything appeared very calm. We were all looking over the sides of the landing craft, and the island seemed to be nothing but a charred mess, with coconut trees and everything else in flames and blackened from bombing. We wondered how anyone could exist after such heavy bombardment as that. I was on the same landing craft as our captain and the radio operator. There must have been about thirty men crowded on it. As we approached the island, the Japanese suddenly began to open fire on us. We all lay as close as possible to the bottom of the landing craft. The coxswain who drove the landing craft was wounded, as well as a machine gunner who was in the front firing onto the beach. I can still remember the awful cursing and swearing by the captain. Every word proceeding out of his mouth was taking God's name in vain in a most blasphemous way. As the landing craft came onto the beach, and the ramp went down, the captain was killed and the radio operator as well. The firing must have been within inches of me, for I was so close to the captain that our flesh may even have touched as we lay in that landing craft. At the time, I didn't realise how close to eternity I might have been, and we quickly had to take our positions upon the beach. We were pinned down and not able to move for some time. There were several other casualties as well. It made a solemn impression upon me that this captain, in the midst of all his profanity and ungodly words, was snatched out of the land of the living. All I could think of was that he had opened his eyes in hell. Later, I was told that three commanding officers were casualties on that particular invasion. It was one mass of confusion. I can well remember the waves lapping our feet as we lay on the beach, as close to the ocean as possible. A man next to me said, "Jay, I've been hit!" I could see that he had been grazed in his arm. Later, someone came and took care of him. He was put on the landing craft and returned back to the mainland. While I would not say

that a thousand fell at my side, yet there were many that did, but it did not come nigh me. After three days of bitter fighting, the island was secured.

(To be continued)

SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF THE EARLY LIFE OF JOHN RAVEN

John Raven was for many years the pastor of chapels at Redhill and Smallfield in Surrey. Born in 1880, he was brought up in Leicester, where he attended Zion Chapel under the pastorate of Grey Hazlerigg. Both of his parents were church members. Throughout his childhood, John was well behaved, conscientious and sober-minded, never desiring to go into the ways of the world. He said that there was never a time when he disliked religion or attending chapel. At this time, the chapel, which seated 600, was completely full every Lord's Day. He also enjoyed going to the Bible Class and acquired a head knowledge of the Scriptures and the doctrines of grace, inasmuch as he could argue with any who differed in their opinions on such matters and often succeeded in silencing them.

When John was about eighteen, he came into deep conviction of sin. He had been reading *Pilgrim's Progress* and came to the part about Mr. Talkative. He had read this book many times, and in his mind, he had often condemned Mr. Talkative for his ability to talk about religion, while lacking grace. When he read it on this occasion, the Lord suddenly sent an arrow into his soul with the words, "*Thou art the man*" (2 Samuel 12.7). John said that he felt utterly stunned, as the Holy Spirit disclosed to him the emptiness of his own religion, being exactly the same as Mr. Talkative. Very quickly, the Holy Spirit had torn away all his natural religion, which was built upon his own head knowledge of the Bible, and completely emptied him of a religion of works. One thing he was taught, which he had never really known before, was that he was a sinner. In after years, when speaking of this time, he said that his was the publican's prayer, "*God be merciful to me a sinner*" (Luke

18.13). Yet, he had to change the “a” to “the”: *“God be merciful to me [THE] sinner.”* He would often walk around the streets of Leicester, not knowing what to do, as he felt to be so sinful, and his sins became an almost intolerable burden. He felt that he had sinned against light and knowledge. He now came to chapel a very different person. He came as a sinner needing mercy and seeking to find grace in the sight of God. At times, he would receive a little encouragement, when the Word spoken seemed to come where he was, but then he sank down again, greatly fearing there could be no hope for his soul. He felt he needed a revelation of the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ to his soul.

After about three years in this state, longing to possess something real and solid, a genuine faith in Christ, he heard a sermon on John 6.68-69: *“Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.”* The Lord so greatly blessed His Word to the soul of John Raven that he went to visit his pastor, Mr Hazlerigg, concerning making an open profession of his faith in the Lord Jesus. In the following days, he felt very favoured with the blessing of the Lord. He wrote, “What a day this has been! God has sent needed mercies when least expected. How I could trace His wonderful work in all that has transpired this week. I have felt overflowing with gratitude to Him.”

On the morning of his baptism, he woke with the words, *“Fear not, ... I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward”* (Genesis 15.1). He also mentioned that when he went into the vestry to prepare for the baptism, a calm came upon him as he considered God’s goodness in bringing him there. He, like so many, did not feel anything special when baptized, but he had the answer of a good conscience.

Not far from where he lived was the Aged Pilgrims’ Care Home for the elderly. A number of aged members from the church at Zion spent their latter days here. When he was younger, his mother often took him with her on her weekly

visitations, but now he often went to visit of his own accord. He enjoyed the company and godly conversation of these elderly people. Every Friday, a member of the church conducted a prayer meeting at this Care Home, and it was on one of these occasions that young John Raven was first called to speak publicly in prayer.

It was around this time when the Lord began to exercise his mind about the ministry. He wrote in his diary some time during 1903, "When I see my meanness, ignorance, my want of grace, experience and natural ability, and many other discouraging things, my sin and folly, I think it cannot be. Then my pride is mortified, my heart becomes fretful, and I know not what to do. O to be enabled to view the thing in a right light: not to be hasty, but to wait for the revelation of the Lord's will, and above all, to give diligence to make my calling and election sure. May nothing come before the concerns of my soul." Surely, in this way, the Lord prepares men for the work of the ministry; making them feel their complete insufficiency, so that they may be wholly dependent upon the Lord, and prove it to be of Him. His pastor, Mr. Hazlerigg, tried to assist a number of chapels around the area who were struggling or in a low state. He would encourage some of his young male members to conduct reading services where there was such a need. At Loughborough, ten miles south of Leicester, the chapel had an aged pastor who was struggling with various infirmities. John Raven was asked if he would be willing to go and help them occasionally. During 1904, he conducted three reading services there, albeit on the last occasion in late September, he misplaced the sermon he felt led to read and had to borrow from a friend another one to read.

The next Lord's Day, he was requested to go into the pulpit and preach. No doubt, he must have laid this matter before the Lord and felt it was right in God's sight for him to venture. After hearing of this, another chapel nearby requested John Raven to preach for them. This, in turn, led to further invitations. He felt he must, first of all, see his pastor to have the sanction of him

and the church before preaching any more. This was duly attended to, and many more invitations followed.

It was in 1918 (the year he also married), toward the end of World War One, that he became the pastor of Ebenezer Chapel, Smallfield and Hope Chapel, Redhill, where he remained until his death in 1953.

His early experience of visiting the old people left a great burden upon his spirit about the needs (both natural and spiritual) of the aged and infirm in the Gospel Standard denomination. He was instrumental in the formation of the Bethesda Homes. His desire was “that the aged and infirm of the denomination might be cared for by our own people in their declining days, that they might enjoy godly company and a spiritual atmosphere!”

A. T. Pickett

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH - PART 2

The opening verse of Isaiah chapter 5 is reminiscent of the language of the Song of Solomon. But alas! The prophetic parable tells of sad things – a vineyard that brings forth wild grapes. The prophecy is solemn in the simple exposition given in verse 7: *“For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant: and He looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.”* Thus, through a prophetic parable, God warns of the dreadful destruction of the Jews for their sins. It is believed that verses 26 to the end describe the subjugation of Israel and Judah by the Romans, which, of course, began to come to pass before the Lord Jesus was born. How telling is the parable of the well-loved, well-kept vineyard! The Lord seeks to bring it home by inviting the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the men of Judah to *“judge, I pray you, betwixt Me and My vineyard”* (verse 3).

The prophecy goes into more detail in verses 8 to 25. *“Woe unto them...!”* occurs six times in this passage, which describes

the wrongdoings of the people and the Lord's judgment upon them for their evil deeds. Many of the sins of the people which are described correspond with the same evils which are prevalent today. For instance: *"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness"* (verse 20).

Chapter 6 refers to the death of King Uzziah, adding to the sense of reality of the vision Isaiah had of *"the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up"* (verse 1). What a glorious, awe-inspiring vision it was, causing the prophet to cry out: *"Woe is me!"* (verse 5). Yet, this was the very time when the Lord confirmed the sacred commission that He gave to His servant Isaiah. *"I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?"* Isaiah replied, *"Here am I; send me."* And the Lord said, *"Go"* (verses 8,9). Every God-sent minister of the gospel has a commission from God, sovereignly, solemnly and sacredly conveyed. The end of chapter 6 tells us how often the proclamation of God's Word has been largely ignored and unheeded. However, the 13th verse gives sweet and sure encouragement for all His servants to venture on: *"But yet in it [the land] shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten."* Remember another prophet who said, *"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart"* (Jeremiah 15.16).

Chapters 7 and 8 are again a mixture of historical narrative and prophecy, most of the history being related in chapter 7. Ahaz (7.1) was one of the few kings of Judah who *"did not that which was right in the sight of the LORD his God"* (2 Kings 16.2). Yet, in chapter 7.14, there is a direct prophecy of the birth of the Lord Jesus! The name of Immanuel is again mentioned in chapter 8.8: *"And he [the king of Assyria] shall pass through Judah ... and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel."* This is almost certainly the scripture which brought the lady who wrote that beautiful poem on the death of Samuel Rutherford to end each verse with the words: *"in/of/from Immanuel's land."*

The beginning of chapter 8 sets forth a prophecy of much more immediate fulfilment, regarding the return of the Assyrians to Damascus and Samaria. It is couched in an unusual way, telling of the birth of a son to Isaiah and his wife, whose name was to be "*Mabershalalhashbaz*". As the margin says, this name means: "*in making speed to the spoil he hasteneth the prey.*" Verse 4 gives the figure of the short time in which this would come to pass: "*For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away...*" This did indeed take place within two years.

Good counsel is given in verses 11 to 14 to those who fear God, which is very relevant today. If you consider the word "*confederacy*" as describing all forms of false religion, then what gracious counsel this is: "*Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the LORD of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. And He shall be for a sanctuary.*" Then, the prophecy speaks further of Christ: "*Bind up the testimony, seal the law among My disciples. And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth His face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for Him. Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion*" (verses 16-18). The first part of verse 18 is cited in the beautiful chapter respecting the manhood of the Lord Jesus – Hebrews 2.13.

The last part of chapter 8 leads us through a dark path into the glorious prophecy of the birth of Christ in chapter 9. Verse 19 has the unusual reference to "*wizards that peep, and that mutter.*" Do not forget that the powers of darkness are still very real today. How often we may come into darkness by seeking the wrong sort of help! What a mercy if nonetheless God brings us into verse 2 of chapter 9: "*The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.*"

Brian Mercer

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about PRAYER. Younger children need only answer 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 50 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. What is required in those that come to God in prayer? (Hebrews 11.6)
2. Why should we "Come boldly unto the throne of grace" (that is, why should we pray to God)? (Hebrews 4.16)

Sometimes prayers from deep necessity are short. Who prayed the following three prayers?

3. "God be merciful to me, a sinner"? (Luke 18.13)
4. "Lord, help me"? (Matthew 15.25)
5. "Lord, save me"? (Matthew 14.30)
6. To whom did God say, "I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears"? (Isaiah 38)
7. For whom was "prayer made without ceasing of the church unto God for him"? (Acts 12)
8. Whose earnest prayer does the Apostle James commend as an example? (James 5)
9. For whom did the Lord Jesus pray, and for whom did He *not* pray? (John 17)
10. Which prophet said, "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you"?

ANSWERS TO FEBRUARY QUESTIONS

1. The two tablets of stone; the tables of testimony written by God, which God had given to Moses.
2. "Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth..."
3. Eli.
4. The Scripture.
5. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."
6. Gideon. (Judges 7.16-22)

7. A stone cut without hands, which “became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.” (Daniel 2.34-35)
8. Of the broken bread, Jesus said, “Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me.” (1 Corinthians 11.24)
9. “Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.” (Mark 2.5)
10. The stone is the Lord Jesus as “head of the corner.” Those who fall on the stone are those who come to Jesus as broken-hearted sinners, pleading for mercy.

WHATSOEVER

*“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do,
do all to the glory of God”*
(1 Corinthians 10.31)

Can you pray about this happening,
This new interest or delight,
In His Name can you perform it,
Are you certain it is right?
If you cannot pray it over,
Then refuse to touch or go,
Is it doubtful or a hindrance?
Do not hesitate – say “NO.”
“There’s no harm” – is not sufficient,
Let your principles be true,
Your whole life a consecration,
“To His glory,” all you do.

Sunshine and Cheer by Clara Simpson

The

Friendly Companion



“Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for
the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that
walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth
at noonday.”
(Psalm 91.5,6)

April 2022

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

Recently, we received a note from a young friend, asking us to explain the meaning of the first verse of John's gospel. While pondering the words, we wondered if other young friends might have the same question.

John opens his gospel by presenting the Deity or Godhead of the Lord Jesus. He also shows that He was eternal, meaning that He always existed. The first verse is written in such simplicity: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* Each word, except one, has four letters or less. Each word, by itself, is so simple; yet, when put together, they set forth an exceeding great truth. John writes of the Lord Jesus as the **Son of God**.

When John wrote of *"the beginning,"* he was referring to the beginning of time and the purposes of God regarding the creation of the world and the forming of His church. *"The Word"* itself had no beginning and likewise has no end. When John writes, *"In the beginning was the Word,"* he was referring to the eternal nature of *"the Word."* But who is he referring to by the term *"Word"*? In the fourteenth verse, John writes: *"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."* The *"Word"* speaks of Jesus, who, though He was equal with God, took flesh and was made like unto us. Thus, young friends, the Lord Jesus is *"the Word"* of John 1 verse 1.

The second clause says, *"The Word was with God."* A separate personality is set forth. The Word (the Lord Jesus) was with God before the worlds were made. He was with God when all things were created. It suggests that He was always in God's presence.

The third clause tells us that *"The Word was God."* Thus, *"the Word"* is a Person of the Godhead. In his first epistle, John writes, *"For there are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these Three are One"* (1 John 5:7). No doubt, you have heard ministers, Sunday School teachers or your parents speak of the Trinity, the Triune God, or the Three in One. These terms refer to the wonderful,

mysterious nature of God the Father, God the Son (Word) and God the Holy Spirit. In verse two, John writes, "*The same was in the beginning with God.*" The "*same*," meaning "*the Word*" existed (had no beginning). It is a repetition of the last clause in verse one.

It is by "*the Word*" that God makes known His will, His thoughts and commandments to poor sinners. For this reason, Jesus (the Word) was sent into the world. We read in Hebrews 1.1,2: "*God, who at sundry [many different] times and in divers [various] manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, bath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.*" By the Word (Lord Jesus), God makes Himself known, and by the Word, He communicates His thoughts, His will and knowledge to His people.

We often hear the Scriptures called the Word of God. The Lord Jesus is also called "the Word."

The Scriptures and the Lord
Bear one tremendous name;
The written and the incarnate Word
In all things are the same.

With love from the Editor.

For many years, the readers of the *Friendly Companion* had the privilege of reading "Bible Lessons for the Older Ones" written by our dear friend, Mr. Jabez Rutt, who has also written a few monthly messages for us during our time as Editor. Mr. Rutt has recently suffered the loss of his dear wife, after a year of great affliction. We pray that the Lord may be his help, strength and comfort in the days ahead.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

The picture on the front cover this month is of a bat. Many people are afraid of bats, and they have been called creepy or scary. However, bats are a remarkable example of God's handiwork. They serve a very useful purpose by eating harmful insects and pollinating fruits.

There are over fourteen hundred species of bats. They can be found in every place except extremely-cold regions and some deserts. Bats vary in size and shape. The smallest, Kitti's hog-nosed (Bumblebee) bat, measures just over an inch (2.5 cm.) in length and weighs less than a penny, making it the world's smallest mammal. The giant, golden-crowned flying fox is one of the largest, with a wing-span of up to six feet (1.7 metres).

Most bats are nocturnal, meaning they are active at night. Bats hang upside down while at rest, and many roost together in caves or other refuges. Most bats hibernate in the winter, but some migrate to warmer climates.

Bats are the only mammals capable of true and sustained flight, like birds. In fact, they are even more manoeuvrable in the air than most birds are.

Bats use an incredibly-complex form of echolocation to locate prey in the dark. As they zip through the air, they constantly emit and sense sound waves to pinpoint accurately the exact locations of moving targets, which they then snatch out of the air and eat completely "on the fly." The variable sound pulses that bats send out have been measured at 30,000 to 100,000 hertz (Hz). In comparison, the upper bound for human hearing is 20,000 Hz. This echolocational system is so precise that bats can use built-in neurological algorithms to process intuitively the ultrasonic sonar pulses to "see" their surroundings with sound just as well as people can see with their eyes! Some bats can even target and nab insects as small as a mosquito.

The sonar capabilities of bats display the genius of their Creator. Human engineers cannot match their abilities.

"Complex Creature Engineering Requires a Creator"

by Jeffrey P. Tomkins, Ph.D, for ICR

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**THE DREAM OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR**

King Nebuchadnezzar had been thinking about what would happen in the future when he fell asleep. In his dream, he saw a great image or statue. It had a head of gold, arms of silver, body of brass, legs of iron, and the feet were part iron and part clay. Then, a stone fell upon the feet and broke them to pieces. The whole image was broken to powder and blown away by the wind. But the stone that fell upon the image grew larger. It *“became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.”*

Daniel told the king that God had given him this dream to show what would happen. Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold. After him, there would be weaker kings. Finally, the God of heaven would set up a kingdom which would *“stand for ever.”* It shall never be destroyed.

After Daniel told the dream and its meaning to the king, he was given many great gifts. Daniel was made ruler over the whole province of Babylon. At Daniel's request, his three friends were also set over the affairs of the province.

QUESTIONS

1. What was Nebuchadnezzar thinking about? (3 words)
2. What fell upon the feet of the image? (2 words)
3. The kingdom God set up shall stand ___ ___? (2 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. A strange dream.
2. Prayed to God.
3. Secrets.

Contributed

*“The great God
hath made
known to the
king what shall
come to pass
hereafter”*

Daniel 2.45

BIBLE LESSONS**JOSHUA SENDS OUT SPIES**

The children of Israel did not need to wonder who would be their leader instead of Moses. Before he died, Moses showed them that the Lord had chosen Joshua to be captain in his place.

The Lord also told Joshua, *"There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them."*

God spoke further to 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."*

Although the children of Israel were coming to the end of their journey, it must have seemed like a new beginning. They had a new leader, and they were about to enter the land of promise. Joshua told them to prepare extra food, because they would cross over the River Jordan in three days, and go in to possess the land.

While the people were getting ready, Joshua chose two strong, wise and dependable men to cross over the river and spy upon the city of Jericho, which was a very large, walled city. In order to possess the rest of the land, they must overcome this great city first. The two men crossed Jordan, perhaps by swimming, and entered the gate of the city. They were brave men to go on such a mission.

By the time the spies entered the city, night was coming on, and they looked for a place to spend the night. The Lord directed them to the house of a young woman named Rahab. Her house was right on the wall of the city. The entrance of the spies into the city had been observed and reported to the king of Jericho. The king sent officers to arrest the two Israelites. Although the Bible does not tell us, it would seem that the

officers searched the house but could not find the spies. Rahab had taken them to the roof and hidden them. She covered them with stalks of flax which she had laid out upon the roof.

Rahab told the officers that the men had come to her house, but left when it became dark. She told them to *"pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them."* It was a lie. Did she not know that the men were enemies to her country? She did indeed! But she also knew something else.

When the king's officers had gone, she went up to the roof, where the spies were hidden. She said to them, *"I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings, ... Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed."*

She told the spies that when the people of Jericho heard of the great things the God of Israel had done for His people, their hearts melted with fear, and there remained no more courage in any man. Rahab heard these accounts with a different spirit from the rest of the people of Jericho. She knew that all the gods of the Canaanites could never work after such a manner.

Although she had lived a very sinful life, Rahab longed to know Israel's God. Thus, these spies were no longer enemies to be feared by her. She desired to be like one of the Israelites. The Bible tells us, *"By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace."*

You can read about this in Joshua chapters one and two.

QUESTIONS:

1. What was not to depart out of Joshua's mouth? (5 words)
2. What was he to do with it day and night? (2 words)
3. How many spies did Joshua send?
4. What was the name of the woman whose house they entered?
5. What happened to the people of Jericho when they heard what God had done for Israel? (14 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. The Passover (feast of unleavened bread), the feast of Pentecost (feast of weeks), and the feast of Tabernacles (feast of ingathering).
2. Horses, wives, silver and gold (riches).
3. "He shall write him a copy of this law in a book."
4. God
5. Thirty.

KEPT

(Continued from page 64)

Chapter 4

Another remarkable instance of the Lord's overruling hand in providence took place upon the island of Biak, which was part of the Dutch East Indies. Several of our units had landed there. We were given the mission to go down a road to take and secure a huge spring that gushed out of the coral rocks. This was one of the most important water supplies on the island, and of course, water was a very vital thing. While some of the other units found much opposition in their tasks, mercifully, ours met with very little resistance, and we were soon able to hold this water source. Again, I see how the Lord watched over me. The enemy was heavily embedded into the coral rock high up in the ridges, and it was very difficult to drive them out. Having been on the island for some years, the Japanese had built great tunnels and fortifications, and all of our artillery could not drive them out. Often, they would attack us with their mortar shells and artillery. On one occasion, we were ordered to go around behind them, hoping we could attack from the rear. We were given orders to climb up a particular sharp ridge. As we came

to the top, the Japanese opened up fire, causing a number of casualties among our men. The captain realised that to continue would be nothing more than a suicide attack, and he ordered us to withdraw. We did so and tried to regroup, waiting for further orders and additional artillery to break up their positions. Communication in the jungle was very poor, and radios were inefficient. The captain often used a flare-gun to communicate with another unit. The different colours of the flare would indicate to another company in our regiment what had happened. The meaning of the colour would only be known by the regiment or commanding officers. (Red would mean one thing, and blue or yellow something else.) A flare was shot up to indicate to the commanding officer of another regiment that we had withdrawn, and then another flare was shot up to give another signal. Of course, that gave our position away to the Japanese, and they began to shoot into our area. A mortar shell came through the thicket and landed on the ground just a few feet away from me. However, it was a dud (name given to those that did not explode) and never went off. If it had exploded, I would have been killed or at least severely wounded. To this day, I vividly remember seeing the unexploded shell and how quickly we moved away, fearing it would go off before we were at a safe distance. Once again, the Lord marvellously kept me, for such duds were very rare.

On another occasion, we were going to dig in for the night, feeling we could make no further progress against the enemy. They kept shooting artillery shells upon us. As we dug in, shells exploded all around us, some of the shrapnel hitting very close. I had coffee in my canteen cup, and some of the shrapnel hit so close that it threw dirt into my cup. One shell hit the palm trees above my head. The shrapnel went here and there, and about fifty feet away, a young man was hit and killed. Again and again, I could see God's wonderful providential care.

(To be continued)

A FAITHFUL DOG

A certain minister went to preach in Wales, and he stayed at a farmer's cottage for the night. The farmer had a lot of sheep which must be gathered in for the night. He gave several shrill whistles, and the sheep came running in, all but three.

The farmer called his sheep dog, and putting up three of his fingers, he told the dog to go and fetch them. They waited for some hours, and neither the farmer nor the minister felt able to go to bed. Finally, a scratching was heard at the door. It was the dog with two of the sheep.

The farmer brought in the dog and gave it some hot supper. Then, lifting up one of his fingers, he told the dog to go and find the one lost sheep.

It was a long night, and neither the farmer nor the minister could sleep. In the morning, they both went to chapel, but they felt restless because the dog had not returned. After service, the farmer went to the dog's kennel, which must have been a very large one. Right at the back lay the sheep, nice and warm, and the dog beside it. But the dog had suffered a heart attack and was dead; the dog had given its life in finding the lost sheep.

Jesus said, *"I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep"* (John 10.11).

Adapted from an old Monthly Message

NOTHING TOO GREAT OR TOO SMALL FOR GOD

Many years ago, I found a little kitten by the wayside. Very gradually, I tamed him. One day, as he played with a wisp of hay in the full sunshine, I named him Sunbeam – Sunny for short. And so, he lived and grew, until one day it was necessary to take him to the vet for a minor operation.

That was long before we owned a cat carrier. Dear Dad rigged up a bushel box, lined it with hay, then covered it with wire netting, securely fastened. Sunny was placed in the box, and off we went to the vet in Tonbridge, about six miles away.

Soon, it was time to collect him from the vet, and after doing so, I ventured to leave him in the car for a few moments, while I went to the butchers. On my return, instead of first checking that Sunny was still securely in the box, I opened the car door. To my horror, Sunny was free and lying as close to the door as possible. As soon as I opened the door, he fled! No amount of calling would entice him back.

We went sadly home and told Mum. Silent prayers went up for the safe return of Sunny. Dear Dad suggested that we notify as many local organisations as possible: the vet, RSPCA, fire brigade, police and nearby schools (asking for a message to be announced after assembly). Our phone number was given and a generous reward offered.

On Sunday, at Matfield chapel, our dear late deacon said, amongst other things, in his prayer, "Help us to remember there is nothing too great, nothing too small to take to Thee in prayer." We eagerly seized on his words.

Monday morning came, and mother and I prepared the weekly laundry wash. Roughly halfway through, the phone rang, and a lady said, "I think we have your little cat." Details were exchanged. Washing was abandoned, and we set out to retrieve Sunny. "You drive and I'll hold him," mother directed.

We duly arrived at the address given, and the kind lady handed over our dear Sunny. "My little boy is going to be so disappointed," she said as she waved us off. I so regretted not asking her more about him.

Anyway, when we were approximately a quarter of a mile from home, Sunny recognised his surroundings and began to purr. It was music to my ears.

Sunny lived to a remarkable old age. It was a reminder to us that nothing is too great and nothing is too small to take to the Lord in prayer.

(The above account was related by an 89-year-old lady, who never forgot the lesson that nothing is too hard for the Lord. She hoped her story might be recorded to encourage others to bring everything to the Lord in prayer.)

FIRST IMPRESSIONS – CHRISTINA WALDER

Christina Walder died on February 24th, 1978, aged 70 years. Her first impressions of having an immortal soul occurred when she was nine years of age. It was strongly impressed upon her mind that she would die that year. The words kept coming to her: *“We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ”* (2 Corinthians 5.10). The hymns she sang in the Sabbath School from the Clifton Hymnal were very solemn, especially those on death, and these words were impressed upon her mind:

And am I born to die,
To lay this body down?
And must my trembling spirit fly
Unto a world unknown?

Soon as from earth I go,
What will become of me??
Eternal happiness of woe
Must then my portion be.

The impressions were so strong that she was afraid to go to sleep lest she should wake up in hell. However, when she reached the age of ten years and was still spared, she concluded that her impressions were wrong. The intensity of her fear was reduced, but the solemnity of death did not altogether leave her.

About two years later, she attended some meetings held in a tent. She was very taken up with what she heard – that she had only to pray and give her heart to God and she would be saved. She could not understand how it was that the pastor of the chapel she attended did not know this easy way of salvation. She attempted to follow the advice given at the tent meetings, but eventually felt disappointed when she found she remained the same. She went to the tent meeting once more, wondering if she had misunderstood what was said. As she left, these words were brought to her mind:

True religion’s more than notion,
Something must be known and felt.

Lines that Mr. John Kemp, then pastor at Bounds Cross Chapel, Biddenden, often quoted, now became her prayer:

Convince us of our sin,
Then lead to Jesus' blood;
And to our wondering view reveal
The secret love of God.

When about fifteen years old, her heart was filled with the love of God. It made her wonder how people could be taken up with earthly things.

Friendly Companion 1992

DREAM OF MR. H. M'PHAIL OF ROSS-SHIRE

On his deathbed, for a season, Mr. M'Phail was sorely tried about his hope for heaven. Falling asleep in a dejected state of mind, he dreamed that he was waiting, lonely and despairing, outside the walls of the New Jerusalem. Seeing the gate closed, and none near to help him, and none in sight to cry to for help, he laid down to die. Then he heard the sounds of a company approaching the city. Venturing to look up from the dust where he lay, he recognised Noah, Abraham, and all the patriarchs. As they drew near, the gate flew open. A glorious company from within came forth to meet them, and with shouts of triumph, they entered. The gate again closed, and again he was left alone and hopeless. But soon he heard the noise of another company approaching. As they passed, he recognised Moses, Aaron, Samuel, David, and all the prophets, a glorious and a numerous band. Again, the gate was thrown open, and an abundant entrance given; again, he was left outside and felt more desolate than ever. A third company was heard approaching, composed of the apostles and all the earliest Christians. They entered the city amidst rejoicing like the rest; he, with less hope than ever, was still outside the gate. A fourth company now appeared. Luther and Knox were at the head of those who formed it. They passed him by, like those who went before, were admitted into

the city, and left him alone and despairing without. Quite close to him now came a fifth company. He recognised in it some of his friends and acquaintances, who had died in the Lord; but though their shining skirts touched him as they passed, he could not venture to arise and join them. Again, he saw the gate open and close, and he laid himself quite down to die. But he heard the footsteps of a solitary pilgrim, coming exactly to the place where he lay. Looking up, he recognised Manasseh. Summoning all his strength, he took hold of his skirt, as he moved slowly toward the city. Creeping on behind him, he knew the gate had opened by the shining glory of the city's light upon his face. Just as he thought he heard the sound of the gate closing behind him, Mr. M'Phail suddenly awoke. The lesson of this dream was presented to him thereafter in the sweet words of Paul: *"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief"* (1 Timothy 1.15)

The Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire by John Kennedy D.D.

SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF THE EARLY LIFE OF ISAAC WATTS

Isaac Watts is considered to be the man who brought hymns into general use in the congregational worship of God. Today, he is mostly remembered for his hymns, many of which are still in regular use. For example: "O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come."

Isaac was born on July 17th, 1674, in Southampton. He was so small and sickly that he was not expected to live. His parents were both God-fearing people, and they were members of the non-conformist independent church in the town. The non-conformists at that time were in great danger from the authorities, who demanded that everyone attend the Church of England. Non-conformity simply means not conforming to the government-imposed rules for worship. They were prevented from holding worship services that they felt were in accordance with the Word of God. Persecution was raging around the

country, with those in Southampton under great threats. At the time of the birth of Isaac Watts, his father was suffering in the local prison. Apparently, his wife took baby Isaac, when well enough, outside the prison so that his father could at least hear his son – albeit crying!

His father was released from prison the following year, and he continued his trade as a clothier, as well as having a boarding school. Isaac Watts senior was very much into education. He had received a classical education and also had a passion for poetry. His son would very soon manifest a gift in poetry. While his father was leading the family worship in prayer, young Isaac was heard to titter (give a small laugh). His father demanded to know what caused this amusement, to which his son replied that he saw a mouse run up the bell-rope by the fireplace, and the thought came to his mind: *“There was a mouse, for want of stairs, ran up a rope to say his prayers.”*

Up until he was six years old, Isaac was taught at home by his parents. Then, he entered a “free school” run by a local rector. Isaac was obviously a very diligent and gifted scholar. He wrote of his early education: 1678 – began to learn Latin by my father; 1680 - to Latin school and writing; 1683 or before – began to learn Greek (during which year he suffered smallpox); 1684-85 – learned French; 1687 – learned Hebrew. But it was poetry that really appealed to him. Before he was six, his mother discovered some verses which he maintained he had written and not copied from another. To satisfy his mother of his ability, he composed the following:

I – I am a vile polluted lump of earth,

S – So I’ve continued ever since my birth;

A – Although Jehovah grace does daily give me,

A – As sure this monster Satan will deceive me,

C – Come, therefore, Lord, from Satan’s claws relieve me.

W – Wash me in Thy blood, O Christ,

A – And grace divine impart,

T – Then search and try the corners of my heart,

T – That I in all things may be fit to do,

S – Service to Thee, and sing Thy praises too.

Up until the glorious Reformation in 1688, the persecution of non-conformists intensified, with many suffering from heavy fines, imprisonment and even death. In May 1685, his father removed to London, of all places, where he thought he would be safer. It was during 1688 that Isaac Watts “fell under considerable conviction of sin.” There are no details given about how the Lord dealt with him in beginning that work of grace, but the following year, he wrote: “Was taught to trust in Christ, I hope.” He mentioned that during 1689 he had a great and dangerous sickness, although it is not known what it was. This would strongly suggest that he may have been close to death.

It was also around this time that Isaac became exercised about preaching. Having observed his talents and grace, an offer was made by Dr. John Speed, who was the physician at Southampton, to fund a place for him at a university. However, non-conformists were not permitted to enter these universities. Keeping firm to his beliefs, Isaac turned down this well-meant offer and remained at the same school in Southampton.

The following year, 1690, he furthered his education at a non-conformist academy on the outskirts of London. This academy in Newington Green had been founded by ministers ejected from the Church of England, and it was proving to be very popular, with extremely-high standards of education. Although young Isaac Watts was a very keen student, he would prove the truth in the Bible: *“It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so He giveth His beloved sleep”* (Psalm 127.2). His health began to suffer, and he was troubled with insomnia (trouble sleeping) for many years. A number of years later, during a sermon, he remarked, “Midnight studies are prejudicial to nature, and painful experience calls me to repent of the faults of my younger years.”

After four years, at the age of twenty, he returned to the home of his parents in Southampton. He spent the next two years in reading, prayer and meditation, perhaps feeling that he needed this quiet time to prepare for the ministry. It was during this period at home that he made a comment to his father that had a

tremendous effect upon himself and hymn-singing in general. At the Independent Meeting House, where they worshipped, a very early version of the Metrical Psalms was used for singing. Isaac strongly complained to his father about the roughness and general poverty of this psalmody. His father replied, "Try then whether you can yourself produce something better." He jumped at this opportunity, and soon Isaac Watts was composing *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*. The first hymn in what became Book 1 of the above title is:

Behold the glories of the Lamb,
Amidst His Father's throne:
Prepare new honours for His name,
And songs before unknown.

This is hymn 19 in Gadsby's selection. We wonder if this was the first hymn Isaac actually composed following his father's comments. It is not known how many hymns he actually composed during this time back in Southampton.

After two years, Isaac returned to Newington, London. This time, he became a private tutor to the children of Sir John Hartopp, who was a wealthy landowner, a strong non-conformist, as well as a politician. He was also a member of Mark Lane Independent Meeting. Isaac Watts lived with this family for about five years, during which time he commenced preaching and became the assistant pastor, most probably through the influence of Sir John Hartopp; but we trust it was of the Lord. He eventually became the pastor, but only for ten years, as his health was in a very poor state. Although Isaac Watts lived until 1748, the latter part of his life was spent with another wealthy family, and he devoted his time to writing. It appears that his earlier years of studying too much had the sad consequences of leaving him with a fragile constitution, and he suffered from frequent bouts of ill health.

A. T. Pickett

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES**THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAAH – PART THREE**

As some of you may know, the Holy Scriptures were not always divided into chapters and verses. In the underlying Masoretic text, these formal divisions did not exist, although there were paragraphs. Thus, there are several instances where the commencement of a new chapter splits up a passage of the inspired Word somewhat unnaturally. It is so with the end of chapter 8 and the beginning of chapter 9. Verse 1 of chapter 9 clearly follows on directly from verse 22 in chapter 8.

The first seven verses of chapter 9 contain one of the most significant and well-known prophecies of the birth of Christ, especially verses 6 and 7. One cannot go into great depth in just a few lessons such as these, so I will at times pass over much without comment. But let us linger a little while on verses 6 and 7. Not only are these two verses a prophecy, but they contain a glorious declaration of precious truths. The union between the sacred, sinless humanity of the Lord Jesus with His eternal, holy and divine nature as God the Son is clearly set forth.

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.” No capital letters here in announcing the birth of the Son of man. *“And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”* Five great names belonging to none other than the Son of God! Joining these two expressions together, is the clause: *“and the government shall be upon His shoulder.”* How many a poor, tried pilgrim has been so thankful for this!

The rest of chapter 9 and the next few chapters contain more solemn prophecies about God’s judgments on His own people and upon their enemies. Interspersed here and there are further blessed prophecies regarding the Lord Jesus Christ.

The latter part of chapter 9 dwells on God’s judgment on Israel: three times there is a solemn proclamation: *“For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still”* (v 12,17,21 and chapter 10.4).

Again, the break between chapters 9 and 10 cuts across the continuation of prophecy concerning Israel. Then, from verse 5 in chapter 10, the prophecy is against Assyria. Israel now receives, in the midst of the beginning of the spelling out of God's judgments against Assyria, some encouragement for the remnant: *"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God"* (v 20-21).

Chapter 11 again prophesies the coming of the Lord Jesus, with illustrations of the peace which will come upon His kingdom. It begins with the wonderful words in verse 1: *"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots."* Then, the figures of very fierce animals, dwelling and lying down with domesticated creatures, are very striking in verses 6-9. The wonderful nature of this peace is highlighted by the promise: *"and a little child shall lead them"* (v 6).

Chapter 12 is further prophecy regarding the outcome of Christ's coming to this earth. *"And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise Thee: though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me"* (v 1). What a contrast to the repeated words at the end of chapter 9, referred to above! In verse 3, we have a glorious description of the gospel day following Christ's advent on earth: *"Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation,"* followed by the further effect of this salvation: *"And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon His name, declare His doings among the people, make mention that His name is exalted"* (v 4).

In chapter 13, the Holy Spirit directs the prophet to begin prophecy about Babylon, *"which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see"* (v 1). Solemn are the judgments pronounced, especially verses 19-22, which all came to pass. Again, in the middle of prophecy

against the enemies of Israel, there is something to treasure: *"And I will make a Man more precious than fine gold; even a Man than the golden wedge of Ophir"* (v 12); another prophecy regarding the Lord Jesus Christ!

After a brief reflection on the Lord's mercy to Jacob at the beginning of chapter 14, the prophecy against Babylon resumes (v 4), but only after the Spirit dwells on the sweet relief which the lands will experience upon the removal of the Babylonian tyranny.

Then the prophet mentions a different name – Lucifer (v 12). John Gill is emphatic that this does not refer to Satan, but rather, to the king of Babylon. The judgments that follow are sore and grievous, extending to the Philistines (v 29) who had rejoiced at the death of Uzziah, and had often prevailed over Ahaz, who succeeded him. Now, in verse 28, we read that King Ahaz died at the time that Isaiah was burdened with this prophecy.

Chapter 14 ends with a remarkable word: *"What shall one then answer the messengers of the nation? That the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of His people shall trust in it."* Spiritually viewed, this gracious word is still being fulfilled by Him whose Word endureth for ever.

Chapters 15 and 16 contain solemn prophecy against Moab, concluding with this: *"But now the LORD hath spoken, saying, Within three years, as the years of an hireling, and the glory of Moab shall be contemned, with all that great multitude; and the remnant shall be very small and feeble."*

Brian Mercer

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about FRUIT. Younger children need only answer 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. What fruit did the spies who were sent to search the land of Canaan bring back with them? (Numbers 13.23)
2. What fruit would you *not* expect to find on thorns and thistles? (Matthew 7.16)
3. What fruit was eaten in disobedience to God's command? (Genesis 2.17; 3. 6)
4. In the parable of the sower, which ground was fruitful? (Matthew 13.8, 23)
5. Of whom did Jesus say, "The same bringeth forth much fruit"? (John 15.5)
6. Who is described as "a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well"? (Genesis 49)
7. What did Jesus curse because it bore no fruit? (Mark 11)
8. Write out the nine things that the Apostle Paul calls "the fruit of the Spirit." (Galatians 5)
9. Find two similar verses which liken a good man to a fruitful tree planted by a river. (Psalm 1 & Jeremiah 17)
10. John the Baptist spoke to the Pharisees about the necessity of fruit. What fruits did he say they should bring forth? What would happen to a tree which did not have good fruit?

ANSWERS TO MARCH QUESTIONS

1. Faith; the trust in God that those who diligently seek Him will be found of Him.
2. "That we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."
3. The publican.
4. "A woman of Canaan."
5. Peter.
6. Hezekiah. (Isaiah 38.5)
7. Peter. (Acts 12.5)
8. Elias (Elijah). (James 5. 17,18)
9. Jesus prayed for those His Father had given Him, not for the world. (John 17.9)
10. Samuel. (1 Samuel 12. 23)

THE ETERNAL WORD

Ere the blue heavens were stretched abroad,
From everlasting was the Word;
With God He was; the Word was God;
And must divinely be adored.

By His own power were all things made;
By Him supported all things stand;
He is the whole creation's Head,
And angels fly at His command.

Ere sin was born, or Satan fell,
He led the host of morning stars;
(Thy generation who can tell,
Or count the number of Thy years?)

But lo! He leaves those heavenly forms;
The Word descends and dwells in clay,
That He may hold converse with worms,
Dressed in such feeble flesh as they.

Mortals with joy behold His face,
The eternal Father's only Son;
How full of truth! How full of grace!
When through His eyes the Godhead shone.

Blessed angels leave their high abode,
To learn new mysteries here, and tell
The loves of our descending God,
The glories of Immanuel.

Isaac Watts

The

Friendly Companion



“God, before whom my fathers ... did walk, the God
which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel
which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads.”
(Genesis 48.15,16)

May 2022

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

As we begin writing the monthly message for May, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine is in its third week. It is so sad to see pictures in newspapers and news magazines of buildings in Ukraine on fire or completely destroyed and in ruins. No doubt, some of the buildings were offices where people worked, stores where they shopped or homes where they lived. Such massive destruction has not been seen since World War 2.

It is heart wrenching to hear of husbands and fathers having to say goodbye to their wives and children, putting them on trains to take them out of the country and away from the war. Neither those who stay in Ukraine, nor those who leave, know what will happen to them or if they will ever see each other again. They will face many hardships, such as lack of food to sustain them, medicines for those who are ill, adequate clothing and shelter from the cold. We so often take these things for granted, which they now find in such scanty supplies or must do without. What desolation war causes!

When He was here on earth, the Lord Jesus taught that there would be *"wars and rumours of wars,"* and said, *"Be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be"* (Mark 13.7). In verse 18, He added, *"And pray ye that your flight be not in winter."* For the poor people of Ukraine, it is winter, and this adds to their suffering. How many of us are really thankful for our warm homes and all their comforts?

It would be wrong for us to think that we are better than the people of Ukraine, or more deserving of comfort and peace. The sins of our nations and of ourselves are just as evil and black in the sight of God. We ought not to wonder why this evil has come upon them, so much as why it has not come upon us. We are always ready to think that we are better than others. *"But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe"* (Galatians 3.22).

The nations of the world endeavour to sign peace treaties between nations in conflict. However, the Lord has told us that

there will be wars until the end of time. Yet, there is a peace that remains even in such times of trouble. It is the peace that God gives to His dear people. The Lord Jesus promised, "*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you ... Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*" (John 14.27). How wonderful is His peace when it is known and felt! The hymnwriter put it so beautifully:

Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin?
The blood of Jesus whispers peace within.

Peace, perfect peace, with sorrows surging round?
On Jesus' bosom naught but calm is found.

Peace, perfect peace, our future all unknown?
Jesus we know, and He is on the throne.

Peace, perfect peace, death shadowing us and ours?
Jesus has vanquished death and all its powers.

It is enough: earth's struggles soon shall cease,
May Jesus call us to heaven's perfect peace.

The Apostle Paul concludes his second Epistle to the Thessalonians with the beautiful words: "*Now the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.*"

With loving wishes from the Editor.

DEATH OF JOHN KINGHAM

With sadness of heart, we inform our readers of the death of Mr. John Kingham on April 1, "*to be with Christ; which is far better.*" For many years, Mr. Kingham has worked behind the scenes in producing the *Friendly Companion* each month. He very kindly and ably, along with his wife, did the final editing of the magazine for printing, which has been greatly appreciated. Also, during our time as Editor, and much of Mr. Buss' time as Editor, he compiled the Bible questions at the end of every issue. May the Lord remember his dear wife and family in this time of sorrow and in the days and years ahead.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

The bird pictured on the front cover this month is the kookaburra. The kookaburra is a member of the tree kingfisher family native to Australia and New Guinea. It is between 28 and 42 centimetres (11 to 16 ½ inches) in length and weighs around 300 grams (10 ½ ounces). This interesting bird is often called a “laughing kookaburra” because of the distinctive laughing sound it makes. Usually, it is the first bird to wake us in the morning and the last bird call heard at sundown. It tilts its head upward and moves its tail up and down when it makes the laughing sound. Early settlers were said to have been very unnerved by this laugh in the forest, probably not knowing, at first, what made the sound. The laugh is actually a warning to other kookaburras to stay out of their territory. A family group will laugh throughout the day, especially at dawn and dusk, to let other kookaburras know where their home territory is.

Kookaburras were introduced by humans into Tasmania and Western Australia from mainland Australia to try and reduce snake numbers, as they are not native to those states. They nest in tree hollows that would usually be used by parrots and owls. Kookaburras can live more than twenty years, and they have the same mate for life. Kookaburras eat insects, worms, small reptiles, mammals and nestlings.

Laughing kookaburras are a common sight in suburban gardens and urban settings, even in built-up areas. They are so tame that they will often eat out of a person's hands. It is not uncommon for kookaburras to snatch food out of people's hands without warning, by swooping in from a distance. They have been known to take sausages cooking on a barbeque. People often feed them pieces of raw meat.

Kookaburras are carnivorous birds. They remind us of the ravens that God provided to feed Elijah by the brook Cherith when there was a famine in the land. All God's creatures are subject to His commands, and they can be used to sustain His people when they are in need. (Hymn 276 – see back cover).

Annette Seymour

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**THE FIERY FURNACE**

King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold and set it up in Babylon. It was of a very great size. The king commanded all the princes, captains and rulers to come to the dedication of the image. They were told to fall down and worship the golden image at the sound of music. Any who disobeyed would be cast into a burning fiery furnace.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, the three friends of Daniel, did not bow down. They were brought before the king, and he was very angry. Again, he told them to worship the image, or they would be cast into the fiery furnace. They said, *"Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us ... But if not, ... we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."*

The king was furious and commanded the furnace to be heated seven times hotter. The three men were bound and cast into the fiery furnace. They did not die, but walked in the midst of the fire with the Lord. The king was astonished! He told them to come out and said, *"Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath ... delivered His servants that trusted in Him."*

QUESTIONS

1. What did King Nebuchadnezzar make? (4 words)
2. Into what were the three men cast? (3 words)
3. With whom did they walk? (2 words)

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

ANSWERS TO APRIL QUESTIONS

1. What would happen.
2. A stone.
3. For ever.

Contributed

*“...our God
whom we
serve is able
to deliver
us”*

Daniel 3.17

BIBLE LESSONS**THE RIVER JORDAN DIVIDED**

The two spies must have been filled with wonder when Rahab told how the people of Canaan feared Israel; especially when she confessed, *“For the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.”* Such truth from the lips of a Gentile! Rahab asked them to spare the lives of her father, mother, brothers and sisters, along with their families, when they came into the land. She further asked, *“Give me a true token.”* The spies promised Rahab that as she had spared their lives, they would spare the lives of all that were in her house.

How could the spies escape from Jericho? It was night, and the gates of the city were shut. No one could come in or go out. Rahab’s house was on the wall of the city, and it had a window, from which she lowered a strong scarlet (red) cord, so the spies could escape. She exhorted them to flee to the mountain nearby and hide for three days until the men who pursued them returned to Jericho.

Before they left her, the spies told Rahab to bind the scarlet cord in the window, so the people of Israel would know which house was hers. This would be a true token to her whenever she looked out of the window. Just as the children of Israel were sheltered by the blood sprinkled on the door of their homes in Egypt, so Rahab and all her family were sheltered by the scarlet cord bound in the window.

What a message the two spies had for Joshua and all of Israel! After the third day, they descended from the mountain and came to the camp of Israel. They reported to Joshua, *“Truly the LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us.”*

The next morning, Joshua and all Israel journeyed from Shittim down to the borders of Jordan and lodged there. For three days, on the banks of Jordan, they looked with longing eyes at the land they had heard so much about and were now about to enter. On the third day, officers went through the camp, telling them to watch, saying, *“When ye see the ark of the*

covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests ... bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it.” They had to keep a distance between themselves and the ark so they would know the way they must go: “For ye have not passed this way heretofore.”

Now, at the end of the wilderness journey, the pillar of cloud and fire which led them for forty years vanished. The ark of God became their guide. The first obstacle in taking possession of Canaan was the river, Jordan. It was the time of year when Jordan overflowed its banks. It was much wider, deeper and flowing faster than at other times of the year. Yet, this was the time God had chosen for them to cross over.

On the day they were to cross over Jordan, God told Joshua, *“This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.”* At the direction of God, Joshua commanded the priests to take up the ark and lead Israel across the river. Joshua said to the people, *“Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites ... Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan.”*

The people watched intently as the priests carried the ark up to Jordan. No path appeared before them, and no rod smote the waters or stretched out over them, as Moses had done at the Red Sea. Yet, the priests never stopped or hesitated. As soon as their feet stepped into Jordan, the waters divided. The waters on their right hand rose and heaped up like a wall, while the waters on their left hand flowed away. The feet of the priests stood firm upon dry ground in the midst of Jordan.

This moment is referred to in the 114th Psalm. In writing of this wonderful miracle, the psalmist asks, *“What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back? ... Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob.”* What a sight for Israel to behold! The presence of their God divided the waters of Jordan.

You can read about this in Joshua chapters 2 and 3.

QUESTIONS:

1. After asking for the lives of all her family, what did Rahab ask for? (3 words)
2. What was she told to bind in the window?
3. Who were the people to know was among them? (3 words)
4. What happened to the waters on the right hand? (4 words)
5. Upon what did the feet of the priests stand firm?

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. This book of the law.
2. Meditate therein.
3. Two.
4. Rahab.
5. Their hearts melted with fear, and there remained no more courage in any man.

KEPT

(Concluded from page 83)

Chapter 5

Another remarkable instance of God's goodness in providence took place in the Philippines. Our unit was ordered to take the city called Zamboanga, which was the main city on one of the southern islands of the Philippines. The Japanese had controlled that area for a few years. They had set up an elaborate defence system to prevent our landing, consisting of trenches, bunkers, barbed wire and log pillboxes. As we came up towards this particular area in the southern part of the Philippines, we were slowed down because the Japanese had made an aerial attack. After the American Air Force destroyed some of the Japanese planes and drove the rest away, we began to make further progress. The Japanese had heavily mined the area into which we were coming. It must have been a very tedious undertaking for them, as this whole, big field was laid

with mines. While some mines are detonated by contact (that is by people stepping on them), these mines were electronically detonated. The enemy intended to wait until many of our troops were on this field, and then they would set the mines off by an electric charge. Just before our unit approached that area, apparently one of the Japanese prematurely set the spark off to explode the mines. If they had waited five or ten minutes longer, there would have been a terrible destruction of our troops, but now many of our lives were preserved. I can well remember our fear as the earth violently shook. At first, we did not know what was actually happening. There was a terrible explosion, and the air was completely filled with rocks, pieces of earth and other debris. We all curled up as small as we could, with our heads to the ground, hoping to protect ourselves from the particles falling back to the ground. I can remember how the air seemed to be filled with the debris. It landed all around us, and some of our men were injured. Again, I was mercifully kept on that occasion. Prior to our coming upon this area, we lost quite a few men. Later, I was told that with the whole of our unit, nearly a thousand men were in the area, and there were eighty-three casualties in that explosion. It was often referred to as "Blow-out Hill," because the Japanese blew the top completely off the hill called Santa Maria.

In looking back, one is greatly humbled to see how the Lord so graciously watched over me and kept me amidst such dangers and death. Yet, how unthankful I often feel to be and seem to come so short in acknowledging the Lord in these matters. The prayer of that elder always remained with me: "When the opportunity to sin is there, may there not be the inclination, and when the inclination to sin is there, may there not be the opportunity." I often felt the Lord's hand was laid upon me when I was put into the infantry. I thought how much more comfortable it would have been in some other part of the service. We were never near any kind of civilisation, and we never seemed to have any time of recreation or quietness. At that time, I felt the Lord was dealing hard with me because of my sins; however, in looking back, I see that even in this, the

Lord kept me. In some of those other places, I might easily have fallen into the sins that were so prevalent.

As we moved up into Japan, the temptations were great, but again I would acknowledge the Lord's great goodness in keeping me. I was only there a few months, and then I was called home.

During the three years that I was away in the service, I never had a furlough; however, at times we had rest areas. These were nothing more than clearings made in the jungle, where we were able to relax and also further our training. While we were at these places for rest, replacements would be sent to our unit.

While I was away, my father became very seriously ill and died. I was aware of his illness but did not know of his death until my return. It was a great loss, as he was such a loving, gracious father. Thus, when leaving home, one never knows what may take place. My father had feared he would never see me again, which proved, in God's sovereign way, to be true, though not in the way he thought. While he was taken by sudden illness and given a most blessed deathbed, my life was graciously spared amidst many dangers.

After all that I had gone through during the war, some might wonder whether I was brought to have a good hope for my soul at that time. When I was sent overseas, and especially as we were getting closer to the time of going into combat, I kept thinking to myself: "Surely the Lord will use this as the means of bringing me to a saving knowledge of Himself." There were many prayers that the Lord would preserve me, but above all, the longing desire that He might speak to my soul.

Upon returning home, I obtained a comfortable employment and everything went along very smoothly, naturally speaking, in my life. I became very tried about the state of my soul. I thought that if I was to be converted, it would have been while I was in the army, especially under those very trying circumstances. In the case of many others, the Lord had used such events as the means of their conversion. I became very troubled that since I had not been brought to a saving knowledge of Christ during

the service, perhaps I was never to be converted, or perhaps I had sinned away all hope of being saved.

It was after I returned home, and everything was naturally peaceable in my life, that the Lord was pleased to lead me on further. He showed me more of my sins, of my deep depravity and fall through my federal head, Adam. I began to see much of my lost condition and the fountain of iniquity within before the Lord was revealed to my soul.

In looking back, the Lord's dealings were far different than I had expected. The Lord says, "*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways*" (Isaiah 55.8). The Lord brought me to realise, like in the case of Elijah, that it was not by wind, earthquake or fire, but by a still, small voice that He spoke to my soul and brought me to a saving knowledge of Himself.

THE GOD OF ELIJAH

In a small village lived a widow with her three children. She had lost her husband some time ago, and it had been hard to provide for their daily needs. However, the widow did not feel bitter against the Lord, but acknowledged His sovereign ways. Thus far, He had been faithful to His promise, "*Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me*" (Psalm 50.15). How wonderfully the Lord cared for His prophet Elijah, and He is the same today.

One day, the need of the widow and her children became very great, for they had no more food. The last slice of bread had been eaten, and the children went to bed. The mother remained alone, kneeling at her chair to pour out her troubled heart before the Lord. She asked the Lord to allow the children to sleep without suffering from hunger, and all three of them slept soundly. But, when morning came, they felt their empty stomachs, and soon it would be time for them to go to school. The poor mother did not know what to do. She prayed, "Oh, Lord, help me again in Thy mercy. Thou knowest our needs."

"Mother, is there no more bread?" asked the oldest of the three children.

"No, child, and no money either. I do not know how things will go, but there is deliverance with the Lord. Your mother feels sure that bread will come to us." Although their stomachs rattled and were painful with hunger, the children did not ask her for food. The mother noticed God's wonderful hand in this, but there was still no bread in the house. She said, "Come, children, let us kneel, and together we will try to tell the Lord of our needs. We will tell Him that you must go to school and you need food. He already knows that, but He desires to be asked in prayer for help." Then the mother poured out her whole heart before the Lord. Faith was strengthened in her soul, and she pleaded the Lord's promise to care for His people. "*Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure*" (Isaiah 33.16).

What happened? The mother was so urgent in prayer at the throne of grace that she did not hear what was going on around her. The oldest daughter, however, heard a continual scratching on the back door. Finally, she quietly arose, tiptoed through the room and opened the door. What a surprise was before her! A large, black dog had a three-pound loaf of bread in its mouth and dropped it onto the mat at the door. Hearing some noise, the mother also came to the back door. It would be impossible to describe the joy that they felt. Soon, praise to the Lord was heard in that little house for the wonderful provision of God in their time of distress.

About ten minutes later, there was a knock at the door. This time it was their minister. All night long, the needs of the widow and her children had been laid upon his heart in prayer. He rose early in the morning to go and see her. When he entered the house, he saw the mother cutting the loaf of bread with tears in her eyes and in those of her children. The widow told her pastor what had happened. She told him of their distress and the wonderful answer of the Lord. Pointing to the loaf of bread, she said, "Look, the teeth marks are still in it."

"Well, well," said the pastor, "all night I have prayed for you. It was bound upon my heart, and therefore, I am here so early. Now, it is my desire to eat with you in gladness for that precious bread from heaven." This was happily granted, of course. The Lord had changed weeping into joy and made all things well to the praise of His name.

The Lord used black ravens to bring food to the prophet Elijah. Here, the Lord used a large black dog to bring food to the praying widow and her children. It was the same God who sent them. Surely the God of Elijah lives for ever! "*Happy is he that bath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God*" (Psalm 146.5). May the Lord cause us to feel our need of Him in these dark times. What shall the end be of those who try to live without God in this deeply fallen world?

Adapted from Religious Stories for Young and Old, Volume 1

THE DEACON'S DINNER PARTY

John Goodman had only been a few weeks in his new home. It was situated in a quiet lane, and there was a lovely lawn and garden. One morning, his loving wife said, "John, my dear, we did not give that dinner we thought of in the winter. Now that we are settled in our new home, we are able to do so."

"Quite right, my dear," he answered. "Give me your list, and I will have the invitations sent from my office."

This was carried out in due time, and Mr. Goodman told his wife that every invitation had been accepted. The replies had been sent to his office at his request. Mrs. Goodman was not concerned about the details, for she knew that her husband liked to do things in his own way.

Finally, the expected day arrived. Mrs. Goodman and her two daughters were waiting to receive their guests. But, to their great alarm, two large buses came to the gate. From the first bus stepped an aged widow, an old man with a wooden leg, a blind man, and more than a dozen other persons who evidently belonged to a lower walk of life. Their faces were beaming with

joy and gratitude. From the second bus emerged Deacon Goodman himself, a large group of children and several hampers (baskets) filled with good things.

Tables were quickly spread on the lawn. Seldom had guests more heartily asked for a blessing upon a meal than the people on that May afternoon. During the evening, they sat or walked together in conversation. There was a splendid sunset, followed by the rising of a nearly full moon. At nine o'clock, the two buses returned to take the happy guests back to their homes.

Later, at family worship, John Goodman read from the Bible about the feast at the house of a Pharisee. His voice lingered with special emphasis over the following words: *"When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just"* (Luke 14.12-14).

Adapted from The Gospel Echo 1913

SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF THE EARLY LIFE OF JOSEPH TANNER

Joseph Tanner (1808-1867) was a contemporary with John Warburton, J.C. Philpot and William Tiptaft, though not so well known as they were. He was the pastor of a Strict Baptist chapel in Cirencester.

Joseph was born in a tiny hamlet just west of Swindon, where his father was a farmer. He was brought up to attend the Church of England on the Lord's day. This meant that he was taught to despise dissenters, whether they were Baptists, Methodists or Independents. At the age of fifteen, one of the workers on the farm persuaded him to go to a local chapel on a Lord's day afternoon. Although he went, he was unimpressed and resolved never to enter one of those places again. He was

also influenced by his minister at the Church of England, who stated that all dissenters were worshippers of Baal. Joseph's enmity against them increased further when he learned that some of those dissenters believed that God had a chosen people called "the elect." He felt that was a most awful and frightening belief and that it never could be right.

At the age of sixteen, Joseph sought for an apprenticeship to learn a good trade. He wrote of that time: "So fully bent and eager was I to obtain a situation that we tried one place and another, but all to no purpose, although my father offered a liberal premium. It was always too late or they were too full. Every door was shut. One man said that a watchmaker in a town only a little distance off wished for an apprentice, but he was one of 'the elect' people, and what made it worse, a preacher. 'No,' I replied in contempt, 'I'll not go near him.' I had never seen one of these hated people, and could not imagine they were like other people."

To the great surprise of all the family, Joseph's younger brother decided that he would apply for this place instead. After a few days, Joseph went to bring his brother home for the weekend and was met by the master's wife. She said that if his younger brother did not want to go home, perhaps Joseph would like to join with them, in addition to his brother. His brother certainly did not want to go back home. Since Joseph was so desperate for an apprenticeship, he felt inclined to see how he would get on, and he began with a month's trial. Finding that he got on well with the trade, he was offered a three-year apprenticeship. He writes further of this: "One thing that reconciled me more to this place was that the son of a farmer not far from us was there, and I should be with him. I found him to be a companion I liked. He went to church, ridiculed the master and the other young man (who was a God-fearing young man), and also my fellow-apprentice, who was a very docile, upright youth in his life and conversation. This wicked and ungodly young man became my friend, my tutor, guide and leader, and (my nature being a little let loose) I proved to be an apt scholar and eager follower, especially as he

hated dissenters, and ridiculed my master, his religion and his house.”

Under this terrible influence, Joseph began a course of trying to provoke his master by not attending family worship, or by staying up late drinking alcohol and the like, but he only met with kindness and patience. As much as he hated his master's religion, he highly respected him as a person.

After a few years in this mad career of sin, there came a change. “I had now got to be about twenty years of age, and increasing in wickedness, when, ever adored be that grace of God which I had so hated and despised, the Lord in His mercy stopped me and thus frustrated my purposes of sin to come. I do not recollect, neither could I state the time when, nor the circumstances under which, my mind was in a measure impressed with the things of God, the concerns of my soul, and a coming eternity. It was not hearing God's Word preached, for I had not gone since the first Lord's day when I resolved to go no more. It was not reading the Word of God, for this I never did. It was not listening to the conversation of the Lord's people, for this I avoided. I cannot tell how it was, but trouble crept upon myself, upon eternity, and how it would be with me then. A persuasion in my own mind told me that I was destitute of, and that I was also ignorant of what that could be. These feelings produced trouble, and to avoid this, I ran the faster into sin.” But God's mighty hand was firmly upon him, restraining him from this awful intention.

The doctrine of God's election now began to come into his mind with the thought, “*Suppose it should be true...*” Joseph now began to attend the ministry of God's Word. He became absolutely convinced of the truth that God has an elected people. Yet, he did not dare to hope that **he** could be one of those elect people. He also found a growing attachment to the people of God.

Over the next few years, Joseph came into great soul trouble. At times, he felt there was no hope for him, being tempted that he was not one of the elect. At other times, he felt a little hope. One text in particular that was made a great

comfort to him throughout that period was: "*We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren*" (1 John 3.14). He felt such a great love to the people of God, and longed to know that he might possess the same religion as they had. When, at times, he felt so low, this text was brought to his mind and would encourage him still to hope in the Lord.

Joseph came to a time when he wanted to set up his own business. He ended up renting a little shop in Cirencester. Then, he became very troubled about his motives in moving there, as he sadly discovered that there was nowhere nearby where the truth was preached. After some time, he, with a few others, rented a small room and held their own services. He began preaching in 1845. There is no account of how he was brought into gospel liberty, or how he felt constrained to commence preaching. His own account of his life comes to a very abrupt end at the time that a room in the town became available for their services.

In the *Gospel Standard*, Mr. J.C. Philpot, the Editor, wrote a personal note following the obituary of Joseph Tanner, in which he explained how he had come to know him. He had found him to be one of the most godly men he ever had the privilege of being acquainted with. Mr. Philpot had gone to Cirencester to preach, but became quite ill with his chest affliction. He ended up spending three weeks being cared for by Mr. and Mrs. Tanner and their family. "And I am quite sure nothing could exceed the affectionate kindness and attention that I received during that time from both himself and every member of his family." Mr. Philpot also wrote: "He was a man of good, and, I may say in some respects, deep experience of the life and power of God in the soul, knowing both law and gospel in their application ... But what particularly distinguished him, both as a Christian man and as a minister, was the uprightness, integrity, consistency and godliness of his walk before the church and before the world."

A. T. Pickett

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES**THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH – PART 4**

The next six chapters are the subject of shorter and more particular prophecies concerning Damascus, *“the land ... beyond ... Ethiopia,”* Egypt, Babylon, Dumah, Arabia and *“the valley of vision.”* It is not always easy to know which country or land is being referred to.

Chapter 17 prophesies of the ruin of Syria and the ten tribes of Israel, who were in alliance, and closes with a remarkable prophecy against the Assyrian army. The same event is described in chapter 37, exactly as foretold here. Chapter 17 verse 14 says: *“And behold at eveningtide trouble; and before the morning he is not.”* Chapter 37 verse 36 says: *“Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand [185,000]: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.”*

Here, in verses 6 and 7 of this chapter, is another instance of the Lord returning in mercy to the remnant of His people in the midst of His judgments on the nations of the earth: *“At that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel”* (verse 7). Would to God that this were fulfilled in our present day with the spectre of another world war hanging over us!

In chapter 18, there is some uncertainty as to which land is the subject of the prophecy, reminding us of the word: *“Do not interpretations belong to God?”* (Genesis 40.8). Nonetheless, the Lord speaks directly to His dear servant, the prophet, in verses 4 and 5 with words that were a comfort to the Lord’s people at that time. Now, thinking of the present clouds of war in the world, may we not look to the same God to frustrate the designs of an enemy who is meticulously planning his own purpose (the harvest in this chapter)? *“For afore the barvest, when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening in the flower, he shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning books, and take away and cut down the branches”* (verse 5).

Chapter 19 tells us much about the bringing down of Egypt, even going into detail regarding the paper reeds, the fishers and fine flax (verses 7, 8, 9). Yet, there is a wider application of this prophecy, particularly in the appearing of the Lord from verse 18 onwards. Here is prophecy concerning the Jews and the Gentiles, and the coming of the Messiah, not only to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles (Egypt and Assyria). This is sweetly set forth in verse 24: *"In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land."* This sets forth the glorious Mediator, the Daysman, who standeth betwixt (Job 9.33) *"that might lay His hand upon us both."*

Chapter 20 is a short, sharp prophecy to warn the Jews of their unfaithful dependence on Egypt and Ethiopia, and that it would be of no avail to deliver them from the power of Assyria.

Chapter 21 contains three short prophecies against Babylon, Idumea and Arabia. The first contains the emphatic news: *"And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods be hath broken unto the ground"* (verse 9).

The writer heard a moving sermon preached by the late Mr. G. J. Collier from verses 11 and 12: *"Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come."* I have also read a telling sermon from the same text preached just before the outbreak of World War 1.

Chapter 22 is actually a prophecy regarding the invasion of Judah and Jerusalem by the Assyrians: *"For it is a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord GOD of hosts in the valley of vision, breaking down the walls, and of crying to the mountains"* (verse 5). There is a solemn warning in verses 13 and 14 which is still applicable today to those who live and behave as the Jews did, as described in verse 13. Though besieged by a powerful army, they chose to ignore the impending peril and "live it up," taking their fill of pleasure in

the things of this life while they could. The emphatic judgment of God upon them was revealed to the prophet: *"Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord GOD of hosts"* (verse 14). This is a warning of eternal death – how solemn!

Immediately after this solemn pronouncement, God directs the prophet to address a completely different matter, namely the removal of Shebna, the treasurer, an officer in Hezekiah's court. He was to be replaced with *"my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiab"* (verse 20). Again, we have a beautiful prophecy of the Lord Jesus Christ. Eliakim signifies *"my God will raise up."* How Christ was raised up by the Father, as we read, for example, in Hebrews 5.5! *"So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an high priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, today have I begotten Thee."*

Verses 21 to 24 so clearly describe the office and work of the Lord Jesus. Then, it must be understood that the last verse, 25, refers back to Shebna, who, as treasurer in Hezekiah's house, no doubt thought that his position was secure.

Going back to verses 21 to 24, how descriptive is the *"Nail"* as a type of the Lord Jesus! It reminds me of lines which were made a help to me back in March 1978 from Gadsby's 1068:

On the word Thy blood has sealed
Hangs my everlasting all.

Brian Mercer

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about WRONG THOUGHTS. 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. What does God's Word call "the thought of foolishness"? (Proverbs 24.9)
2. "Eli thought she had been drunken." Of whom was this written, and what was the woman actually doing? (1 Samuel 1.13,15)
3. Who thought that the gift of God could be bought with money? (Acts 8.20)
4. What is "a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart?" (Hebrews 4.12)
5. What did Haman wrongly think when King Ahasuerus asked, "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?" (Esther 6.6)
6. Who said, "Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good," and to whom was he speaking? (Genesis 50)
7. "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to..." What wrong thought did Paul have for which he afterwards grieved? (Acts 26)
8. "Thou thoughtest that..." What wrong thought did God reprove? (Psalm 50)
9. What wrong thought did Naaman's faithful servants kindly rebuke him for? (2 Kings 5)
10. Find up to four texts which plainly declare that Jesus knew all the wrong thoughts of those around him, which was a proof of His Godhead. (Matthew 9-12; Luke 9-12)

ANSWERS TO APRIL QUESTIONS

1. Grapes, pomegranates and figs.
2. Grapes and figs.
3. The fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
4. The good ground.
5. "He that abideth in Me, and I in him."
6. Joseph. (Genesis 49.22)
7. A barren fig tree. (Mark 11.14,21)
8. Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. (Galatians 5.22,23)
9. Psalm 1.3 & Jeremiah 17.8.
10. "Fruits meet for repentance." (Matthew 3. 8). It would be "hewn down and cast into the fire." (Matthew 3.10)

GOD'S CARE FOR HIS PEOPLE

Elijah's example declares,
Whatever distress may betide,
The saints may commit all their cares
To Him who will surely provide;
When rain long withheld from the earth
Occasioned a famine of bread,
The prophet, secured from the dearth,
By ravens was constantly fed.

More like to rob than to feed,
Were ravens, which live upon prey;
But when the Lord's people have need,
His goodness will find out a way.
This instance to those may be strange
Who know not how faith can prevail;
But sooner all nature shall change,
Than one of God's promises fail.

How safe and how happy are they,
Who on the good Shepherd rely;
He gives them out strength for their day,
Their wants He will surely supply.
He lions and ravens can tame!
All creatures obey His commands!
Then let us rejoice in His name
And leave all our cares in His hands.

J. Newton

The Friendly Companion



“By Me kings reign, and princes decree justice.”
Proverbs 8.15

June 2022

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

When we read accounts of people in the Word of God, there are often certain things that we cannot understand. For example, when we read about Lot, Abraham's nephew, in the Book of Genesis, it appears from what is written there, that after all the outward blessings he received, he came short and was "*found wanting*" of the life of God in his soul.

Lot was delivered from idolatry in Ur of the Chaldees when God called Abraham to come out from that country. He came with Abraham into the land of Canaan. Sadly, the day came when Lot had to separate from his uncle because of the fighting between their servants over pasture for their flocks and herds.

Abraham told Lot that it was wrong to have strife between them, because they were brethren. He told Lot to choose what part of the land he wanted, and he would go the opposite way. Lot knew that God had promised the land of Canaan to Abraham, and it would have been honourable if he had told Abraham to choose first. There were six steps that led to the sad downfall of Lot.

First, Lot **looked at** all the plain of Jordan, with the lush green grass for his herds and plenty of water. The Bible tells us that he "*lifted up his eyes and beheld all the plain of Jordan.*" It would have been far better for him to have lifted up his eyes unto the Lord, but this he failed to do.

Second, he **chose** him all the plain of Jordan. We need to beware of this step. Many have made choices like Lot, for what appeared to be the most pleasant and profitable way, and it has brought them into sad places, with nothing but trouble and sorrow.

The third step was the step of **separation**. After making a choice like Lot, many have separated from those who had an influence for good upon them. They choose places where they must compromise the truth. They may excuse their choice by saying that they attend where there is a reasonably sound

ministry. Yet, it dulls and darkens their minds, and it tends to deaden any life that is in their souls. We have heard of many who have left off coming to the midweek services, and sometimes even the Lord's day services, after the Covid restrictions. These solemn choices have sad consequences.

The fourth step of Lot is that he **dwelt in the cities of the plain**. The word "dwelt," in this case, suggests something like loitering or lingering. A person may become so accustomed to a place that he becomes used to things that are sinful or wrong and fails to notice them any longer.

The fifth step of Lot came when he **pitched his tent toward Sodom**. Little by little, he drew closer and closer to this city of evil and abominable practices, like a moth drawn to the flame.

In the sixth step, the Bible tells us that he **dwelt in Sodom**. He lived in Sodom right up to the very day that the Lord destroyed it with fire from heaven. Even when told of the danger he was in and the judgment that God was going to bring, Lot lingered. He moved so slowly that the angels of God had to pull him out, along with his wife and daughters.

Still, after all these things, we are told by Peter that Lot was a *"righteous man,"* though dwelling amidst the abominations of Sodom, and that he *"vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds"* (2 Peter 2.8).

Next month we hope to notice an account opposite to that of Lot.

With loving wishes from the Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

To our younger readers, what a long time seventy years must seem! It is indeed a long time, especially when someone has worked for that long period in the same job! But that is what Queen Elizabeth has done. When her father, King George VI, died unexpectedly on February 6, 1952, Elizabeth became

queen at the age of twenty-five. She was crowned in June 1953, which event is being celebrated this month in the United Kingdom. This 70th year is called a “Platinum Jubilee.”

The queen does not have the absolute powers that her predecessors had. She has to work with the government by approving the laws of the land that they make. Sadly, many of the laws passed in her reign have been contrary to the Law of God. We wonder what her innermost thoughts are about some of the statutes she has had to approve. When the king of Belgium was asked to sign a law that allowed abortion, he refused and abdicated. He was very quickly reinstated, but he showed his disapproval by doing that.

One of the outstanding things about the queen is her devotion to duty and to the position she holds. In this, she has set an excellent example which few have followed to the same degree.

By the oath she took at her coronation, she has vowed to uphold the Protestant religion. By her position, she is head of the Church of England, a title inherited from Henry VIII at the time of the Reformation. Sadly, this part of her office has been compromised, and there are those who wish to alter the oath, if and when Charles may take the throne. It is said that the queen reads a chapter of the Bible every day, and always when able, she attends worship on the Lord’s day morning.

Although there are things in which we would have liked the queen to set a clearer example, in many ways this remarkable lady has been steadfast in her calling through many changing times.

However, like us all, she will have to depart this life and appear before her Maker, who is King of kings and Lord of lords. We pray that she may know what it is to put her whole trust in what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for sinners, and not in herself.

We wish her well in the last days of her long reign and life.

G. D. Buss

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**GOD RULES OVER MEN**

King Nebuchadnezzar had another dream, and it made him afraid. He saw a very great tree with much fruit. The beasts of the field rested under it, and birds lived in the branches. Then he heard an angel cry with a loud voice, *"Hew down the tree,"* leaving the stump and roots, *"and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth."*

The wise men of Babylon could not tell the meaning of the dream, and Daniel was brought before the king. Daniel said that the great tree was the king, who had become strong and powerful. His kingdom would be taken away until he knew that God rules over men.

After twelve months, the king walked in his palace, boasting of his power and majesty. Suddenly a voice from heaven said, *"The kingdom is departed from thee."* He was driven out of his palace and lived in the field with the beasts, wet with dew, and eating grass like an animal.

After a period of time, the understanding of the king returned. He *"praised and honoured"* the most high God who rules over all the earth. He knew that God is able to bring down those who walk in pride. The kingdom was restored to Nebuchadnezzar.

QUESTIONS

1. What did the king see in his dream? (4 words)
2. When the king boasted, the voice said what? (6 words)
3. Whom did he praise and honour? (4 words)

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. An image of gold.
2. A fiery furnace.
3. The Lord.

*“The most High
ruleth in the
kingdom of men,
and giveth it to
whomsoever
He will.”*

Daniel 4.17, 25

BIBLE LESSONS**ENTERING THE PROMISED LAND**

The priests carrying the ark of God stood still in the midst of Jordan, while all the people of Israel passed over on dry ground. The armed men from the tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh led the way. They already had their homes on the east side of Jordan. When all the people were safely across, Joshua commanded one man from each tribe to take a large stone out of Jordan's river bed to set up for a memorial.

Joshua commanded them to take twelve other stones and set them in the midst of Jordan where the feet of the priests stood. When everything that God had commanded was finished, the Lord commanded the priests carrying the ark to come up out of Jordan. As soon as the priests stood with the ark on the other side of Jordan, the waters came rushing down and overflowed the banks as they had done before.

The people of Israel journeyed a little distance from Jordan and set up camp in Gilgal. At Gilgal, they set up a pillar with the twelve stones they had taken from the midst of Jordan. It was for a memorial of the mighty hand of God in making a way for them. In years to come, when their children would ask, "*What mean ye by these stones?*" they were to answer "*that the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD.*" God would have them remember all He had done in helping them cross Jordan. We wonder if the waters covered the stones placed in Jordan for the greater part of the year. Yet, when the waters were low, they would appear and strengthen the hearts of the people.

When the people of Canaan "*heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel,*" their hearts melted with fear. The God who had brought this people out of Egypt, dried up the Red Sea before them, and destroyed the mighty kingdoms of Sihon and Og, was still among them.

The time that God had promised to Abraham, when his descendants would enter the land of Canaan, had now arrived. Although Abraham had died hundreds of years before, yet God

remembered His word to Abraham: *“Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, ... and they shall afflict them four hundred years; ... but in the fourth generation they shall come hither again”* (Genesis 15.13-16). **God is faithful to every promise that He gives.**

The first thing that God commanded Joshua to do in the new land was to circumcise all the men and boys who were born during the wilderness journey. Two generations of Israelites were born in the forty-year journey, and they had not been circumcised.

The children of Israel entered the land of Canaan on the tenth day of the first month, and on the fourteenth day of the second month, they kept the passover for the first time in the Promised Land. The day after keeping the passover, they prepared their meals with the old grain growing in Canaan. The following day, the manna ceased. Through the wilderness journey of forty years, God never failed to send the manna.

From their camp in Gilgal, the Israelites could clearly see the high, strong walls of Jericho. One morning, Joshua went out to look at the city. Suddenly, a man appeared before him with a drawn sword. What boldness Joshua displayed! He walked toward the man and asked, *“Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?”* The stranger answered, *“Nay; but as Captain of the host of the LORD am I now come.”* Joshua knew that God had appointed him as leader of His people. Who was this stranger who said he was the Captain?

Joshua was overcome, not with fear, but with reverence and awe. He fell on his face and worshipped! Joshua knew that this Captain with the drawn sword was none other than God Himself. The Captain told Joshua, *“Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy.”* And Joshua obeyed. Do you remember who had the same experience? It was Moses, when God appeared to him in the burning bush. Joshua must have heard Moses tell of that wonderful appearance of Israel's God. Now he was favoured with the same. This revelation of the **Great Captain** would strengthen Joshua for all

the battles that he and Israel would fight. The Lord would go before them.

You can read about this in Joshua chapters 3 to 5.

QUESTIONS:

1. Twelve men were appointed to carry a stone out of Jordan for what purpose?
2. What were these men commanded to do with twelve other stones? (15 words)
3. What happened the day after they kept the passover? (11 words)
4. What did the stranger tell Joshua he had come as? (7 words)
5. What was Joshua told to do and why? (15 words)

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

ANSWERS TO MAY QUESTIONS

1. A true token.
 2. The scarlet cord.
 3. The living God.
 4. Rose and heaped up.
 5. Dry ground.
-

KINDNESS

A kind action or a kind word is like oil upon a squeaking wheel. My dear young friends, I would affectionately warn you to be kind to your father and mother. Many boys and girls hurt their parents by disobedient acts, naughty words, bad tempers, and in many other ways. Be kind to your brothers and sisters.

It is very pleasant to see a united family. Be kind to animals. It is sad to see a boy or girl harm one of God's creatures!

And I would drop a special word of caution. Boys and girls, be kind to the aged, the infirm and the crippled. Never, never ridicule those who are afflicted. Who gave **you** health and strength? Who gave **you** eyes, ears, hands, tongue and feet? Who gave **you** the wonderfully made body that you have?

I will relate a sad, but true, story of a boy related in an old book. The boy was playing with his schoolmates one day when a coach drove up, and a number of passengers got off. Among them was an elderly man with a walking stick, who got out with much difficulty. He walked in a most curious way. His feet turned one way and his knees another. Without thinking, the boy shouted out, "Look at old rattlebones!" and the other boys took up the cry. The poor man turned his head with a look of pain, and then went on his way.

Just then, the father of the boy came round the corner. He shook hands warmly with the man and assisted him to his own house, which was only a little distance away. The boy looked on with a guilty conscience, and he could no longer enjoy playing with his friends. At tea-time, he went home, and, after a while, he went with trembling into the sitting-room to be introduced to the afflicted stranger. It so happened that the man did not recognise the lad as the one who had cried after him. He said to the boy's father, "Such a fine boy was surely worth saving."

The words cut the boy to the heart. His father had often told him of a kind friend who had plunged into the river to save him from drowning when he was an infant. As a consequence, the man had become a cripple from rheumatism (arthritis). This was the very man whom the boy had mocked. Such a lesson was deeply impressed upon the boy's mind. From that day on, he always tried to be kind to the afflicted.

Dear boys and girls, do not forget the words of Scripture, "*And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another*" (Ephesians 4.32).

Adapted from Ears for Little Gleaners by H. Dawson

WHO PROGRAMMED YOUR GLASSES?

Did you know that everyone wears a pair of glasses? I am not talking about glasses to see long distance or close up. I'm talking about another kind of glasses. These glasses that everyone wears have one of two programs!

People see the world differently, depending on which glasses they are wearing. These glasses are really what is called “**our worldview.**” The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines worldview as a “comprehensive conception of the world, especially from a specific standpoint.” We could say that your “standpoint” is the foundation that builds your worldview. Ultimately, **there are only two foundations for your worldview: God’s Word or man’s word.** Your “conception of the world” is the way you look at the world because of the foundation you have.

You see, we all live in the same world. To be able to understand this world and interpret all we see correctly, we must start from the **foundation of God’s Word.** Only God knows everything. In His Word, He has revealed the information we need, so we can put on the right glasses. Genesis chapters 1 to 11 are the foundation for the rest of the Bible and for our worldview. For instance, when we look at the world through biblical glasses, we realise that it is not all beautiful, because the creation was marred by sin and the judgment of death. Yet, there is still a remnant of beauty in a fallen creation.

However, if someone has the foundation of man’s word – that life arose by naturalistic evolutionary processes – then their glasses show a world of death and suffering that they believe has gone on for millions of years. Sadly, the majority of people look at the world through the wrong glasses, because they have been influenced by the secular world.

Make sure your glasses, or worldview, come from the foundation of **God’s Word.** Not only does this determine how you understand the world, but also how you behave. As the Bible clearly states: *“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of*

the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh" (Luke 6.45).

Make sure you are wearing your biblical glasses, and never take them off! *"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God"* (Hebrews 11.3).

Adapted from Answers Insider by Ken Ham

THE WHITE OR THE BLACK HANDLE

An ancient philosopher says, "Every cup has two handles, the one white and the other black, and either may be presented according to the disposition of the host towards his guest." Everything that happens in life has two opposite versions that are possible, according to the viewpoint of the person who is observing. A positive or negative colouring is given by the person who relates a tale. He may not be aware of the praise or the censure he indirectly pronounces on the character in his narrative. This is the origin of much damaging slander or undue praise that is given to a person. Motive imparts character to every action, and some persons are more ready to assign motives than to carefully investigate whether they are actually true.

The ancient philosopher gives this illustration: "A coachman was seen in a green lane in the suburbs of Athens, plucking the grass and giving it to his horse." This was the simple fact without any colouring.

However, a black handle was put to it by one person. He saw what the man was doing, went into the city, and told an acquaintance this tale: "I have seen a shameful sight. A man was sent to the city with parcels from a distant place. He was given money to purchase provender for his horse. However, he squandered the money and resorted to plucking grass in order to refresh his horse for the homeward journey." This was the black handle of the occurrence as it was reported. The story was accompanied with the indirect accusation of the double offence of dishonesty to his employer and cruelty to his horse.

Another person, an eye-witness of the same event, knew the man and his circumstances. He went into Athens and said to a friend, "I have seen Anthrippon. Poor fellow, he is too poor to buy provender for his horse. Instead of resting at the inn, he worked hard, cropping the finest of the grass, and taking care that his beast should be well-fed at a small expense. He wanted to save the money to provide for the needs of his large and afflicted family." This was the same narrative with the white handle, and these were the true facts about the man, and the virtuous motives by which he acted.

Everything that is heard and repeated to others has a prevailing tint, a bright or dark hue, upon it. This tendency was noticed by Christ. He gave a caution against its injurious nature, saying, "*Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged*" (Matthew 7.1,2).

Now, let every reader judge himself, and see if he is of that evil disposition that is prone to present or take everything by "the black handle." It is a disposition altogether contrary to that of charity or Christian love. "*Charity suffereth long, and is kind; ... is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; ... beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things*" (1 Corinthians 13.4-7). A man of that spirit, while earnest for the truth, will always try to take things by the white handle.

Adapted from Sunday at Home - The Little Gleaner 1887

SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF THE EARLY LIFE OF JOHN NEWTON

The hymn "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound" must be the most well-known hymn throughout the world. The name of the composer, John Newton, is also very well known in the Christian world. Many have heard about various parts of his life: as a sailor, servant, captain, or minister. They may know about the period of his life at Olney, then London, and of his friendship with William Cowper, with whom he published *Olney Hymns*, which included many of their own compositions.

John Newton was born in 1725. His father was a commander at sea and often away from home. His mother was a quiet, reserved and very gracious woman. She was devoted to the care of her only child, John. She taught him all the basic principles of education, and when he was six, she began to teach him Latin. Very sadly, she died at that time, and John was cared for by relatives, as his father was away at sea. His father remarried when he returned the following year. Young John was sent to a boarding school at Essex, being only eight years of age. The severity of his master at school almost broke his love for learning and books. He nearly lost the teaching of his mother. A new master came a year later, and he had the opposite effect upon John. Noticing that he was eager to learn and had a very active mind, he pushed him forward in his studies. By the age of ten, he was quite learned in Latin, as well as in other subjects.

At eleven years of age, John's father took him on a sea voyage, which was the first of many. No doubt, his father instructed him in all the credentials of sailing and the maritime trade. Very sadly, he appeared to lose all the Scriptural instruction of his mother and showed no concern about religion. Like so many, he was influenced by those around him – abounding in the ways of sin and the world. When twelve years old, he was thrown from a horse and came very close to death, or at least serious injury. He wrote of this: "For had I fallen upon the stakes, I inevitably had been killed. My conscience suggested to me the dreadful consequences if, in such a state, I had been summoned to appear before God!"

At another time, he agreed to join his friends on a Lord's day afternoon for a boat ride. He was delayed in getting there, and they left without him. He felt very angry about this, until he later learned that the boat had upturned, and all the young men had drowned. This affected him, but only temporarily.

When John turned seventeen, his father wanted him to settle into a business. He arranged for him to go to Jamaica for several years and establish a business out there. While the preparations were being made, John's father sent him on a short business trip

to Maidstone in Kent. This was to be completed in a few days at most. He had also received an invitation to visit a family that had been very close friends with his mother. He discovered that their home in Kent was within half a mile of the place he was to go. He nearly decided not to call on them, but he did go, and there he met a young lady who was thirteen years of age. Instantly, he fell in love with her and felt absolutely sure that she was to be his future wife. He knew that if he returned to London, he would soon be on the ship heading to Jamaica. So, instead of three days in Kent, he turned the stay into three weeks purposely to miss the departure of the ship. He succeeded in his plan but highly displeased his father!

John then became a midshipman on board a man-of-war for the Royal Navy which was heading out to the East Indies for a number of months. While the boat was moored in dock for a short time, he took it upon himself (without permission) to hire a horse and ride over to Kent to see the young lady again. Upon returning to the ship, he had lost the trust of the captain and never fully regained it.

The ship headed along the south coast but came into dreadful storms just off the coast near Devon. They managed to get into port at Plymouth. While there, he heard that his father was not far away along the coast in Dartmouth. He very unwisely took it upon himself to abandon ship again to find his father, with the hope of finding a more preferable position. Within two hours of reaching Dartmouth, he was caught by a small band of soldiers and marched all the way back to Plymouth. His punishment for abandoning ship was severe. He was publicly stripped and whipped, degraded to the lowest position on the ship, and now treated as a servant to all. As the ship left England, heading out on its long voyage, the temptation to throw himself into the sea was very strong. One thing prevented him, the thought of his young lady back in England.

The ship stopped for a while at Madeira, where, in the providence of God, a way was made for him to change ships and board one heading to Sierra Leone, Africa. This change greatly

improved his working conditions. While at Sierra Leone, just before the ship was due to sail on to the West Indies, the captain died. John Newton so disliked the new captain that he decided to stay in Africa. Having found a man to work for on a plantation, he sought to “make his fortune” there. Yet God had other purposes! He wrote of this time: “I was as yet an outcast lying in blood (Ezekiel 16.6), and to all appearance, exposed to perish. But the Lord beheld me with mercy. He did not strike me to hell, as I justly deserved; He passed by me when I was in my blood, and said unto me, live. But the appointed time for the manifestation of His love to cover all my iniquities with the robe of His righteousness, and to admit me to the privileges of His children, was not till long afterwards; yet even now He bade me live; and I can only ascribe it to His secret, upholding power, that what I suffered in a part of this interval did not bereave me either of my life or senses; yet, as by these sufferings, the force of my evil example and inclination was lessened, I have reason to account them amongst my mercies.”

Rather than making a fortune, John fell sick with a fever. His master was away, and his master’s wife made no effort to look after him. Even when his health improved, he was denied food. He was so reduced in strength that he began to eat roots in the plantation; at night, lest he be discovered. He was treated virtually as a slave. Even when his master returned, his conditions barely improved.

Eventually John was able to escape and joined a trade ship. Here he remained for some months until the ship, now loaded with cargo, began its return voyage to England. This would be God’s appointed time to “call by grace.” After a few days of calm weather, a sudden storm came upon them one night. The ship took such a beating that the crew thought they could not survive long. Almost every moment was spent pumping water out of the ship or filling the holes with clothes or bedding. It was at this time of crisis that John Newton cried out to the captain, “If this will not do, the Lord have mercy upon us.” He was instantly struck with his own words and thought, “What mercy can there

be for me?" The waves were still literally breaking over his head, and every time this happened, he feared the ship would go down, and he would perish. He wrote, "I now began to pray." He found encouragement from Luke 11.13: "*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?*" The storm did abate, but the ship was in a very poor state. Eventually, after some considerable time, it made its way to the west coast of Ireland. Soon after the ship was safely in the harbour, another storm came. If they had yet been out at sea, they never could have survived. Again, he wrote, "About this time, I began to know that there is a God who hears and answers prayer ... I continued much in prayer; I saw that the Lord had interposed so far to save me, and I hoped He would do more. The outward circumstances helped in this place to make me still more serious and earnest in crying to Him, who alone could relieve me; and sometimes I thought I could be content to die, even for want of food, if I might but die a believer."

The Lord did deepen that work of grace in his heart, and eventually he was brought into gospel liberty. He also married the young lady he met all those years before.

There is so much about the early life of John Newton that could have been included, but for want of space. For those who are interested to learn more, they could do no better than read his own autobiography, *Out of the Depths*. We believe that all he passed through as a young man, when sanctified, made him a most gracious, kind, tenderhearted man who had a great love to the people of God.

A.T. Pickett

PROVIDENCES IN THE LIFE OF JOHN NEWTON

"Nothing was more remarkable," says Mr. Cecil in his *Memoirs of John Newton*, "than Mr. Newton's constant habit of regarding the hand of God in every event, however trivial it might appear to others."

During the time that John Newton was in a wretched condition on the coast of Africa, he wrote two or three times to his father, describing his case and desiring his assistance. He said that he would not return to England unless his father sent for him. His father made arrangements with the captain of a ship that was about to sail for Sierra Leone to bring John home.

When the ship arrived at Sierra Leone, the captain made enquiries for John. Finding that he was a great distance away, the ship sailed on. A special providence seems to have fixed John at a place called Kittam. He had been delayed from setting out on a trade mission. Had he been at the place where he usually was, or at any other factory, of which his master had several, he would not have heard of the ship until it was too late.

Sometimes he and a fellow-servant walked to the beach, hoping to see a sailing vessel. This was rare, for the place was not usually resorted to by ships of trade, and most passed at night or at a considerable distance from shore. One morning, in February 1747, John's fellow-servant walked to the beach and saw a ship. He quickly made a smoke signal to show that he wanted to trade. The captain was hesitant about stopping, but eventually put down an anchor, and John went out to the ship in a canoe. This proved to be the very ship that had orders to bring him back to England. Had John's companion been half an hour later, the vessel would have been past.

There were numerous other instances of God's special providential care over John Newton, while in Africa, on the seas and after he returned to England. We cannot wonder that he had such a strong impression in the latter part of his life, of a particular providence superintending and conducting the steps of man, since he was so often reminded of it in his own history. Divine providence, as well as grace, seems to have afforded him matter for much consolation and profitable meditation.

We read of a divine hand concerned in the fall of sparrows, and in numbering the hairs of our head. Yet, our lack of trust in the Lord is shown in the first trial we meet. How many cases

occur in the history of each of us, where nothing short of an almighty arm could prove a present help in the time of trouble!

The history of John Newton is an example, showing that Christ *“is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him”* (Hebrews 7.25). “He is able to bring the most hardened blasphemer and abject slave from his chains of sin and misery to stand in the most useful station, and proclaim to the wretched and to the ruined, the exceeding riches of His grace.”

Adapted from R. Cecil in Friendly Companion 1955

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH - PART 5

Isaiah chapter 23 is a prophecy regarding the great city of Tyre. You will remember that in King Solomon's day, Hiram king of Tyre was of great service to him in the building of the temple. Such was the evidence of the favour of the God of Israel toward His people that Hiram wrote: *“Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, that made heaven and earth, who hath given to David the king a wise son, endued with prudence and understanding, that might build an house for the LORD, and an house for his kingdom”* (2 Chronicles 2.12). How sovereignly does God raise up people to fulfil His own gracious will and purpose!

Yet, as Judah themselves solemnly departed from God and went into captivity in Babylon for seventy years, surely it is no wonder that the great and worldly city of Tyre would be made desolate for seventy years. The Chaldeans were also the instruments in God's hand to bring this to pass. The prophecy in verse 1 is abundantly clear: *“The burden of Tyre. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no entering in: from the land of Chittim it is revealed to them.”* “No house” – what desolation! The word of the Lord also stated that at the end of 70 years, Tyre would be restored. All this came to pass. The final verse 18 is prophecy which extends much further into the future, and the conversion of the Tyrians to Christianity was fulfilled in the times of the apostles: Acts 21.3,4. In writing this, I cannot help thinking of what has happened to

that great city of Mariupol in Ukraine, which has been almost completely destroyed by the enemy. Who knows whether God will yet permit that city to be raised again, as He did with Tyre so long ago?

Chapter 24 is more of a general prophecy regarding the whole world which lieth in wickedness. It is evident that the Lord will judge for pride and haughtiness. Verse 4 mentions *"the baughty people of the earth,"* which resonates with the words in chapter 2 verse 17. In the midst of these solemn judgments upon the earth, there is a call to the Lord's people: *"Wherefore glorify ye the LORD in the fires, even the name of the LORD God of Israel in the isles of the sea"* (verse 15).

The last verse is again prophecy regarding events far more distant and refers to the certainty of the time when *"the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion"* (verse 23). This takes us to the heavenly Mount Sion as declared in Revelation 14 verse 1.

In chapter 25, it seems that the revelation by the Spirit to the dear prophet Isaiah causes him to burst forth into a wonderful note of praise at the very beginning of the chapter: *"O LORD, Thou art my God; I will exalt Thee, I will praise Thy name; for Thou hast done wonderful things; Thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth."* How precious it is for any poor sinner, when he is constrained to say: *"O LORD, Thou art my God ... for Thou hast done wonderful things!"*

The complete destruction of *"a city"* is prophesied in verses 2 to 5. Some interpret this of Rome; others say that it applies to many cities. The one certain thing is that this speaks of *"a city"* which is hated of God.

Then in verses 6 and 7, the promise of the gospel dispensation is beautifully set forth, followed by prophecy regarding the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 8 is cited in the New Testament at 1 Corinthians 15.54. Here in verse 8, the certainty thereof is emphasised by: *"For the Lord hath spoken it."* Notice also that here the death and victory over death of the Lord Jesus is joined with the blessed sequel to it: *"and the LORD God will wipe away tears from off all faces."* O the love and tenderness expressed here!

In verse 9, there is a word which should concern us all. Are you found, dear young friends, gathered up in these words? *"And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us."*

The chapter closes with similar judgments as those pronounced earlier in verses 2 to 5.

Chapter 26 continues from chapter 25 with the introduction: *"In that day,"* which seems to link up with chapter 25 verse 9 (above). Also, verses 5 and 6 in chapter 26 are similar to verses 2 to 5 and 11 to 12 of chapter 25.

However, verses 1 to 4 speak of another city altogether, belonging to the people of God. Is not this the gospel church here upon earth, as the psalmist declares in Psalm 48.12,13: *"Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following."*

What a blessing is promised in verse 3 to the rightful inhabitants of this city: *"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee."* This is followed by the exhortation in verse 4: *"Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength."* In coming to a close this month, the lines of hymn 372 have been coming to mind:

Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion, city of our God!

But I leave you with the last verse of Newton's hymn:

Bless'd inhabitants of Zion,
Washed in the Redeemer's blood!
Jesus, whom their souls rely on,
Makes them kings and priests to God
'Tis His love His people raises
Over self to reign as kings;
And as priests, His solemn praises
Each for a thank-offering brings.

Brian Mercer

BIBLE QUESTIONS

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

1. The Lord told His disciples to seek for what two things? (Matthew 6.33)
2. What did the Lord Jesus say He had come to seek? (Luke 19.10)
3. What did the angel say to the women at the sepulchre? (Matthew 28.5)
4. What did the Lord say would happen to the house of Israel when they sought Him? (Amos 5.4)
5. The Lord told His people that they would seek Him and find Him when they did what? (Jeremiah 29.13)
6. What did Joseph say he was seeking in Genesis 37?
7. Ezra proclaimed a fast that he and the people with him might seek what of God? (Ezra 8)
8. In Hebrews 11, what did the strangers and pilgrims declare plainly that they seek after?
9. In Hebrews 13, we are told the people of God have no continuing city but seek for what?
10. For what things are those who are risen with Christ to seek? (Colossians 3)

ANSWERS TO MAY QUESTIONS

1. Sin.
2. Hannah, who was praying in the temple.
3. Simon the sorcerer.
4. The Word of God.
5. "To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself?"
6. Joseph was speaking to his brothers. (Genesis 50.20)
7. Paul thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. (Acts 26.9)
8. "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." (Psalm 50.21)

9. "He [Elisha] will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper." (2 Kings 5.11)
10. Matthew 9.4; 12.25; Luke 9.47; 11.17.

THE CHOICE OF LOT

How hurtful was the choice of Lot,
Who took up his abode
(Because it was a fruitful spot)
With them who feared not God!

A prisoner he was quickly made,
Bereaved of all his store;
And, but for Abram's timely aid,
He had returned no more.

Yet still he seemed resolved to stay,
As if it were his rest;
Although their sins from day to day
His righteous soul distressed.

A while he stayed with anxious mind,
Exposed to scorn and strife:
At last he left his all behind,
And fled to save his life

The doom of Sodom will be ours,
If to the earth we cleave;
Lord, quicken all our drowsy powers,
To flee to Thee and live.

John Newton

The Friendly Companion



“The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him, to the
soul that seeketh Him.”
Lamentations 3.25

July 2022

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

Last month, we considered the strange case of Lot, Abraham's nephew. There appeared to be nothing good written of him in the Book of Genesis, and yet, Peter makes it very clear in his Epistle that Lot was a righteous man.

This month, we will look at the case of a man who had many promising signs. There were, no doubt, many who admired him and those who were envious of him. His account is described in Matthew 19, Mark 10 and Luke 18. The first thing we are told is that he was a young man. It is always encouraging to see a concern in those that are young. We are also told that he was rich, for he had great possessions. It is a rare thing to see anyone who has an abundance of wealth showing an interest in heavenly things.

Another important point regarding this young man we can determine from the Lord's answer to him: "*Thou knowest the commandments.*" He, like Timothy, must have been taught the Scriptures.

There were a number of things which made this young man to stand out. First, he was most earnest in coming to Jesus. In Mark's gospel, we are told that he came running. The thing he would seek of Jesus, he felt to be of great importance. Thus, he hastened to obtain it.

The second thing that stood out was the reverence he showed when he came near to Jesus and kneeled before Him. He must have had a better knowledge of who Jesus really was than all his religious teachers, as none of them had bowed before Him. He also addressed Him with reverence, calling Him "*Good Master.*"

The third thing that made him stand out was the great question he asked: "*What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?*" This, especially, made him stand out. Many had come to Jesus with questions of various sorts. Many asked questions to trap the Lord Jesus. There is no greater or more important question that one could ask. It deals with our eternal state,

where we will spend eternity. This young man was troubled at the thought he would come short.

Next, he had come to the one Person who could give him *"eternal life."* In John 17, Jesus speaks of Himself, *"As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him."*

The disciples of Jesus must have really wondered and been pleased to see the rich young man honour the Lord in such a way. They could only see the outward appearance, *"but the Lord looketh on the heart"* (1 Samuel 16.7).

He referred the young man to the law: *"Thou knowest the commandments ... Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother."* The young man answered, *"Master, all these have I observed from my youth."* How ignorant he was of himself and his self-righteousness!

Jesus felt great empathy (an understanding of the feelings of another) for the young man, because He saw how near he was to the kingdom, yet outside. He told him, *"One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."*

By this word, the young man's true state was revealed. He became very sad. He loved his possessions more than God. He went away grieved. There were so many things that seemed right about him. Yet, his heart was not right. His possessions were his master, and no man can serve two masters. The Lord said at another time: *"Whosoever he be ... that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple"* (Luke 14.33). The Lord said further, *"How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!"*

Things seemed so promising regarding this young man, yet he turned back. The disciples were astonished and wondered who could ever be saved? Jesus answered them, *"With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible."*

With loving wishes from the Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

Our front cover picture this month shows droplets of dew.

The Lord says, *"I will be as the dew unto Israel"* (Hosea 14.5); and also, *"My speech shall distil as the dew"* (Deuteronomy 32.2). Thus, the Lord compares Himself and His Word to dew, a most needful and valuable provision in nature. The sweet influence of the Holy Spirit is *"as a dew from the LORD,"* by which the life of His people is maintained. They are the plants of His right-hand planting.

1. Dew distils in the **darkness**. The night of adversity, when all things seem to be covered in darkness, is often the time when spiritual blessings are given. The darker the night, the heavier the dew.

2. Dew **beautifies** the plants. The rising sun shining upon the dew is most lovely. Far more lovely is the rising of the Sun of Righteousness upon His people, when the graces of the Holy Ghost rest upon their souls. *"He will beautify the meek with salvation"* (Psalm 149.4).

3. Dew **softens** the ground, moistening the hardest soil. So, the dew of His grace softens the hardest heart and subdues the most rebellious.

4. Although dew soon evaporates, its influence is **lasting**. The plants and herbs retain the moisture through the hot hours of the summer day, long after the dew has disappeared.

5. The formation of dew is **imperceptible** and quiet. There is no noise or confusion in any of God's works. In silence, the dew comes forth from God, sweet and fresh.

6. Dew is **abundant**. There is rarely a scanty dew; fully and freely it refreshes the herbage of earth. Therefore,

7. It is a powerful agent in **fertilizing** the land, which would become barren and parched during the heat of summer without the dew.

8. Dew **revives** the whole vegetable creation, thus maintaining its life.

9. Dew is most **pure** and **gentle**, both in its coming and effects. It does not pour down like rain, but it distils: *"My speech shall distil as the dew"* (Deuteronomy 32.2). Lastly,

10. Dew is extremely **penetrating**. This can easily be tested when you walk in the dewy grass in the early morning.

So sweet an emblem is dew of the grace of Christ.

(Adapted from Friendly Companion 1992) Edward Carr

TEXT ON A BUS

While in her garden, one of our young readers caught a glimpse of the words "Lord Jesus Christ" on a bus passing by. An hour later, she saw the bus again and was able to read the words clearly: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved" (Acts 16.31).

She remembered that these words were spoken by Paul and Silas to the jailer. There was a great earthquake, and the prison doors were opened. The jailer wanted to know how he could be saved, and that was the reply.

This young friend, Elsie Cottingham, drew a picture of the bus with the text on it, which is shown below. It is a very important text, and we hope the Lord may use it for good.



EVIL COMPANY

Sophronius, a wise teacher, would not allow his children, even when grown up, to associate with those whose conduct was not morally pure and upright.

His son and daughter, Eulalia, wanted to visit a friend one day. The father, believing the friend to be a careless person, refused to give permission. Eulalia said, "Dear Father, you must think us very childish if you imagine we could be exposed to danger by it."

The father, in silence, took a dead coal from the hearth and gave it to his daughter. "It will not burn you, my child; take it." Eulalia did so, and her hand was blackened and her dress soiled. "One cannot be too careful in handling coals," said Eulalia, with annoyance."

"Yes, truly," said the father; "you see, my child, that coals, even if they do not burn, blacken; so it is with evil company."

Adapted from Friendly Companion 1946

KIND WORDS

Speak kindly in the morning; it will lighten all the cares of the day, turn sorrow into gladness, make household business and all other affairs move along more smoothly, giving peace to the one who thus speaks, and grateful joy to him who hears.

Speak kindly at the evening hour, for it may be that before the dawn of another day, some tenderly loved one may finish his or her span of life for this world. Then it will be too late to retract an unkind word, or even seek forgiveness for an injury inflicted upon the heart of a loved friend departed. Remember that kind words can never die.

The Gospel Echo 1913

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**WRITING ON THE WALL**

Belshazzar was the next king of Babylon. He made a great feast for a thousand of his lords. They used the gold and silver vessels that were taken from the temple at Jerusalem. They drank wine and praised their own gods.

Suddenly, they saw a hand writing upon the wall of the palace. The king was afraid, and his knees smote together. He cried aloud to bring in all the wise men of Babylon, but they could not read the writing. Finally, the queen told him to call for Daniel, who had wisdom from God.

Belshazzar offered a great reward to Daniel, but Daniel told him to give the gifts to another. Yet, he would read the writing and make known the meaning to the king. Daniel said the words meant, *"God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it ... Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting ... Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."*

Enemies entered the land that same night, and Belshazzar was slain. Darius, the Mede, took over the kingdom of Babylon.

QUESTIONS

1. Where were the gold vessels taken from? (4 words)
2. They saw a hand writing upon what? (2 words)
3. What happened to Belshazzar that night? (3 words)

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

ANSWERS TO JUNE QUESTIONS

1. A very great tree.
2. *"The kingdom is departed from thee."*
3. The most high God.

*“And thou ...
hast lifted up
thyself against
the Lord of
heaven”*

Daniel 5.22,23

BIBLE LESSONS**THE WALLS OF JERICO**

What a striking difference between the people of Israel and the people of Jericho! The people of Jericho were surrounded with high, strong walls and barred gates of iron. Yet, they were filled with great fear, so that no one went out, and no one was allowed into the city.

The children of Israel lived in tents, out in the open and exposed to danger. Yet, they did not have a fearful sense of doom, like the people of Jericho. The children of Israel had a wall around them, but it was not a wall of bricks or stone. It was a wall that their enemies could not see, and they could not see it themselves, except by faith. For the comfort of His people, the Lord declares, *“For I ... will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her”* (Zechariah 2.5).

The Lord told Joshua to instruct the people of Israel in how they were to go against Jericho. Each day, for six days, they were to march around the whole city of Jericho. The armed men were to go first, followed by seven priests blowing on trumpets made of rams' horns. Next, the priests were to carry the ark of the covenant upon their shoulders, followed by the host of the people. They were to march in silence. No noise was to be heard, no singing or talking. The only sound was the rams' horns blown by the priests.

What a lesson in patience! To the natural mind, it must have seemed useless. Each step, by itself, appeared to be without purpose. Yet, each step taken by faith, in obedience to God's command, would ultimately bring down the mighty walls of Jericho.

The people of Jericho watched and wondered at the strange way the people of Israel conducted warfare. They marched around the city with the monotonous sound of the rams' horns and then returned to their camp without shooting an arrow or battering the gates. It must have appeared foolishness to them. Yet, the imposing number of armed men at the forefront must have been very sobering to the people of Jericho. Also, the

strange object covered with badger skins must have caused some dismay. Was it a new weapon? Then, the great host that followed unarmed! What were these Israelites doing?

On the seventh day, the whole camp rose early, just as the day was dawning. They marched around the city, but they did not return to their camp. This time, they kept marching around Jericho a second time, a third time, a fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh time. When they had completed the seventh time, the priests blew loudly on the rams' horns, and Joshua commanded the people to "*shout; for the LORD hath given you the city.*" What a shout echoed around the city from the hundreds of thousands of Israelites!

The Bible tells us that "*the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him.*" What a miracle their God had performed! The wall fell down without an Israelite touching it. But there was another miracle. One small part of the wall remained standing. It was Rahab's house, and there was a scarlet cord in the window. Just as the faith of the Israelites was honoured when the wall fell down, the faith of Rahab was honoured when her house was left standing.

Joshua commanded the two spies to go into Rahab's house and bring out all that were with her in the house. The rest of the people went into the city and gathered up all the silver, gold and vessels of brass and iron. These were to be put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. Nothing of this first victory was to be kept by an Israelite. It was the first fruits of the land of Canaan and thus belonged to the Lord.

You can read about this in Joshua chapter 6.

QUESTIONS:

1. What wall did the children of Israel have around them? (10 words)
2. What followed the seven priests blowing rams' horns?
3. How were the people to march? (2 words)
4. How many times did they march around the city on the seventh day?
5. What was in the window where the wall did not fall?

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. To set up for a memorial.
 2. Set them in the midst of Jordan where the feet of the priests stood.
 3. They prepared their meals with the old grain growing in Canaan.
 4. Captain of the host of the Lord.
 5. "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy."
-

BECOMING AS A CHILD

It happened so unexpectedly. Seven-year-old Gaspar suddenly had to be admitted to the hospital. It had happened to many others, but this time it was Gaspar who had to have an operation on his appendix. He looked around anxiously when he was wheeled into the operating room.

With the frankness of a child, he asked the surgeon, "What are you going to do to me?"

"We are going to take away the pain out of your tummy in a minute," the doctor said.

"But I don't have any pain right now," Gaspar said.

"No, but if we don't do anything, the pain will come back, and you will get sick again," said the doctor.

"How are you going to take the pain away, Doctor?"

"You are just going to go to sleep, Gaspar, and when you wake up, it will be over. Then you will soon be well again."

"But I'm not sleepy at all," said Gaspar.

"Oh," said the doctor, "I am going to make you sleepy, and you won't feel anything."

"Am I really going to sleep, Doctor?"

"Yes, Gaspar, you are really going to be sleeping."

"Then, I have to pray first," Gasper said. Before anyone knew what was happening, he slid to the floor and bowed his knees. It was very quiet in the room. No one moved; not the surgeon, the assistants, or the nurses. With surprise, they all watched that small boy. Clearly and distinctly, the words came from his mouth.

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray Thee Lord, my soul to keep.
If I should die before I wake,
I pray Thee Lord my soul to take.
Wash me, make me pure within,
Cleanse, O cleanse me from my sin.
For Jesus' sake, Amen.

That childlike prayer became the turning point in the life of the surgeon, and the words never left him. That same evening, he kneeled down before the Lord and prayed the same prayer from his heart.

For the Generations to Come, Volume 1

MY FATHER GIVES; HE DOES NOT SELL

A mother lay dying, and her parched lips thirsted for something to refresh them. Her young daughter, who was about fourteen years of age, stood by her bedside. Suddenly the thought struck her: "I have seen such beautiful grapes in the greenhouses of the king's gardens. I'll go and ask how much one bunch of grapes would cost. Oh! if I could just get one bunch for Mother!"

Away she hurried and soon reached the place. The sentry on guard asked why she had come.

"I must see the king," said the little maid.

"Impossible!" replied the stern soldier.

"But Mother is dying," she pleaded.

"I can let no one pass these gates," was the reply.

The poor girl's heart sank, and she burst into tears. Just at that moment, the king's son rode up. He was touched with the grief of the young girl. Turning to her, he asked, "Well, and what do you want with the king?"

"Please, sir, my mother is dying, and I wanted to know how much it would cost to buy one bunch of grapes? Mother is so thirsty." The tears flowed faster and faster.

Bidding her to follow him, the king's son led her to one of the vines. Cutting a fine bunch of the rich fruit, he gave it to the astonished child, saying, "My father does not sell; he gives."

This girl had a great need, but she knew the king could help her if he was willing. In distress of soul, a poor, needy sinner is forced to go to the King of kings, seeking for mercy and pardon. The law of God stands like the stern sentry on guard, giving no help. However, the King's Son (Jesus) is moved with compassion. He freely gives all the blessings of His Father's house, *"without money and without price."*

Adapted from The Cheering Words

A TWOFOLD VICTORY

On one of his long journeys to preach the gospel, Dr. Macdonald lost his way. Night was coming on when he came to a poor house in a lonely spot. He found the wife at home, but he received a very cold reception. She let him into the house, but informed him that he would not be able to stay for the night. He answered that he meant to stay, but he was told that one would soon be coming who would turn him out of doors.

In due course, the husband, who was a notorious poacher, returned. As his wife expected, he was not too pleased to find a visitor before him. He ordered the stranger out of the house. But the stranger said that if he was to go out, he must be put out! The poacher caught him. They wrestled, and the poacher found that he had met with more than his match. When the doctor got him down, he made him promise that he would never again turn a forlorn stranger out of doors.

The doctor proposed to hold household worship, and held it. He told his host where he was going and got the poacher to undertake to be his guide. The physical prowess of Dr. Macdonald won the respect of his unwilling host. He went with the doctor to the place where he was to preach. Then, he waited to hear the sermon, and that sermon was the turning point in his life.

The Apostle of the North (Friendly Companion 1950)

THE THREE MOCKERS

In a little seaport town, a preacher from a different region was to preach the Word of God on a certain Sunday evening. Every seat in the church was occupied.

When the preacher was ready to commence his sermon, he suddenly stopped speaking, and for some time stood silently. The congregation thought the minister had become ill, but suddenly he spoke, and said: "It is now precisely fifteen years since I have been in this same church. Among the hearers at that time were three young men who had planned to ridicule the minister who was then preaching here. They also had stones in their pockets with which they were going to disturb the service. 'Let's throw now,' said one of the three. 'No,' said one of the others, 'Let's wait a few minutes yet to hear what he will say.' After a few minutes had passed, the other said, 'We had better not carry out our plan this evening.' The other two then left, being very angry, but the third young man remained to listen.

"The fate of each of these three young men proved to be as follows: the first one was put to death at Thyburn for forgery; the second one became a murderer. He was captured and locked up in prison, where he is still suffering for his crime. By the grace of God, the third one was converted and is now standing here before you, having received the unmerited privilege of proclaiming the gospel." The preacher then began his sermon.

Religious Stories for Young and Old, Volume 4

SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF THE EARLY LIFE OF SUKEY HARLEY

Back in 1783, the tiny hamlet of Prolimoor, not far from the Welsh border, about fifteen miles south of Shrewsbury, would have been an extremely remote place, with farming the main occupation. In this place lived a very poor family. Mrs. Overton had given birth to her **fifteenth** child, a little girl, whom they named Susanna (Sukey). Never could they have imagined that the life of this little girl would still be read about in the twenty-first century.

Sukey proved to be a very hardworking, industrious person. Even when very little, she would try to help wherever she could. When she was three, her father died, leaving the family in great distress. No doubt, some of her older siblings were able to work and help provide. They appeared to have very little religion. No mention is made of going to church, only of saying "The Lord's prayer" before going to bed. Sukey called this "saying her prayers," although it meant nothing to her. She never went to school, learning only domestic chores.

She writes of her childhood: "We used sometimes to be very badly off; my mother used to go out to nurse, and remain out a month or six weeks at a time. An older sister looked after me. The meat would sometimes be all gone long before mother came home. We were very badly clothed." She also wrote: "I was at this time a very wild, unruly child, and as I grew up, I cared for no restraint or correction. I was wilful and obstinate and chose my own way."

Sukey married at a very young age, probably mid to late teens. Although she was a lively, high-spirited person, her husband was a quiet, reserved and steady young man. He was not into drinking alcohol, and did not enjoy foolishness of any sort, but was very conscientious and hard working. Neither of them knew anything about religion. He would often reprove her for swearing. Sukey often went to the village shop on a Lord's day morning. The shopkeeper kept asking her not to come on this day, but Sukey took no notice! One Lord's day,

her husband came with her to assist in carrying the purchases home. When her husband heard the shopkeeper ask Sukey again not to come on the Lord's day, he put a stop to it. She writes: "Well, I thought, what an oddity man he is to mind what that woman says. But neither of us knew any more about the Sabbath than the beasts in the field."

They moved to another nearby village, where Sukey became acquainted with some neighbours, whom she called "Methodists." They urged her to go to chapel with them, and after refusing a few times, she finally agreed. Returning home after her first time at chapel, she discovered that a cake had been stolen from her kitchen. While at chapel for the second time, her husband's shirt sleeve caught fire, which nearly set the whole house ablaze. She was determined never to go to chapel again! Yet, she felt that these neighbours had something special that she was lacking, and it troubled her.

One day, Sukey was struggling to get her small pigs into the sty at the back of the house. She was shouting and swearing, and one of her neighbours called out, "Oh, Sukey, Sukey, thee must be born again!" This completely confounded Sukey. Like Nicodemus, at first, she could not understand. She went to tell her other neighbour about it, and said that if it was in the Bible, she would believe it. Her neighbour fetched a Bible and read the words to her. Sukey could not understand it at all, but she was really troubled about what it meant. Sukey had never been taught to read, and was unable to read the Bible herself. She also became concerned that she only knew one prayer, which she kept repeating over and over again. This so troubled her, that she found herself asking God to teach her a new prayer. Suddenly, these words came into her mind to pray: "Lord, lead me into the true knowledge of Thy dear Son." She did not even know that God had a Son. She was absolutely convinced that God had taught her this prayer, which encouraged her to keep praying it.

After a fortnight (two weeks) of praying this new prayer, Sukey came into a very dark place, fearing there could be no

hope for her and that she would perish in hell. It almost brought her into suicidal thoughts. She did go with her neighbours to the chapel one evening, but felt so miserable that she was overtaken with her gloomy thoughts. She could hardly sleep that night and was severely tempted to give up praying. While eating breakfast the following morning, these words came with power into her mind: *"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and be with Me"* (Revelation 3.20). She suddenly remembered that was the text preached from the night before, although she seemed not to have heard the words at the time. This encouraged her to keep praying.

One day, when the burden of her soul became almost unbearable, after sending her little daughter off to school, Sukey locked and bolted the door, and covered all the windows with cloth. Then, she said: "I went down on my knees in prayer and prayed these same words over and over and over again. I felt as if I would have pulled the roof over my head, I went tearing and tearing at it with such vehement earnestness." And then the dear Lord came. "I felt Him come; it's past talking about. No words can express the feeling of my heart at this time. He fetched me off my knees and He showed me that though I deserved to go to hell, he told me all my sins had been forgiven. I had such a sight inwardly of my dear Redeemer's sufferings; how He was crucified, how He hung on the cross for me; it was as if He showed me what I deserved, yet He seemed to say, He had suffered that desert. It was as if He made it so plain to me; how He would save me, because it was His blessed will to save me."

This experience had a tremendous effect upon her. Sukey broke off from all her worldly-minded friends and sought to live a life of faith. One thing yet greatly troubled her: she was illiterate. She could not read at all, but she longed to be able to read the Bible. At first, she constrained her young daughter, Mary, to teach her the letters of the alphabet, "giving her two suppers of a night to encourage her." Very slowly, Sukey learned how to read very simple words. "She (Mary) brought me as far

as this – God is love, God is light; and these very words came over me; when I spelt out the words, they came into my heart. I thought, My God is love, He is light, He can teach me Himself. I wanted no more teaching of Mary; from that time, I would take my Book, go down upon my knees, and look up to my heavenly Father, and beg of Him to teach me.”

The Lord did teach her to read. The Bible became her mainspring. Almost every word was underlined, with one verse having a pin stuck into it. That verse was made a real blessing to her daughter many years later: *“Thou shalt weep no more: He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when He shall hear it, He will answer thee”* (Isaiah 30.19). Her daughter wrote, “I used to feel that my mother had the true religion. I often watched her going to some quiet place to pray. She was the same person in private and before everybody.”

Eventually, with a few others in the area who had also been called by grace, a little congregation met together on Lord’s days, usually in a house or cottage. These meetings occasionally had visits from ministers, such as Bernard Gilpin and James Bourne. Sukey lived to be seventy years old and passed away in 1853.

A.T. Pickett

It is impossible for a child of God to obtain any soul help but from God, and he often permits His saints to come into situations to convince them of it.

Henry Fowler

When faith begins, God does not neglect it; He lays the holy cross upon our back in order to strengthen us and make our faith mighty.

Martin Luther

*BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES***THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH - PART 6**

Last month, I touched on the beginning of Isaiah chapter 26, as a continuation from chapter 25. In fact, all three chapters (25, 26 and 27) are part of the same “song,” foretelling the future deliverance of the church of Christ here below and the destruction of its enemies.

The Holy Spirit, in His wisdom, has seen fit that the prophecies of deliverances should alternate with those of the Lord’s judgments. Without the light of the Spirit upon the sacred page, our minds are prone to be confused. When the blessed Spirit shines upon the truth, poor sinners will see again and again the wonder of the Lord’s mercy in delivering them from their just deserts.

Chapter 26 (verses 5 and 6) foretells what will come upon “*the lofty city*,” which many interpret as referring to Rome.

Then, the song turns to “*the just*” (verse 7), followed by closer intimations of the experience of the Lord’s people collectively (verse 8) and personally (verse 9). Verses 10 and 11 return to the lot and end of the wicked: “*The fire of Thine enemies shall devour them.*”

Verse 12 visits the same sweet subject as verse 3 (see last month): “*LORD, Thou wilt ordain **peace** for us: for Thou also hast wrought all our works in us.*” There is something to observe here: the frequent contrasts between solemn judgments and blessed deliverances cause the sacred work and truth of God in salvation to stand out the more. It certainly will be so when the Lord brings us to walk a little in these things.

Verse 13 brings an honest acknowledgement of the sins of the church in time past and, at the same time, a gracious utterance brought about by the conquest of grace in the heart: “*But by Thee only will we make mention of Thy name.*”

Again, in verse 15, there is a burst of praise to a performing God, followed in verses 16, 17 and 18 by reflections on the chastening of the Lord and the failings of the church in times of conflict. The confession in verse 18, “*We have not wrought any*

deliverance in the earth,” contrasts with the wonderful promise in the next verse, *“Thy dead men shall live,”* and the glorious means by which this will be accomplished: *“Together with My dead body shall they arise.”* This is nothing less than the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Yet, there are further judgments to be endured before the church will be united at last with the Redeemer, as solemnly foretold in verses 20 and 21: *“For, behold, the LORD cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.”*

The introduction of a new song on the same theme is prefaced by the same words at the opening of chapter 27: *“In that day”* (verses 1 and 2).

What a comfort is the promise given in verse 1, as we look at the sea of iniquity and filth that is all around us! At times, a living child of God realises that *“the prince of this world”* really orchestrates it all. But what a promise! *“And He shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.”*

No wonder there is a song to be sung (verse 2) for the church, likening it to *“a vineyard”* and the spelling out of His tender care of it (verses 3 and 4).

Verse 6 is a compact prophecy of the gospel dispensation and the gracious product of it: *“Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.”* However, the next three verses (7, 8 and 9) tell of the purging that will be needful to bring forth fruit, reminding us of the word in Hebrews 12.11.

Then, the Lord turns to His solemn judgments upon the city of Rome before concluding the song with a note on the triumphant deliverance of His own people, even *“one by one”* from their captivity. The final note is of the highest order: *“And shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem (verses 10 to 13).”*

The next four chapters (28, 29, 30 & 31) each begin with the same words: *“Woe to ...”* Again, however, the Lord’s covenant oaths and promises are interspersed throughout.

Chapter 28 contains prophecy against the sins of Israel and Judah, right through to verse 22, except for **one**, which is the sixteenth. In the midst of much solemn exposure of dreadful sins committed against light and knowledge, a covenant-keeping God declares: *“Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.”* The Apostle Peter cites this in that lovely chapter, 1 Peter 2.6. The word speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ as the only foundation for the living church of God.

From verse 23 to the end is an interesting description as to how God will sow the Word, nurture and harvest it, and the summing up at the end: *“This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working”* (verse 29).

Chapter 29 is solemn prophecy against Jerusalem (Ariel), foretelling the siege and destruction of it, followed by the denunciation of the Jews for their grievous sins until the end of verse 16. Then, the Lord begins to show that He will be mindful of His chosen people still, after blessing Lebanon with fruitfulness. Again, the promise of the Lord appearing for His people begins at verse 18, with the same words: *“And in that day...”*

Verse 19 is a word to consider, and may it be ours to treasure: *“The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.”*

Brian Mercer

I trust I can say, with all my carnality and worldly-mindedness, I value a smile from God, a hope in His mercy, a touch from Him, a grain of His grace, above all this world calls good or great. “Let me have Thee, my God; then others may take what they please.”

Francis Covell

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about THINGS THAT APPEAR. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail. (See page 146 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. What did God cause to appear on the third day? (Genesis 1.9)
2. Three times a year all the men of Israel were to appear before God. How were they not to appear? (Deuteronomy 16.16)
3. Before whom did the Psalmist want to appear? (Psalm 42.2)
4. What did Moses ask that God would let appear unto His servants? And unto their children? (Psalm 90.16)
5. What did God say that His people had made to appear in all their doings (work)? (Ezekiel 21.24)
6. Who must appear before the judgment seat of Christ? (2 Corinthians 5)
7. Where does Christ now appear for His people? (Hebrews 9)
8. How will Christ appear the second time to those who look for Him? (Hebrews 9)
9. The worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of what? (Hebrews 11)
10. When Peter wrote of the righteous scarcely being saved, what did he ask regarding the ungodly and the sinner? (1 Peter 4)

ANSWERS TO JUNE QUESTIONS

1. The kingdom of God and His righteousness.
2. That which was lost.
3. Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.
4. Ye shall live.
5. Search for Me with all your heart.
6. His brethren.
7. A right way.
8. A country.
9. One to come.
10. Those things which are above.

LORD, INCREASE OUR FAITH

Oh! for a faith that will not shrink
Though pressed by many a foe,
That will not tremble on the brink
Of poverty or woe.

That will not murmur nor complain
Beneath the chastening rod;
But in the hour of grief or pain
Can lean upon its God.

A faith that shines more bright and clear
When tempests rage without;
That when in danger knows no fear,
In darkness feels no doubt.

A faith that keeps the narrow way
Till life's last spark be fled,
And with a pure and heavenly ray
Lights up a dying bed.

Lord, give me such a faith as this,
And then, whate'er may come,
I'll taste e'en here the hallowed bliss
Of an eternal home.

Sower 1905

The Friendly Companion



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

Proverbs 15.3

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

Perhaps there may be some young readers who feel troubled because they have no brothers or sisters. They may look at cousins or friends who have siblings, and wish they had someone to play with; especially when they see some homes with numerous children. They mark the special bond that brothers and sisters often have, and it makes their lonely path seem even more difficult to bear.

There are a number of accounts in the Word of God where there was a single (or only) child. I wonder if you can think of any. Some of them became well-known for the mighty deeds they were enabled to accomplish. Others were known for the godliness that they manifested.

Samson was an only child. Yet, he grew up to judge Israel for twenty years. He was renowned for his great strength, through which he was able to afflict the Philistines who were oppressing the people of Israel. He was raised as a Nazarite unto God. The term "Nazarite" meant being separated unto God. There were three things that marked a Nazarite. First, they were not to drink wine (any alcohol) or eat any unclean thing; second, their hair was not to be cut; and third, they were not to touch a dead body. Although there were many things in his life which grieved his parents and the Lord, yet Samson was among those given faith to do the work of God. Even in his death, Samson brought a great deliverance to Israel.

It would seem that Elijah was an only child. What a man of God he was! How boldly he declared a famine in the land of Israel! It brought much hardship to King Ahab and the people for three and a half years. How wonderfully Elijah was provided for by the God of Israel, first by the brook Cherith and then in the house of the widow at Zarephath. Again, how bold Elijah was when he stood against all the prophets of Baal! In answer to his earnest prayer, the Lord brought rain upon the land once more. Lastly, how remarkable was his mysterious departure from this world, being brought up to heaven by a chariot of fire.

Another “only child” who was raised up of God in the manner of Samson and Elijah was John the Baptist. He had a most remarkable life. His father declared that he would be called “*the prophet of the Highest*” and would prepare the way for the revealing of the Lord Jesus. What a plain and simple life John lived! His clothing was made of camel’s hair, and he wore a leather girdle about him. His diet consisted of locusts and wild honey. His dwelling was out in the wilderness. The Lord Jesus said that John was “*a burning and a shining light.*”

Thus, though they were the only children in their homes, God was with each of them and wrought great things by them.

There was another son that you and I would not consider as an only child, but God thought differently. It was Isaac. Three times in Genesis chapter 22, God refers to Isaac as Abraham’s only son. Perhaps you could read that chapter and find the three verses. See how they flow out to the great end that God had purposed. Abraham and Isaac were each given a revelation of the Lord Jesus, the “*only begotten Son*” of His Father.

With loving wishes from the Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

Eagles have often been used as a symbol of power and majesty because of their strength and swiftness in flight. They build their nests in high places. The United States declared the bald eagle (shown on the front cover) to be its national bird in 1792. It became a symbol of freedom, due to the eagle’s long lifespan, strength and majestic appearance.

The first mention of eagles in the Bible is in Exodus 19.4. God said that He bore the children of Israel “*on eagles’ wings.*” Another beautiful illustration of God’s care is found in Deuteronomy 32.11,12: “*As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the LORD alone did lead him.*”

Eagles, along with vultures and other unclean birds, were prohibited as food for the Israelites in Leviticus 11.13. God gave

Israel dietary laws to set them apart from other nations. These laws were also given for health reasons, as part of God's promise that He would *"put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians"* (Exodus 15.26). Eagles are birds of prey and scavengers. They eat dead flesh, as vultures do, and could carry harmful diseases to humans.

Speaking of His own wisdom and power in creation, God said, *"Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high? She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place. From thence she seeketh the prey and her eyes behold afar off. Her young ones also such up blood: and where the slain are, there is she"* (Job 39.27-30). The eagle was set forth to show the wonderful work of God in Proverbs 30.19: *"The way of an eagle in the air."*

God uses the example of an eagle for warnings, such as in Proverbs 30.17, to those who mock or disobey parents. God warns His enemies: *"Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down"* (Obadiah 1.4); and, *"Behold, He shall come up and fly as the eagle, and spread His wings over Bozrah"* (Jeremiah 49.22).

Perhaps the most familiar reference to eagles is in Isaiah 40.31: *"But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."* This verse reminds the reader that the strongest of men may stumble and fall, but those who trust in the Lord have a strength that this world cannot offer. When we see an eagle soaring in flight on invisible air currents, it reminds us that the Creator, who gave strength to the eagle, will also strengthen those who call upon His name. *"Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me"* (Psalm 50.15).

Adapted from Got Questions Ministries

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**DANIEL SAVED FROM THE LIONS**

Darius, the new king of Babylon, chose Daniel to be a president over the land. The other rulers were jealous of Daniel and tried to find fault with him. When they could find nothing wrong, they asked the king to make a new law. Whoever made a request to anyone except the king for thirty days would be cast into a den of lions.

When Daniel heard that the law was signed by the king, he prayed and gave thanks to his God three times a day as before. The rulers found Daniel praying and accused him before the king. Darius was very sad and tried to deliver Daniel, but he could not. He said to Daniel, *"Thy God whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee."*

Daniel was cast into the den of lions, but the Lord sent his angel to shut the lions' mouths. Daniel was not hurt *"because he believed in his God."* The next morning, the king hurried to the den of lions and commanded that Daniel should be taken up out of the den. Those who had accused Daniel were cast to the lions instead.

QUESTIONS

1. What was Daniel chosen to be? (2 words)
2. Where was Daniel cast? (5 words)
3. The Lord sent His angel to do what? (4 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. The temple at Jerusalem.
2. The wall.
3. He (Belshazzar) was slain.

Contributed.

*“My God hath
sent His angel,
and hath shut
the lions’
mouths.”*

Daniel 6.27

BIBLE LESSONS

ISRAEL SMITTEN BY AI

After all the silver, gold and vessels of brass and iron had been removed for the tabernacle, the children of Israel burnt Jericho. So, the once-great city lay in ashes. Before Israel returned to their tents, Joshua warned them that Jericho should never be built again. He said, *"Cursed be the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall be set up the gates of it."*

The Lord had proved His promise to Joshua, *"As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee."* After this great victory over Jericho, the fame of Joshua began to spread through all the land of Canaan.

In due time, Rahab was taken into the camp of the Israelites. One of the nobles of the tribe of Judah, whose name was Salmon, took her for his wife. What a place of honour was given to Rahab! She would receive even more honour in time to come, for one of her great-great grandsons was David, the king of Israel. She was also in the lineage of the Lord Jesus.

After Jericho was destroyed, Joshua looked at the next city to be taken. He sent men to go and view the city of Ai. The men returned to Joshua, saying that only two or three thousand armed men would be needed, for the city was very small in comparison to Jericho.

Joshua sent three thousand men against Ai. The battle ended very quickly, with the people of Ai being victorious. They slew thirty-six men and chased back the rest of them. Now the hearts of the Israelites *"melted, and became as water."*

Joshua and the elders of Israel rent their clothes, put dust upon their heads (a sign of great mourning) and fell on their faces before the ark of the Lord until evening. At last, Joshua said, *"Alas, O Lord GOD, wherefore hast Thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to ... destroy us? Would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of Jordan!"* The victory over Jericho was forgotten, and nothing but defeat

seemed before them. In the Book of Hebrews, a warning is given to the believers: *"Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."* Could Joshua and the people of Israel rest outside of the land that God had promised to give them?

Joshua could not understand why God had failed to help them. He reasoned with God saying, *"O LORD, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt Thou do unto Thy great name?"*

God answered Joshua with a sharp rebuke: *"Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned."* One man in Israel, whose name was Achan, had committed a great trespass, and for his sake, all Israel was humbled before their enemies. God said, *"They have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen ... and they have put it even among their own stuff."* Because they had taken the accursed thing, *"they were accursed,"* and God said, *"Neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you."*

Joshua commanded all Israel to prepare themselves for the next day when they would be searched by God for the accursed thing in the midst of them. They would be brought tribe by tribe. The tribe that was taken would be brought by its families, and the family that was taken would come by its households. Then, the household that was taken would come man by man. Joshua declared that the man that was taken with the accursed thing would be burnt with fire, he and all that he had, *"because he hath transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel."* What a fearful judgment awaited the man who had committed the trespass!

You can read about this in Joshua chapters 6 and 7.

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Joshua say the man would be that rebuilt Jericho?
2. Who was the great-great grandson of Rahab?
3. How many men were sent to fight against Ai?

4. What did God say Israel had done? (12 words)

5. What would happen to the man with the accursed thing?

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. "For I [God] will be unto her a wall of fire."

2. The ark of the covenant.

3. In silence.

4. Seven.

5. A scarlet cord.

THE CUCKOO CLOCK

One evening, Margaret Mason sat in her chair with her well-worn Bible. A neighbour had come with his children. They wanted to see and hear her famous cuckoo clock strike the hour. While they were waiting, the neighbour asked Margaret if she would be willing to tell them about her life.

Margaret did not reply immediately and appeared deep in thought. Finally, she said solemnly, "I would like to tell of the goodness of the Lord towards a poor sinner like me, but I am afraid of secretly lifting up myself instead of Christ. It is no easy thing to keep self out of sight when telling others of the Lord's work. I am less than nothing, but I have been tenderly cared for, comforted, strengthened and guided, as if I was the only creature to be cared for in God's creation.

"When I was about twenty years of age, I fell into a grievous error. I must not pass it by, because that one fault is the iron hinge upon which my history has turned. No doubt, that mistake is among the '*all things [that] work together for good*' (Romans 8.28), but it has been through fiery trials.

"They all said that I was taking a wrong step when I was determined to marry Frank. Against the entreaties of my parents, I was bent upon it. I deceived myself by thinking that

it was for the good of his soul. Oh, the poor, blind girl that I was, to throw myself into a wrong path. I had been taught the prayer, *'Lead us not into temptation'* (Matthew 6.13), and I knew the precept, *'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers'* (2 Corinthians 16.14). Children, mark what I am saying! Never take a wrong step that good may come! Never set your foot in any path where you cannot pray, 'Lord, be with me.'

"Well, I married poor Frank, and from that time forth, I have been a chastened woman. Though I toiled hard – harder than any woman ought to toil – we were always poor. My husband wasted nearly all our earnings at the public-house. Many times, I went secretly to the brook to eat a handful of watercresses, or to the hedges to gather berries to take away the pangs of hunger.

"Poor though we were, there was one household treasure, besides the Bible, with which I could never part. That was this cuckoo clock. The cow was sold, the pig went; one after another, our best pieces of furniture were sold, but I still kept the cuckoo clock. Frank made it himself, and it was his first gift to me before our marriage. Frank was a German by birth, but he changed his name to an English one when he settled in this country. He had served an apprenticeship to a clockmaker at Nuremberg in Germany. Many times, the voice of that little cuckoo bird spoke to my heart. Many times, it has reminded me of that eternal springtide which will soon overflow every sorrow.

"One evening, poor Frank came home tipsy, as usual, and asked for more money. I had none. He grew as furious as a wild beast and swore he would have his revenge. Worn out with terror and distress, at last I fell asleep. In the morning, I found myself alone. Every article of clothing had been taken to the pawnshop. The drawers were all tumbled out, and everything was gone but the Bible. It seemed as if Frank was kept from taking away that best treasure. I lay in bed, knitting and weeping by turns, and praying all the time. It was truly an hour of extremity, but the Lord wonderfully appeared for me. By and by, I heard a sharp tap at the window. It was the pawnbroker's wife, a woman whom I had always thought as hard-hearted as a

stone, and from whom I turned away whenever we met. She had a large bundle of my clothes under her arm, a small can of warm coffee and a loaf of bread. It was Elijah's God who sent her. 'Mrs. Mason,' she said, in her hard-sounding voice, 'I half guessed how you were faring. These clothes are yours, not mine. I got them cheap enough. Do not thank me, but just speak my name sometimes in your prayers.' And she was gone. I did not forget her request.

"Another time, I had nothing with which to pay the rent for our little cottage. Rent day was on the morrow, and I wondered what to do. The landlord had told us that he would turn us out if he did not receive his rent. I dug up the last potatoes, stowed several things of my own making in a basket, along with a couple of chickens and some eggs. I tied up some fresh flowers from the garden which I always kept. I set forth for the nearest market town. It was a heavy load, but my back was used to heavy burdens. Presently, a market gardener overtook me trudging along and gave me a lift in his cart. My things sold wonderfully well that day. I got enough to pay for the rent.

"But my faith had to undergo a further trial. I reached home late, wet and weary. To my great anguish, I had lost my precious sovereign. That coin, for which I had been toiling, praying and giving thanks – it was gone! For a few moments, I sank down in despair. But again, the pitiful Saviour seemed to draw nigh, and to whisper, '*Daughter, be of good comfort*' (Matthew 9.22). So, I rose up straight and strong, wrapped my wet cloak round me, and set out to retrace the long, dreary way to the town. It was a stormy evening, but the rain had ceased, and the moon shone out, now and then, through the gaps in the clouds.

"There was an old fir tree near the roadside where a pair of ravens had built their nest. I could hear them croaking to one another. The Lord of Elijah again made the ravens message-bearers of peace. The lovely words of Jesus stole softly into my heart: '*Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls!*' (Luke

12.24). *'How much more!'* The words went through my heart and brought me just the cheer I needed.

"I walked forward with a firm step, carefully examining every foot of the way. I thought I saw something bright and glistening near the roadside. Could it be? My heart fluttered within me. Yes; there was the lost piece, standing up on its edge in a wheel-rut, with the moonlight glinting down upon it like a star. Was I not a happy woman? I ran home as blithely as a girl. I thanked God, more with tears of joy than with words of praise."

The children had been listening with such riveted attention that they forgot about the cuckoo clock. Suddenly, the little door jerked wide open, and the bird jumped out, shouting eight times his two-syllable word. Then, the visitors rose to go home.

The next morning, the neighbours wondered why the shutter was still closed on the kitchen window of Margaret Mason. Hearing no sound, they quietly went inside. The cuckoo clock had run down. The waiting disciple, seemingly without a pang or a struggle, had received her Master's message, *"Friend, go up higher"* (Luke 14.10). She was in a place with no more sorrow.

Adapted from an old magazine

A PERPETUAL PROMISE

Earlier this year, a new divorce law was approved by the UK government. This "no-fault" divorce law allows either a husband or wife to end his or her marriage within six months without any suggestion of fault in the other person. Not surprisingly, there has been a sudden increase in divorces since that time.

This has brought to remembrance an expression used at a wedding ceremony that we attended in West Sussex in the year 2010. The marriage vows were referred to as a "perpetual promise." The marriage ceremony took place in another denomination, but it was soberly performed, vows were exchanged, and an address given to the married couple and assembled company. The minister was faithful to his calling and stressed that a vow was not to be lightly taken. A vow was of

great importance, being spoken to each other before God and man. He emphasised that “a vow is a perpetual promise to be remembered.” The exhortation was given to be faithful to each other throughout the marriage “until death us do part.”

Perhaps you might ask about a biblical illustration of a “perpetual promise.” One that immediately comes to mind is the “*bow*” or rainbow in Genesis chapter 9. After the flood, God gave this ongoing (perpetual) promise that the entire world would not be flooded again. The bow was the token of the covenant God made with man and every living creature “*for perpetual generations*” (verse 12). Another perpetual promise is found in Genesis 8.22: “*While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.*” It is one of the wonderful, never-failing promises of God, and it tells of His enduring faithfulness to mankind.

Perhaps some of our young friends may one day make a “perpetual promise” in marriage. We hope you will pray for the Lord to provide you with the right partner, who will be a true, godly helper. “*The LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him*” (Genesis 2.18). Remember that the solemn vows taken in marriage are to last as long as the husband and wife shall live.

Contributed

GOD BEFORE ALL

A godly young French woman firmly broke off her engagement to a gentleman because he ridiculed religion. She had given him a gentle reproof, to which he replied, “A man cannot be so old-fashioned as to be seriously concerned about God and religion.” The young woman was greatly startled by his remark. Upon recovering herself, she said, “From this moment, since I have discovered that you have no regard for religion, I cease to be yours. He who does not love and honour God can never love his wife constantly and sincerely.”

Adapted from Gathered Gems

SCATTERING WORDS

A little girl came home from school one day, and said to her mother, "What do you think I heard about Jessie?"

"Was what you heard about Jessie kind?" asked her mother.

"Well, it was not very kind," was the reply.

"Then, if it was not kind, perhaps you should not tell me?" suggested her mother.

Mary promised her mother that it would go no further. Her mother pointed to a dandelion which had gone to seed in the front garden, and told her to run with it in her hand down the road and back again. Mary ran along merrily, singing as she went, while away blew the little white seeds. When she got back, her mother told her to go and pick up the seeds that had fallen as she ran.

"Oh, Mother, they have gone everywhere. I could never bring them all back."

"Yes," said her mother, "in the same way, the words which you speak spread and disappear as quickly as the dandelion seeds have done, and you can never bring them back again."

In the Bible, we read: "*Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips*" (Psalm 141.3). Let us ask the Lord to help us that we might never speak unkind or ugly words, for we shall never be able to take them back.

Cheering Words 2004

THE PRAYING MOTHER

A certain mother had the happiness of seeing her children brought to the knowledge of the truth early in life and walking in the fear of the Lord.

A minister questioned her about the way in which she had instructed her children. He thought she might have done something special which had proved to be so effectual.

The woman replied that she did not think she had done anything differently from other Christian mothers. However, she added, "I believe I never nursed my children without

praying in my heart that I might nurse a child for the Lord. As I washed them, I raised my heart to God that He would wash them in that blood which '*cleanseth from all sin.*' As I clothed them in the morning, I asked my heavenly Father to clothe them in the robe of Christ's righteousness. As I gave them food, I prayed that God would feed their souls with the bread of heaven, and give them to drink of the water of life. When I prepared them for the house of God, I prayed that their bodies might be made fit temples for the Holy Ghost to dwell in. When they left me for the week-day school, I followed their footsteps with a prayer that their path through life might be like that of the just, "*which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*" And as I put them to rest at night, the silent breathing of my soul has been that my heavenly Father would take them into His embrace and fold them in His gracious arms."

(God puts an honour upon the prayer of faith, though oftentimes it seems to be only the breathing of desire. He has ordained that those who seek shall find, those who ask shall receive and those who pray shall be answered. The faith and the blessing are alike His free gift.) – Editor of *The Little Gleaner*

Adapted from The Little Gleaner 1887

SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF THE EARLY LIFE OF WILLIAM HUNTINGTON

William Huntington (1745-1813) was a man raised up of God. He was unflinching in his beliefs and would never compromise. He had many enemies who hated him, but he was greatly loved by the people of God. The Lord raised him up from small beginnings, and his unique experiences as a young man were used of God to form him into the person that he was.

There must have been very mixed emotions when William was born, the tenth child in the family. His mother had been unfaithful to her husband, and William's real father was the employer of her husband, who was a farmer of considerable wealth in Cranbrook, Kent. This man was very harsh with his

employees, paying them little wages. Thus, the family into which William was born lived on the borderline of poverty.

William spent a very short time at a small school in the village, but he was soon required to work on the farm. One particular thing William remembered from his schooling was that the teacher had impressed upon them that God took notice even of the sins of children. Although he received another short period of education at the local grammar school, his childhood was mainly spent working. He had short periods of employment at different places, but nothing lasted very long.

Around the age of seventeen, William became friendly with a young lady of similar age. Her parents did not approve of her courtship with a poor man, but they would allow them to marry if William found himself a decent job. And William did try! He tried and tried, but everything went wrong. Either the business failed, or doors were shut; nothing seemed to work out for him. Eventually, her parents decided that enough was enough! They found a wealthy young man who would marry their daughter, even though she protested. Very sadly, she became pregnant, with William being the father. Her parents refused to allow them to marry, and by a court order, forced William to pay maintenance for the child. William was brought bitterly to regret this terrible deed, which troubled him for the rest of his life. It would be easy to omit these sad details, but they show forth the mercy of God to the most unworthy of sinners. In later years, he used the initials S.S. after his writings, which stood for "sinner saved."

For the next few years, William was in deep distress, often suffering from afflictions, and going from one job to another. He promised to serve and worship God, but then broke all his promises. His circumstances became exceedingly difficult. Although he could hardly discern it himself, the Lord began a work of grace in his heart. First, the Lord showed him what a great sinner he had been and still was. Every time William tried to reform his life, he failed. He proved that God saves by His free and sovereign grace and not by works.

After learning that the young lady had died, to whom he had been so strongly attached, he sought to find a wife. He eventually married a young lady named Mary Short. After being blessed with a baby, William found himself out of work again, and the winter was bitterly cold. They awoke one morning to find that the baby was dead. It had almost certainly died from the freezing temperature in their house. Of this time, he wrote, "My lameness, poverty, distress of mind, and the sufferings of my wife, loss of my child and sense of God's wrath, were the most complicated distresses I had ever felt. From this time, spiritual convictions began to plough so deep in my heart as to make way for the Word of eternal life."

The Lord was deepening His work in the heart of William, causing him to turn more and more to the Bible, even though he often felt that every text condemned him. He was clearly taught the doctrine of divine election but feared that he was not one of those elect souls.

One particular day, as he was working as a gardener, he felt so burdened about his state and condition. The words of Scripture came very powerfully into his mind: "*But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you ... Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*" (John 14.26,27). The power with which these words were applied, caused him to climb down the ladder he was on. He cried out, "What is it? What is it?" He then heard the following words spoken to him so distinctly: "Lay by your forms of prayer, and go and pray to Jesus Christ; do not you see how pitifully He speaks to sinners?" Wondering what was happening to him, he rushed into the tool shed, fell upon his knees and poured out his heart unto the Lord in extempore prayer (spontaneous prayer straight from his heart). Up until that time, he had prayed with a set form of words, but now he confessed unto God that he was a great sinner and could in no way make himself better. He begged God to save him for His great mercies' sake. The

dear Lord was pleased to bless him with a wonderful sense of His pardoning love, and granted him a view by faith of the suffering Saviour upon the cross. Initially, William felt this could not be for him, as he felt to be such a great sinner, only worthy of being sent to hell. But the love of God overcame him and sweetly convinced him that he was forgiven all his sins and would be taken to heaven at last.

For some time, William walked in gospel liberty, enjoying sweet communion with the Lord and meditating much upon His Word. Yet, when he went to church on the Lord's day, he could not find any profit under the preaching. Indeed, he felt there was much error being preached. This led him, for a time, to stay at home with his wife and hold their own services, with William expounding the Word. He later moved to Ewell after finding new employment there. In private conversation with a man and his wife, the latter invited William to their home, and they asked if he would read, pray and speak from the Bible. This continued, and others from the surrounding area began to join with them in these services. That was really the beginning of his public ministry.

As word went around about William Huntington preaching, he was invited to other houses and then to chapels. He went through a terrible time of opposition and persecution, yet the Lord constantly upheld and strengthened him.

He eventually went to London, where a chapel was built for him, seating over two thousand people. The chapel was constantly overflowing with eager hearers.

William Huntington was a prolific author. This is remarkable considering his lack of early education. Today, he is most well-known for his great number of writings, including an autobiography, *The Kingdom of Heaven taken by Prayer*.

A.T. Pickett

Every blessing we enjoy is undeserved mercy.

Little Gleaner 1916

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES**Editor's Note**

The usual lesson by Mr. Brian Mercer has been delayed because of a very difficult month and the loss of his father-in-law. In its place, we have inserted an article written by Mr. J.H. Gosden on the importance of marriage.

The institution of marriage was given by God for the mutual benefit of men and women. It was appointed for the bringing forth of children into the world and for them to be nurtured, trained and taught in right ways.

The important role of a father in the home is clearly emphasised in the Word of God. In the present day, it has been minimised to such a degree that fathers dare not discipline their children, or are prevented from doing so. It is a most evil device of Satan to overthrow God's order for the social well-being of mankind.

Regarding the important step of marriage, the Word of God gives a very beautiful account in Genesis 24 of God directing the whole matter for a young man and a young woman being brought together. May our young friends be thus favoured and guided in one of the most, if not the most, important step they will take in life.

MARRIAGE

This month, I am writing upon a deeply interesting and highly important subject – marriage. Before sin entered into the world, God our Creator said: *"It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."* (Genesis 2.18). From one of Adam's ribs, the Lord God made (builded, margin) a woman, and brought her unto the man. Thus, the origin of marriage dates back to the innocence of man, when he was first created and knew only good. It is a sacred institution of God's goodness and wisdom for man's well-being and comfort. He knew that man needed a "counterpart" in life for his social and moral good.

The Lord Jesus Christ pointed out to the Pharisees the mystic significance of marriage: *“Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder”* (Matthew 19.4-6). That word of Christ condemns the practice of divorce which has become so common, the laws being relaxed to facilitate the evil. It is one of the signs that God is not feared.

The Apostle Paul, quoting the above words of Christ, says, *“This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband”* (Ephesians 5.32,33). The estate of marriage sets forth a type of the union between Christ and His church, and it places very solemn importance upon that natural relationship. This enhances the evil of violating it, since it brings dishonour to the parties themselves and to the antitype, Christ. Marital unfaithfulness is often indulged in without shame upon very slight pretexts, and the fault is seldom on one side. It shows the serious decline in moral decency and honour. This is contrary to godliness,

Some youthful readers may be contemplating this serious step; a step which, once taken, cannot – may not – be retraced. I would give you an affectionate word of caution and counsel. Although all of you may not truly fear God, I trust many desire to do so. If you look up the following Scriptures, you will see that the Word of God gives definite guidance in the matter: Proverbs 19.14; 1 Timothy 5.14; Hebrews 13.4; 1 Peter 3.1-7. There are many more, but I would especially call your attention to Paul’s important counsel in 2 Corinthians 6.14: *“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath*

Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" Many have suffered all their subsequent days for the sin of disregarding so definite and wise an admonition!

But a common remark is, "I am not confident that I do fear God." If that question is rightly asked, it will take you to the throne of grace with earnest prayer to Him who alone can satisfactorily answer it. But if the question becomes a temptation to marry a worldly partner, beware of falling into that snare! When two young people are anxious about the state of their souls, they may very well be of help to each other. They will realise the importance of each step taken, especially one with life-long consequences. It will bring a solemnity which is so often lacking in these matters. It is good when even these things are "*sanctified by the Word of God and prayer*" (1 Timothy 4.5). It is very wonderful that the blessed God condescends to be enquired of even in regard to life's temporal concerns. Pause and consider and, as helped, wait on Him! If He choose for you, it will be well indeed. Serious responsibilities are involved in entering upon this relationship. For those who are rightly joined together, mutual obligations will be undertaken with affection and not as an irksome duty. Divine help will be needed, and it is promised to those who seek to regulate their lives according to the Word of God. Where His tender fear is in exercise, there will be a single aim to do His will and to submit to His authority.

Your personal salvation will be an individual concern and experience between God and your own soul. However, if the Lord grants you the temporal blessing of a partner who is also in possession of grace, you will walk through life as "*heirs together of the grace of life*" (1 Peter 3.7). Your trials and joys will be thus sanctified. Then, when separation comes at death, the union of spirit will remain.

I fervently wish you the enriching blessing of God.

J.H. Gosden, adapted from Friendly Companion 1946

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about THINKING. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail. (See page 170 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. Who said *"Think on me when it shall be well with thee"*? (Genesis 40.14)
2. What did Nehemiah ask God to think upon him for? (Nehemiah 5.19)
3. What thoughts did the Lord think toward His people? (Jeremiah 29.11)
4. Whom did David say thought upon him, even though he was *"poor and needy"*? (Psalm 40.17)
5. What did Paul refer to when he wrote that it *"thinketh no evil"*? (1 Corinthians 13.5)
6. What warning did Paul give to the believers in Corinth for *"him that thinketh he standeth"*?
7. In Luke 12, who *"will come in an hour that we think not"*?
8. When the decree went forth for the Jews to be slain, who told Esther that she should not think to escape by being in the king's house?
9. In John 5, what did Jesus tell the people to do, *"for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they ... testify of Me"*?
10. Paul wrote in Ephesians 3 that God *"is able to do exceeding abundantly above"* what?

ANSWERS TO JULY QUESTIONS

1. The dry land.
2. Empty.
3. God.
4. Thy work. Thy glory.
5. Their sins.
6. We must all appear. (1 Corinthians 10.12)
7. In the presence of God. (Hebrews 9.24)
8. Without sin unto salvation. (Hebrews 9.27)
9. Things that do appear. (Hebrews 11.28)
10. Where shall they appear? (1 Peter 4.18)

TAKE IT TO JESUS

Take it to Jesus; His eye can see
The sorrows that daily burden thee;
He watcheth, He careth, when thou art alone;
He carries thy burden, He calls it His own.

Take it to Jesus; His ear can hear
The sighs of thy bosom, the silent prayer;
Though crowned in His glory, majestic on high,
He stoops to attend to the prisoner's cry.

Take it to Jesus; His heart can feel
The wounds that are deepest, His hand can heal;
The arrows that pierce thee with keenest pain,
He'll pluck from thy breast, and revive thee again.

Take it to Jesus; His watchful care
Follows thy spirit everywhere;
He guards thee, He guides thee the way that is best,
That leads to His dwelling, the haven of rest.

In Jesus thy Lord, all thy secrets confide;
No friend may be near thee, He still is thy Guide,
All others may leave thee, He cannot, nor will,
For love is His name, and unchangeable still.

M. Shayler

The Friendly Companion



“And be sure your sin will find you out.”
Numbers 32.23

September 2022

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

If you were asked what was the most important part of your house or chapel building, what answer would you give? Some might say that the walls were the most important part, while others might say that it was the roof. While these are the most visible parts of a building, there is another part that is very seldom, if ever, seen; yet, because of its position and purpose, it is the most important part. It is the **foundation**, which the walls and roof rest on. Probably none of you have ever seen the foundation of your house.

Many years ago, on one of my yearly visits to preach for the friends at Choteau and Canada, the friend who picked me up at the Great Falls airport in Montana asked if I would like to see a large, new house that was being built not far from his home. As we drove up the long, private drive, he told me that the size of the house was seven thousand five-hundred square feet. Having built many homes that were three to four thousand square feet, which were huge executive homes, I was excited to see a house nearly twice as large as any of those.

Mr. Greyn, the friend who came for me, explained that the owner was a lawyer who lived in the state of Ohio. Having hired a contractor to build the house, he never came back to see what progress was being made. He put all his trust in the contractor he had hired.

To say that the outward appearance of the house was very impressive would be an understatement. It sat on a plateau facing the Rocky Mountains, with the Sun River making a wide bend just in front of the house; a very picturesque setting. The massive roof reached a height of thirty-five feet at its peak. The doors and windows had not been installed at the time of our visit, so we could walk right in.

As we walked into the house, all the loveliness of the setting and the impressiveness of its size vanished. The floors were sagging in places. That was because the hidden walls which were supporting the floor, and which could not be seen from

the outside, were placed on a foundation of gravel. Thus, the walls, and also the roof above them, were starting to sag. What mixed emotions we felt as we took in the whole picture!

Like the house I have been describing, there are those in the church of God who appear from the outside to be on solid footing. They make a profession of His name or appear to be religious, being a member of a church or faithfully attending the services. While making an impressive appearance, their foundation is only upon **sand**, like the house whose foundation was only upon gravel.

Some years later, when my wife and I were visiting our friends in Chilliwack, British Columbia, we stayed with dear friends who recently had bought a house outside the city, built on a mountain-side. The house had a very high ceiling. In many ways, although on a smaller scale, it reminded me of the house Mr. Greyn had showed me. What a difference was seen when our friends took us down below! We saw parts of the great rock upon which their home was built. The whole mountain was solid rock. Then, I was more impressed by the foundation than by the house itself.

Many times, I have thought of the lessons those two houses provided. Which one represents my state before my fellow man, and more importantly, which represents my real state before Almighty God?

The Lord willing, next month we will consider the importance of the foundation, and the foundation that God provides for His church, His people.

With loving wishes from the Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

The picture on the front cover this month shows a large swarm of honey bees. This swarm was found in a tree at the home of a friend. The bees made a very loud buzzing noise, which attracted her attention. She contacted a bee-keeper, who

was very happy to come and collect the bees. He safely removed them and settled them into a new hive.

Swarming is a natural process in the life of a honey bee colony. It occurs when a large group of honey bees leaves an established colony and flies off to establish a new colony, usually because the original colony has become too crowded. A swarm may contain several hundred to several thousand worker bees, a few drones and one queen.

There are three kinds of bees living in a hive – a queen, workers and drones. One queen runs the entire hive, laying eggs that produce the next generation of bees in the hive. The queen is busiest in the summer, when she lays up to 2,500 eggs per day. She can live for as many as five years.

One worker bee may visit fifty to one hundred flowers during a single trip to collect nectar. He shares information about the source of food by performing the “waggle dance.” He waggles his body and moves in a figure-eight to show the other bees where to find the nectar. Honey bees may fly at up to fifteen miles per hour. During flight, they beat their wings an astonishing 200 times per second.

Bees are attracted to flowers with sweeter scents. More fragrant flowers attract bees from greater distances. It requires nectar from two million flowers to make just one pound of honey. A single honey bee produces about one-twelfth of a teaspoon of honey during its lifetime. The average life of a worker bee is five to six weeks.

Bees show the incredible design of God their Creator. They have a mutually-beneficial relationship with flowers, plants and trees. The bees transfer pollen between flowers, allowing plants to grow seeds and fruit. Thirty-five per-cent of our food crops depend on bees for pollination. The nectar that the bees gather, enables them to produce honey. Honey bees produce two to three times the amount of honey they need to get through the winter. The surplus provides a tasty and healthy food for humans.

Contributed

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**ISRAEL RETURNS FROM BABYLON**

For seventy years, the children of Israel had been captives in the land of Babylon. When Cyrus became king, he allowed the people to return to their own land and to build again the house of the Lord at Jerusalem. Cyrus gave them the gold and silver vessels that had been taken away from the temple by Nebuchadnezzar.

Among those who returned were Joshua the high priest, Zerubbabel the governor, and Ezra the scribe. The people gathered together at Jerusalem. They built the altar of the Lord God of Israel and offered sacrifices.

In the second year after they returned, they laid the foundation of the temple. The priests blew trumpets and the Levites used cymbals to praise the Lord. They sang and gave thanks, *“and all the people shouted with a great shout.”* Many shouted for joy, but some of the old men wept with a loud voice. The foundation of this house was not like the beautiful temple that Solomon had built.

QUESTIONS

1. How long had the children of Israel been in Babylon?
2. Who allowed the people to return to their own land?
3. What was laid in the second year? (5 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. A president.
2. Into the den of lions.
3. Shut the lions' mouths.

Contributed

*“Let him go up
to Jerusalem ...
and build the
house of the
LORD God of
Israel”*

Ezra 1.3

BIBLE LESSONS**ACHAN DESTROYED – AI DEFEATED**

What a long and dark night it must have been for Achan! Joshua had declared that the man who had taken anything out of Jericho would be stoned to death and burned with fire, along with all his family. There would be no mercy for them. Achan had been so careful that none of his neighbours saw the things he had taken and hidden in his tent. But God saw it all! Achan knew that God had commanded that all the silver, gold and vessels of brass were to be brought to the tabernacle. Yet, he hardened his heart in his covetous desires and acted so defiantly.

The next morning, all Israel waited with fear for the judgment of the Lord. When they were brought by their tribes, the tribe of Judah was taken. Out of all the families of Judah, the family of the Zarahites was taken. Out of this large family, Zabdi was taken. Zabdi was Achan's grandfather. Last, God singled out one man of Zabdi's house – Achan. Joshua said unto Achan, *“My son, give ... glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto Him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me.”* Before all Israel, Achan had to acknowledge his guilt! *“Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel. ... When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.”*

Joshua sent his servants to Achan's tent. They brought the garment, the silver and the gold, *“and laid them out before the LORD.”* To Israel, and much more to Achan, the garment no longer had a goodly appearance, and the silver and gold had a heavy curse upon them.

What a sad day it was! Joshua, with all Israel, took Achan, his wife, his sons, his daughters, and even his flocks and herds, along with his tent, the silver, the gold, and the garment. They brought them to the valley of Achor, where they were stoned to

death and burned with fire. Then, they piled a great heap of stones over the ashes.

Thus, God made Israel to know how careful they must be to obey **all** His commands if they wanted His help and presence to be with them. Whenever the Israelites looked on the heap of stones, they would remember what happened to the man who disobeyed God's command.

God's fierce anger was now turned away from Israel. God commanded Joshua: "*Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take **all the people of war** with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people ... only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves.*"

Joshua did just as God told him, taking all the men of war. He chose out thirty thousand mighty men of valour. They had a very secret mission. Under the cover of night, they were to go behind the city of Ai and hide themselves.

Early in the morning, Joshua and the rest of his army went up against Ai, just as they had done before. When the king of Ai saw them in the valley below the city, he and all his men of war went out against them. He was determined to drive them away as he had done the first time.

Joshua and his army began to flee from the men of Ai as if they were beaten by them. The men of Ai pursued after them until all the men of Ai were drawn out of the city, leaving the city open behind them.

Then, the Lord commanded Joshua to stretch out his spear toward Ai. That was the signal to the men who were lying in wait to arise and take the city. With no men left in Ai to defend the city, the men of Israel quickly entered in and set it on fire.

Now, Joshua and the people with him turned again from fleeing and slew the men of Ai. Joshua held out his hand with the spear until all the people of Ai were destroyed. It is a beautiful example for those who, by God given faith, would fight against the enemies of their soul.

When Israel had gathered up the spoils and the cattle, they burnt Ai according to the commandment of the Lord.

You can read about this in Joshua chapter 7 verses 14 to 26 and chapter 8 verses 1 to 28.

QUESTIONS:

1. Which tribe was taken as the guilty one?
2. Which man was taken from this tribe?
3. What three things did he covet?
4. Who was destroyed with him?
5. What was the name of the valley where he was stoned?

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. Cursed.
2. David.
3. Three thousand.
4. *"They have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen."*
5. He would be burnt with fire.

GOLDEN COUNSEL – THOUGHTS ABOUT HONEY

In 1 Samuel 14.29, we read, *"See, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I have tasted a little of this honey."* These words were spoken by Jonathan, who discovered the honey. He was the son of Saul, the first king of Israel. There are three good things that might be said of Jonathan.

First, he was a **good son** to a bad father. This is not at all common. Good fathers weeping over bad sons are often seen, but here is the reverse. Jonathan never seemed to forget that Saul was his father. Saul even tried to kill his good son once, but Jonathan fought for and beside him, never deserted him, and finally died with him.

Secondly, Jonathan was a **good friend** – David’s friend in prosperity and in trouble – “*A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity*” (Proverbs 17.17). Young friends, be careful about making friends with evil companions. If you find a friend like Jonathan, who fears God, value that friend. Especially remember that Jesus is “*a Friend [that] loveth at all times,*” and He is “*a Brother ... born for adversity.*” May you prove Him to be your Friend.

Thirdly, Jonathan was a **good soldier**. The day when he ate the honey was a day of victory, brought about by his bravery and wisdom. The Word of God says, “*He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city*” (Proverbs 16.32). No military skill can equal that. Many enemies exist: anger, temper, pride, laziness, deceit, self-righteousness. All these have to be fought against many times by those who desire to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Now regarding the honey itself. Honey is found in a honeycomb, to which the Bible may be compared. A honeycomb is made by many bees, and the Bible was written by many writers. Each cell and each Book contains honey. But where do bees get their honey? Should we have honey without flowers? No. So, God’s bees, the writers of the Bible, got their honey from a Rose – the Rose of Sharon. What makes the Bible so sweet to the Lord’s people? David said, “*How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!*” (Psalm 119.103). Was it not because he found Jesus in them? No wonder David and Moses, the prophets and the apostles, like bees, made a honeycomb to store up the honey for others to eat.

Honey is like Jesus. First, because it is **sweet**. As that beautiful hymn says,

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer’s ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.

Secondly, honey is like Jesus because it is **food**, and all those who love God feed on Jesus. He is as necessary to them as bread and butter is to you. They cannot be satisfied without the words of Jesus being felt in their hearts by the power of the Holy Ghost, enabling them to feed on Jesus.

Thirdly, because it is **healing**. There is one kind of honey made from the eucalyptus tree that has great medicinal properties. But Jonathan said of his honey that it "*enlightened*" his eyes, and even the eucalyptus honey does nothing so wonderful as that. Honey that made blind men see would be wonderful indeed. But the sweet honey of God's Word, and the knowledge of Jesus, do **enlighten** the dark eyes of people's minds and hearts.

Where did Jonathan find the honey? In a wood – a nice, quiet place. So, those who find out how sweet Jesus is, usually find Him in some quiet, lonely place, as Nathanael did under the fig tree.

Jonathan also found his honey under a tree. Isaiah 55.13 and Solomon's Song 2.3 show that Jesus and His people are both compared to trees. In His company and in theirs, this kind of honey is most likely to be found.

Lastly, Jonathan had to **suffer** for eating the honey. So, those who find sweetness in Jesus will often have trouble, and sometimes persecution, mixed up with the sweetness. But God took care of Jonathan, and he was not killed at that time. God can also take care of you.

*Adapted from a Sunday School Address by Mr. Wilmsburst
Little Gleaner 1889*

AN INSECT SENT BY GOD

What a terrible thing it is to defy God! There was an atheist (infidel) who challenged God to fight with him. He boastfully said to those around him, "If there is a God, then let Him come and fight with me." He set the time and the place where He defied God to come and fight with him.

At the time he had appointed, a large crowd gathered. The atheist took off his coat, bared his arms and shouted, "Now God, if there is a God, come and fight me!" God **did** come and fight with him. He sent one of His creatures, a tiny insect, to bite the man on his arm. Although almost unseen and unnoticed, the insect proved to be a messenger of death to the atheist. He became very ill and soon died.

Godly Job asked this question: "*Who hath hardened himself against Him, and hath prospered?*" (Job 9.4)

From an old Monthly Message

ELLA AND THE SCARLET GERANIUM

Many years ago, there was a little girl named Ella, who was a cripple and had to remain in bed. Her older sister went out to work during the day, and Ella looked forward to the evening when she returned. Kind neighbours loaned books to Ella and gave her a canary, which sang and brightened the dull hours.

There was one visitor whom Ella always looked forward to seeing. That was a lady from a religious group, who visited once a week. She always brought a little present for Ella. Sometimes it was a book or flowers, and sometimes it was something good to eat. One day, the lady brought a beautiful scarlet geranium in a flower pot. Ella was delighted with the geranium, and it was placed on a table where she could look at it.

The kind lady always tried to bring some message of comfort to the little girl, along with the present. On this day, she took out a small piece of red glass from a bag and asked Ella to look at her geranium through the glass. To her surprise, the geranium looked white when she looked at it through the piece of red glass. To be sure the flower had not changed its colour, she looked at it again without the glass, and it was scarlet, just as before. This little experiment pleased the crippled child.

The lady smiled at her pleasure, and then she tried to give a lesson from the flower. She repeated a well-known text: "*Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool*" (Isaiah

1.15). She told Ella that when God looks at us as we are by nature, our sins appear as red as the scarlet geranium. However, when he looks at His people, they appear as white as snow. Their sins have been washed away by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, His Son. *"If we confess out sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1.9).

Adapted from Young People's Treasury 1902

A HEARD PRAYER

A noteworthy incident in the life of a well-known Dutch minister in Benthuisen, Holland, gives evidence that the Lord hears the prayers of His people. More than once, Mr. Ledeboer had been brought before the judge because he continued to preach, in obedience to the command of his Lord, although it was forbidden at that time by the earthly authorities.

Mr. Ledeboer suddenly awoke on a stormy, autumn night. The Lord impressed it upon his heart that he must immediately go on a journey, but he did not know where or why. The minister followed the impression he had received, being convinced that the Lord wanted to use him to perform His will. In the meantime, he called his housekeeper, and informed her of his intentions. She objected because of the rough weather, but he called for one of his elders, asking him to go with him on a journey. The elder did not hesitate, but immediately prepared his carriage. He knew Mr. Ledeboer very well and did not doubt that he had an important mission. He knew that his minister walked closely with God. Soon the elder was at the parsonage. "Where is this journey to?" he asked.

"I do not know. Just ride, and God will direct our way. I do know that it is God's will, and I want to follow Him obediently." Barely a quarter of an hour had passed after they left the parsonage on that bleak night. They were met by two police officers who asked where Mr. Ledeboer, the minister, lived."

Mr. Ledeboer himself pointed out where the house of the minister could be found. With good courage, they continued

their journey. Naturally, the officers soon found that the minister was gone, and they could not capture him. The housekeeper could truthfully say that she did not know where he was. The day began to dawn when they came to a crossroad.

"Where now?" asked the elder.

"Just let the animal go. God will direct his way. That is good enough for me, because I do not know where the Lord will lead us," was the answer. The horse took the way to Woerden, and while they were conversing together, they arrived in that town.

All at once, the horse stopped. The elder wanted to urge the horse on, but Mr. Ledeboer said, "This is where I must go." The carriage stood in front of an old building where fallen women were cared for. The elder made objections, but the minister felt that this was the place where the Lord had brought him to fulfil His counsel. He had already rung the bell.

Although it was still early, the porter opened the door and asked who he was. After Mr. Ledeboer had made himself known, the man clapped his hands together in astonishment. He cried out, "If I had never before believed that God does wonders and that He hears prayers, now it would be impossible to deny." He told the minister that a woman who was dying wanted to see him. During the night, she had prayed several times that Mr. Ledeboer might come. She said that she could not die until she had spoken with him, and she firmly believed the Lord would send him. It was obvious that her prayer had been heard!

The minister was taken to the room where the dying woman lay, and he was full of astonishment at the direction of God's providence. When the sick woman saw the desired minister, she gathered her last strength together to tell him what lay upon her heart. The minister was not entirely unknown to her, and he listened with amazement. Tears of joy ran down her cheeks, as she told him that the Lord had used him as a means to her conversion under the preaching of the Word. She confessed her guilt of falling into sin, so that she had nearly come to despair. The Lord had sought her out, forgiven her sins for Christ's sake, and given peace to her soul. It had been her desire before the Lord that she might relate this to Mr. Ledeboer before she died.

She was eager to extol the Lord together with him for all the benefits bestowed upon her, and then she was willing to die.

The minister was deeply moved, and poured out his heart before the Lord. *“This is the LORD’s doing; it is marvellous in our eyes”* (Psalm 118.23). Now he saw why he had to take the journey, and his faith was strengthened. With joy, he and the dying woman took leave of each other. Mr. Ledebøer went out the door, but before he had gone down the steps, the woman had gone into the rest that remains for the people of God.

Perhaps, this is a story which the older ones already know, but it is good to relate it so that the younger generation shall not forget that the Lord deals wonderfully with His people.

Adapted from Religious Stories for Young and Old, Volume 2

SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF THE EARLY LIFE OF ROBERT LINK

No doubt, very few have heard of Robert Link. However, many have heard of the chapel where he was a deacon – Gower Street Chapel, London. The annual meetings of the Gospel Standard Societies were held at that chapel for many years. Living in Victorian times, Robert Link was acquainted with such ministers as J.C. Philpot, John Warburton, J.K. Popham and many others.

Robert Link was born in 1814 near Ashford in Kent. Both of his parents had previously been widowed, and he was the first child of this marriage. His father was an older man and worked as a labourer on the farms around the area. He was born just at the time of hop picking. Hop farming was a large industry in Kent, and at harvest time, all available workers would be employed from early morning to dusk. This meant that his mother spent every day alone with her baby, since no one was available to help her.

By the age of six, Robert went out to work. His first job was called “crow-keeping,” which involved scaring the crows and other birds off the fields. When he turned fourteen, he was employed as a service boy. Then, in his early twenties, he

became a groom for a local clergyman. After three years there, the clergyman informed Robert that his sister, who was living in London, was looking for a footman, and he felt Robert would be ideal for the job.

So, at the age of twenty-three, Robert moved to London, where he remained for the rest of his life. He writes, "So I came to London to live in the year 1837, about the time the Queen (Victoria) came to the throne. I was at that time ignorant of myself, and ignorant of God, and ignorant of my own ignorance. I was living '*without hope and without God in the world.*'" It would appear that he went to church regularly, probably to the Church of England.

Robert had not been long living in London, when the Lord began to work in his heart. Certain texts from the Bible started troubling him, such as, "*The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God*" (Psalm 9.17), and, "*That will by no means clear the guilty*" (Exodus 34.7). Another text followed him every day: "*Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them*" (Galatians 3.10). The constant cry of his heart was, "*What must I do to be saved?*" (Acts 16.30). He kept trying to please God by good works. Although he attempted to obey the law of God, he found that sin was mixed in everything. Rather than getting better, he felt to get worse and worse. He tried many different churches, but none of the preachers could show him the way of salvation.

After some time in this distress, the family Robert was working for went to a place near Oakham for a break. The house was large, and a number of servants went with them, including Robert. There he met other servants who regularly worked at the house. He was warned against two of them who held so-called "erroneous doctrines" – they believed in God's election! Some years later, Robert discovered that those two servants sat under the ministry of J.C. Philpot and were very gracious men!

When he was back in Kent, he went out for a walk one day, feeling very cast down. He met a man and told him of the distress of his soul. That man, who was outwardly religious, told

Robert that he could borrow a book which might be of help, but he himself had found nothing in the book. When Robert reached home, he found that the book was the second volume of *Daniel Herbert's Hymns & Poems*. Through reading the Bible and the hymns of Herbert, he saw very clearly that God **does** have an elect people; but his great fear was that he was not one of them. He quickly ordered volumes one and three of the *Hymns and Poems*.

Again, in speaking to another person about Herbert's hymns, he was advised to go to a certain church where the preacher spoke of similar doctrines. The preacher was Mr. Richmond. His ministry was very faithful, yet encouraging to those seeking to find the way of salvation. Robert felt very drawn to his ministry, as he entered into much of the distress that Robert was feeling. After a while, Robert felt able to speak to Mr. Richmond about his soul distress. A day or two after their meeting, Mr. Richmond sent a kind letter to Robert, including two sermons by J.C. Philpot. The text of one of these sermons was, "*Let Thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, even Thy salvation, according to Thy Word*" (Psalm 119.41). Robert wrote of the blessed effect it had upon him: "As I began to read the sermon, it began to read me, and tell me all things that ever I did. Mr. Philpot spoke of many things that reproach a living soul, and all those things reproached me, and I wondered how one could know all that I was passing through; and when he spoke of the answer to all the reproaches, he said, 'it was on the ground of mercy,' – that was coming where I was; I was guilty, and mercy was welcome news indeed to me; and as I read on, the blessed doctrines of justification by faith, the imputation of sin and the imputation of righteousness were opened up to me, and I saw that all I had been trying to do, in working out my own salvation by the works of the law, was all done by the Lord of life and glory."

After experiencing that wonderful blessing in reading the sermon by Mr. Philpot, he could no longer sit under a false ministry when he returned to London. Someone suggested that

he try Eden Street Chapel in London, where he heard J.C. Philpot preach. Robert began to attend regularly and joined the church there. He continued to worship there until the church moved from Eden Street to Gower Street in London. There he was appointed as a deacon.

A.T. Pickett

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH – PART 7

The July lesson on the Book of Isaiah concluded with chapter 29 verse 19. The ground is then given for the poor rejoicing in “*the Holy One of Israel*” in verses 20 and 21: “*For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off: that make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought.*” How descriptive are these words of mankind today! Therefore, it is a source of comfort for the meek and the poor that God has promised to bring the terrible ones to nought. Dear young friends, do pray that you may be kept from making “*a man an offender for a word.*” Many sad divisions in Zion, the church of God, have been caused by such a spirit.

The final three verses of chapter 29 promise much good for the Lord’s people with a “*thus saith the LORD,*” including those who have “*erred in spirit*” and “*they that murmured.*”

Chapter 30 is more well-known, perhaps for the words in verse 21: “*And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it.*” This chapter is addressed to “*the rebellious children.*” It warns first of going down into Egypt and of trusting in the shadow of Egypt. Such will be brought to confusion. The depth of their rebellion is so great that in verses 8 and 9, the Lord commands the prophet: “*Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever: that this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not bear the law of the*

LORD.” After telling these people the consequences of their iniquity (v 13,14), we hear a gracious invitation from the Lord God to return, but it is ignored: “*and ye would not.*” So, further punishments will be meted out (v 16,17).

Nevertheless, such is the covenant love of a triune Jehovah that a very blessed promise is given in verse 18 and the following verses. It commences with: “*And therefore will the LORD wait, that He may be gracious unto you.*” Isn’t that remarkable? “*Therefore will the LORD wait...*” But we are also advised at the end of the same verse: “*Blessed are all they that wait for Him.*”

Many gracious promises are given through the end of verse 26, culminating in a wondrous prospect: “*Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.*” What encouragement there is for rebellious children here!

“How shall I give thee up?”
(Tis Jesus speaks the Word)
“I am the sinner’s only hope;
I am thy gracious Lord.

“Rebellious thou hast been,
And art rebellious still;
But since in love I took thee in,
My promise I’ll fulfil.”

Gadsby’s 1032

Chapter 30 (verse 27 to the end) closes with a return to more solemn prospects. There are warnings of the fierce anger of the Lord against the nations, a sifting time (v 28), the beating down of Assyria through the voice of the Lord (v 31) and the prophecy of Tophet (v 33). In the immediate context, Tophet signifies the valley of Hinnom, near Jerusalem, which is the place where the Assyrian army was ruined by the destroying angel (chapter 37.36). It can also rightly be understood to signify hell itself,

speaking of the destruction of antichrist by and at the coming of the Lord Jesus.

Chapter 31 begins in a very similar way to the previous: *“Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help.”* In a few verses, the prophecy against Assyria is reiterated and enforced. In the middle is a promise for Jerusalem: *“So shall the LORD of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof.”*

In verse 5, it is interesting to note the Lord’s promised preservation of Jerusalem; *“and passing over He will preserve it,”* is the same expression used in Exodus 12.23: *“the LORD will pass over the door.”* The destroying angel spared the children of Israel in Egypt so long as they were **under the blood**.

Chapter 32, unlike the previous four, does not begin with the word “Woe.” It foretells the coming of the Messiah and the gospel dispensation which is established at and from His coming. The opening verse sets before us King Jesus, who *“shall reign in righteousness.”* That is a righteousness which exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees and which is imputed to all His people.

Then, immediately in the beautiful second verse, we have Jesus the Man who is the precious Refuge for sinners.

The practical benefits of the gospel of Jesus Christ (see Mark 1.1) are then clearly described in verses 3 and 4. This is followed by a description of the way in which hypocrisy and error will be exposed, and a searching warning that the wicked cannot be changed from their ways, except by the grace of God.

In verses 9 to 14, there are warnings and rebukes for the Lord’s own people. They describe the desolations which will come as a punishment for carelessness and indifference.

Then, there is the blessed prospect of a change: *“Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high ...”* (v 15). The chapter concludes with an Old Testament beatitude: *“Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass.”* This is a clear reference to the gospel day.

Brian Mercer

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about THINGS THAT ARE SHORT OR SHORTENED. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail. (See page 194 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. What is made short because of darkness? (Job 17.12)
2. What did Paul say was short? (1 Corinthians 7.29)
3. The devil hath great wrath because he knoweth what? (Revelation 12.12)
4. What did Ethan ask the Lord to remember? (Psalm 89.47)
5. In the same Psalm, what did the psalmist say God had shortened? (Psalm 89.45)
6. When Moses questioned the Lord's promise to provide flesh for the people to eat, what did the Lord ask him?
7. What did Isaiah say was not shortened that it could not save?
8. In Isaiah chapter 50, the Lord asked if His hand was shortened that it could not do what?
9. In Job 20, what is said to be short?
10. In Romans 3, Paul writes that we all have sinned and come short of what?

ANSWERS TO AUGUST QUESTIONS

1. Joseph.
2. For good.
3. Thoughts of peace and not of evil.
4. The Lord.
5. Charity.
6. Take heed lest he fall. (1 Corinthians 10.12)
7. The Son of man. (Luke 12.40)
8. Mordecai. (Esther 4.13)
9. Search the Scriptures. (John 5.39)
10. All that we ask or think. (Ephesians 3.20)

“IT MAY BE THAT THE LORD WILL WORK FOR US”
(1 Samuel 14.6)

“It may be that the LORD will work.”
Thrice blessed hope, O weary soul:
It soothes the anguish of my breast –
The tides of sorrow cease to roll.

“It may be that the LORD will work.”
For power and might are His alone,
Nothing can be too hard for Him,
And He will never leave His own.

“It may be that the LORD will work.”
On land, on sea, at home, abroad,
He knows the souls that trust in Him,
And still is He my gracious God.

“It may be that the LORD will work.”
Yea, 'tis an answer to my prayer.
I'll bring His promise to His throne,
For none can ever perish there.

“It may be that the LORD will work.”
This bears my burdened spirit up.
Jesus alone is all my plea –
My Saviour is my only hope.

“It may be that the LORD will work.”
Yes, I can leave it in His hand:
All that shall come is for my good
And subject to His wise command.

Hilda M. Haynes

The Friendly Companion



“The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the
wind driveth away.”
(Psalm 1.4)

October 2022

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

Last month, I wrote about a house that was built upon a weak foundation. Soon, major faults began to appear in the floor, walls and roof. To correct the problem, five men worked for three months, twelve hours a day, to set a good foundation underneath the house. It required a great amount of extremely hard work to brace up forty-foot sections at a time. They had to dig the dirt away from the sides, and underneath the walls, to pour a concrete foundation for the house to set upon.

In the Book of Job, a question is asked by Eliphaz, *"Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his Maker? Behold, He" – God – "put no trust in His servants; and His angels He charged with folly: how much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth?"* (Job 4.17-19). This description refers to all men and women, boys and girls. Your body, with all its parts, is the house of clay, and its foundation is the dust of the ground. God said to Adam, *"For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return"* (Genesis 3.19). If our hope for eternity is built upon any works of our own, or of other men, we are like the house built on gravel or sand.

The Lord compares those who come to Him, hear His sayings and do them, unto *"a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock"* (Luke 6.48).

Earlier this year (June), we heard that America's first national park, named Yellowstone, had severe flooding. The park was closed for weeks, as large sections of the roads leading into the park were washed away. It was reported that a house in the park was swept off its foundation and carried down the river. The foundation remained, but the house was swept away. Possibly, it was not firmly attached to the foundation. How solemn it will be if we appear to be on the foundation God has laid in His dear Son, but we are not attached to Him. The apostle, Judas Iscariot, appeared to others to be on the foundation when he followed

Jesus and preached the word of Jesus. Yet, he was not attached to Jesus, for he was found to be an enemy to Him at last. In the time of temptation, he was swept away.

God has laid a foundation for His people, His church, in the life, death and resurrection of His Son Jesus. The Lord Jesus was laid deep in the eternal thoughts and mind of God. He was laid deep in the eternal purposes of God. The purpose of God was to provide an everlasting salvation for His people. He was laid deep in the everlasting love of God. The love of God was so great that He gave His only-begotten Son to be the law-fulfiller and the sin-bearer of His people. Jesus was laid deep in the human nature that He took. In that nature, He was in subjection to the law. He was *"in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin"* (Hebrews 4.15). He knew of sorrow, persecution, reproach, shame and deep humiliation. What a foundation was laid in Him!

Christ is the foundation of the gospel. Thus, He is the foundation of the gospel ministry. When Christ is set forth in the preaching of the gospel as the only way to God, the only place of acceptance with God, the only One who can give repentance and forgiveness of sins, He is then laid as the foundation in the heart of a needy sinner. When a person is taught his real state before Almighty God, he finds that he has nothing to stand upon. All is *"deep mire, where there is no standing"* (Psalm 69.2). He feels that he is sinking under the guilt of sin, the condemnation of God's holy law and the justice of God. How wonderful, at that moment, to feel the Holy Spirit leading him to the foundation God has laid in the Lord Jesus Christ. In his ministry, the Apostle Paul was careful to ensure that those who heard him would be rightly founded upon the foundation which God laid in the Lord Jesus. He wrote in his Epistle to Timothy: *"The foundation of God standeth sure" – firm – "having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His."* (2 Timothy 2.19).

May the Lord teach each of you the need of such a foundation, and, in His mercy, may He fix you upon it.

With loving wishes from the Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

Our front cover picture this month shows a farmer separating wheat from chaff. Chaff is the loose, outer covering on wheat and other grains that must be separated in the threshing and winnowing process of harvesting.

In Bible times, grain was threshed (or trampled), crushed and beaten on outdoor threshing floors to separate the inedible parts of the grain, called chaff. The lightweight chaff would blow away in the wind, or sometimes it was burned as fuel. In the winnowing process, the grain was tossed into the air, allowing the wind to separate further any remaining bits of the husk from the wheat. These bits, called chaff, would be carried away in fine particles like dust. In a few instances in Scripture, chaff also refers to dried grass or hay (Isaiah 5.24; 33.11).

Threshing and winnowing by hand were common in ancient times. Separating the worthless chaff from the valuable grain was a symbol for separating good from evil, or the difference between the godly and the wicked. *"The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous."* (Psalm 1.4,5).

In Isaiah 33 verse 11, the righteous people of God survive judgment, while the wicked nations are consumed: *"Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble: your breath, as fire, shall devour you."*

According to Hosea, God's way of dealing with wickedness in Israel was to remove the idolaters, like chaff swirling away on the wind: *"Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away, as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor, and as the smoke out of the chimney"* (Hosea 13.3).

In Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the ungodly nations of the world were represented by a great image that was constructed of various elements. A stone, *"cut out without hands,"* represented the Lord Jesus and His kingdom. It smote the image upon the feet. *"Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver,*

and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth” (Daniel 2.35).

In the New Testament, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, was portrayed by John the Baptist as the winnower or harvester of grain: *“Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (Matthew 3.12).*

Jesus came the first time as Saviour, but the second time, He will come to judge the world. The chaff – the wicked, the ungodly, the faithless, the unbelieving, the unfruitful – He will separate from the godly, to be consigned to everlasting punishment. *“Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (Luke 21.36).*

Adapted from Gotquestions.org

THE PASSING OF QUEEN ELIZABETH II

On Wednesday, September 8th, the long, seventy-year reign of Queen Elizabeth II came to its end when she passed away at Balmoral Castle, Scotland. We extend our deep and sincere sympathy to the new monarch, King Charles III, and to the members of the royal family.

Elizabeth II was a remarkable lady, whose life of dedication to the nation and beyond has been a shining example to millions worldwide. We have reason to be thankful to God for this. Now she has had to leave this world, as we shall all have to, where she had such great influence, and meet her Maker, King of kings and Lord of lords. Many prayers have been put up for her over the years during her reign, and also that she would be prepared for that great and solemn event, which we each must face.

She leaves a world profoundly different from the one in which she began her reign. Sadly, although there have been great strides in technology and in other fields, socially and morally the changes have been on a rapid, downward spiral. Although, on many occasions, we have been thankful that she referred to her personal faith as a Christian, this nation is now largely atheistic in its outlook and standards, which has caused much grief to those who fear God. However, Isaiah expressed in Isaiah 6.1: *"In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple."* The throne of our God is never vacant, and He who sits upon it has all power in His hand. This is our comfort in changing times.

We would pray for our new King, Charles III, as we did for his mother, that he may be led to seek wisdom from above in the heavy responsibility that now rests on his shoulders.

G.D. Buss

THREE PRECIOUS FACTS

The **death and resurrection** of Christ is the ground of the believer's salvation. The **Person** of Christ is the believer's object in worship and service. The **coming** of Christ is the believer's joyous and purifying hope.

Little Gleaner 1907

There is no living without prayer. It plucks up the weeds of sin, prunes luxuriant branches, waters the flowers of grace, and sweeps the avenues of the heart that Christ may walk therein with delight.

Little Gleaner 1916

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**WORK ON THE TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM**

The enemies of the Jews heard that the temple was being built, and they tried to stop it. They wrote a letter to the new king of Babylon against the Jews. They said that Jerusalem had been a bad city. If it was built again, the king would suffer damage. Then, the king of Babylon commanded the Jews to stop building.

For several years, there was no work on the temple. Then, the Lord spoke to the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. They told the people to be strong and work, and the Lord would help them. The glory of this new temple would be greater than the old one, because the promised Saviour would one day enter into it. The Lord said, *“The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it.”*

Then Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest began to build the house of God, *“and with them were the prophets of God helping them.”*

QUESTIONS

1. What did the king of Babylon command the Jews to do?
2. The Lord spoke to which two prophets?
3. Which two leaders began to build the house of God?

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. Seventy years.
2. Cyrus.
3. The foundation of the temple.

Contributed

*“Yet now
be strong ...
and work: for
I am with you,
saith the
LORD of hosts.”*

Haggai 2.4

BIBLE LESSONS**MOUNT GERIZIM AND MOUNT EBAL**

What a lesson was given in the case of Achan! By coveting and taking what God had forbidden at Jericho, he lost his own soul. In the Book of Hebrews, we are told: *"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."* If Achan had been content to wait, he could have carried away the spoils at Ai without fear of judgment.

After the victory at Ai, the children of Israel were favoured with a little rest from the battles they had fought and before the battles that were ahead. Even in this time of rest, they were not idle. Joshua led the people a little farther north to a beautiful valley lying between Mount Ebal on the north and Mount Gerizim on the south. Six tribes stood on the sloping hills of Ebal, and the other six on Gerizim, with the ark of God between them. The men, women and children, along with the strangers that had joined with them, were all gathered together.

Before the children of Israel entered the land of promise, Moses had commanded that when they crossed over Jordan, they were to take large, whole (unhewn) stones and build an altar upon Mount Ebal. They were to offer burnt offerings and peace offerings, *"eat there, and rejoice before the LORD."* In this place, Joshua was to read the law which Moses had written, *"the blessings and the cursings."* They were to be rehearsed in the ears of all the people, to remind them of all the blessings God would grant when they obeyed His commandments. It would also remind them of the warnings God pronounced against their disobedience.

Moses told them which tribes of Israel were to stand on Mount Gerizim and which tribes were to stand on Mount Ebal. Moses said that the tribes of Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin were to stand on Gerizim to affirm the blessings as Joshua read them. The tribes of Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali were to stand on Ebal to affirm the curses when Joshua read them.

How careful Joshua was to obey the command of Moses! He did not wait until they had conquered all the land, which would

have taken a considerable time. Instead, he caused the people to pause in the midst of the conflicts to hear God's Word concerning them. *"There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel."* How long a time they stood, while Joshua read all the words of Moses! Not only did Joshua **read** the words, but we are told that *"**he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel.**"* The Bible does not tell us how this was done, only that it was done. What a very solemn, yet wonderful, gathering this must have been!

By this time, the other kingdoms of Canaan heard of Israel's victories. The mighty nations of the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites and the Hivites, all joined together to fight against Israel.

However, there was a very great city, named Gibeon, whose inhabitants devised a different plan. Rather than fight with Israel, they would try to make peace with them. Although the people of Gibeon lived very near, they worked deceitfully. They made it look like they had come from a great distance.

When they approached the camp of Israel, they pretended they were ambassadors from a far country. In those days, people travelled by riding on donkeys or camels. The men from Gibeon came by donkeys. Their food was carried upon their donkeys in old sacks, worn thin. Their wine bottles, made from leather, appeared to be worn out. Their shoes were covered with patches of leather, and their garments were full of holes. The bread in their sacks was dry and mouldy.

Under this false appearance, the Gibeonites came to the camp of Israel in Gilgal. They told Joshua and the elders of Israel, *"We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league"* – treaty – *"with us."* The men of Israel were suspicious and said to them, *"Peradventure ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a league with you?"*

The Gibeonites told Joshua that they were willing to be servants to Israel. Joshua asked them, *"Who are ye? and from whence come ye?"*

You can read about this in Joshua chapter 8 verses 30 to 35, chapter 9 verses 1 to 8, and Deuteronomy 27 verses 4 to 8.

QUESTIONS:

1. Which tribes were commanded to stand on Mount Gerizim?
2. Which tribes were commanded to stand on Mount Ebal?
3. Beside reading the law of Moses, what else did Joshua do?
4. What nations joined together to fight against Israel?
5. What were the Gibeonites willing to be to Israel?

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. Judah.
2. Achan.
3. A Babylonish garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold.
4. His wife, his sons, his daughters, and his flocks and herds.
5. Achor.

THE CHIMNEY SWEEP

Many years ago, houses had fireplaces in each room, where coal was burned for heat. Soot and ash built up, and chimneys had to be cleaned regularly. During the Victorian era and before, little boys, usually between the ages of five and ten, were often used for the dirty, difficult work of sweeping chimneys. They had to climb inside the chimneys, scraping away and sweeping out the soot. Usually, the boys were very poor. Sometimes parents put them into this work for money to survive; often, they were orphans, and occasionally, they were kidnapped off the streets. The sweep masters often underfed the boys to keep them small and thin. Their lives were in danger from falling, and many suffered from burns and lung damage.

The following story is based upon fact. Lady Belville had a son, named Charles, who was about five years old. He was her

only child, and she was a widow. She placed all her affection upon Charles, and her greatest desire was that he might be manifest as one of the Lord's children. However, the more pains she took to teach him, the more unwilling he was to listen. He was often disobedient, and she failed to correct him. He disliked listening to Bible reading and prayers. However, Charles did learn one prayer from his mother: "Lord, convert me – change my heart; teach me to love Thee, and to love my brethren, as Jesus Christ loved us. Amen."

One day, a servant came to tell Lady Belville that Charles could not be found anywhere, although they had been looking for an hour. You can imagine her anxiety. Servants were promptly sent throughout the city to search for her son. The authorities were notified, and she offered a large reward for his return or any information about him. However, no trace of him was found. Finally, a woman came to say that she had seen a little boy of that age and clothed in that manner. He was amusing himself alone, throwing stones into the river, but when she returned, the child was not there.

Three years passed without any news of her lost son. Lady Belville tried to persuade herself that Charles was yet alive. She would look closely at any little boy she met and sometimes question him, but to no purpose. One day, she returned unexpectedly from the country, where she had been for several weeks. A little chimney sweep was leaning against the door in one of the rooms of her house. He was very thin and looked very sad. Large tears rolled down his dirty face. "What is the matter, child?" asked the countess.

"It is nothing, Madam. We are come to sweep your chimney. My master is on the roof, and he is coming down."

"Why do you weep? Tell me your trouble."

"It is because my master will beat me again."

"Again, do you say? Does he beat you often?"

"Almost every day, Madam,"

"And what for?"

"Because I do not earn enough money. When I return at night, he says I have been idle. But it is not my fault; I have cried out as loud as I can, but no one has asked me to clean their chimney."

"Surely, every day does not pass without work, and then he would not whip you," said the countess.

"Well, Madam, then he says that I don't climb fast enough, or that I do not scrape hard enough. When I come down, he strikes me again, although I do all I can. Yesterday, I hurt my leg, for my pantaloons are wore through at the knees," and the poor boy wept bitterly.

"And how much are you paid each day?"

"Nothing. Only he gives me my food, but so little that I often go to bed hungry."

"Ah! Well, I will speak to your master."

"Oh, no Madam, please – he will beat me yet more. I complain to nobody, but in the evening, I pray to God. I ask Him to take me back to my mother."

"You have a mother, then!"

"Oh yes, and a very good mother. If I could go to her, I would not be so unhappy."

"Do you know where she lives?"

"No. It was a place like this. The trees in the garden could be seen through the windows. My mother was like you, only she was not dressed in black like you are."

These words overcame Lady Belville. She took the boy by the hand and drew him near her. She asked, "Has the Lord never answered your prayer, my child?"

"Not yet, Madam, but He will hear me one day, I am sure. He has said so in His Word. A kind gentleman gave me a New Testament. I can read a little, and I sometimes repeat the prayer that my mother taught me."

"And what was that prayer? Please tell me."

The child knelt down, joined his hands, and shed more tears. He said with a trembling voice, "Lord, convert me – change my

heart, teach me to love Thee, and to love my brethren, as Jesus Christ loved us, Amen.”

“My child, my child!” cried Lady Belville, “Thou art my son, Charles!”

“My mother!” said the child; “Where is she? She used to call me Charles.”

“I am thy mother,” she sobbed. She knelt down by the side of the boy. She prayed and gave thanks to the Lord out of the fulness of her heart.

The master sweep entered the room, and he was surprised to find the little sweep and the lady on their knees. Lady Belville asked the master sweep how he had come in possession of the boy. He told her that a man, calling himself the boy’s father, had placed him in his hands for a sum of money. This man had been very ill, and perhaps he was now dead.

Upon further investigation, the truth was found out. The man who pretended to be the boy’s father had stolen him as he jumped over a garden wall and sold him to the master sweep.

Too happy to take further action, the Countess of Belville forgave him. Afterwards, she gave an annual dinner for chimney sweeps in memory of the happy day when the Lord restored her son Charles.

Adapted from Cheering Words 1855

WISDOM GIVEN IN A TIME OF DANGER

The minister, Mr. Francis Covell, was once walking in a lonely lane, and he met two men that he felt sure were up to no good. At once, he began to consider what he should do, and decided that it was his duty to speak to them. He did so in a very serious manner, speaking to them of the solemnity of death and asking them if they ever thought of their dying day. The men seemed very uneasy. They were glad when the opportunity occurred of getting away from the stranger who spoke to them so pointedly and solemnly.

The Life of Francis Covell

A VOICE IN THE DARK

A builder in America, who was also a local preacher, returned home one evening after a hard day of work. He suddenly felt a strong urge to drive several miles and look at an old farm house, on which he was soon to begin work.

Although it was late, he drove off to see the house, which was unoccupied. Everything seemed to be in order. Before leaving, he pushed open the front door. In a loud voice, he called out to see if anyone was inside, but there was no reply.

Being a minister, and praying over all his labours, he felt constrained to pray aloud in the house before leaving. He gave thanks to God for His mercies, prayed for God's people and pleaded for the salvation of those who were unsaved. Then, he returned home with a sense of peace in his heart.

Several months later, the minister was visiting prisoners in the local jail. He was told that a prisoner wished to see him, but he did not recognise the man who was brought out. He was surprised to learn that the prisoner had been in the empty house on the evening he had gone there. The man had been hiding from the police and had heard every word of his prayer.

The prisoner told him that he had repented of his sins and had given himself up to the police. He was now serving a short sentence for his crime. The Lord had spoken to his heart, and he had been brought to realise his sinful condition. He had cried for mercy, and he felt sure that God had forgiven him.

"Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters." (Isaiah 32.20).
The Lord is able to bless His Word wherever it is spoken.

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

I trust I can say, with all my carnality and worldly-mindedness, I value a smile from God, a hope in His mercy, a touch from Him, a grain of His grace, above all this world calls good or great. "Let me have Thee, my God; then others may take what they please."

Francis Covell

SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF THE EARLY LIFE OF PHILIP DODDRIDGE

Best known for his hymns (eight of which are found in Gadsby's Selection), Philip Doddridge was the minister at an independent chapel in Northampton. He was also the author of a number of books, one of which is still in print, *The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*.

His parents were both Protestant Dissenters. His maternal grandfather, John Bauman, had to flee persecution in Prague during the 1620's. He lost all his possessions (of which he had many) and came to England with one invaluable treasure – his Luther's Bible.

Philip was born "somewhere in London" in June 1702. He and his older sister Elizabeth were the only survivors of twenty children, the other eighteen having died before Philip was born! Indeed, Philip's mother endured a very long labour with Philip. At first, it appeared that he was also stillborn, but then the midwife noticed a slight movement in his chest, and he was spared. Throughout his life, Philip never enjoyed good health.

As might have been expected, his mother rather doted on him in his early years. Yet, she did nurture him in the knowledge of the Bible and the Christian religion. When Philip was eight years old, his mother suddenly died. Then, only four years later, his father also died. Young Philip had an uncle, also called Philip, with whom he used to stay for holidays. This uncle also died the same year as his father! Philip had already been attending a boarding school in Kingston-upon-Thames, near London, but the loss of these three family members must have had a tremendous effect upon him. Years later, during a sermon, he said, "I am under some peculiar obligations to desire and attempt the relief of orphans, as I know the heart of an orphan, having been deprived of both my parents at an age in which it might reasonably be supposed a child should be most sensible of such a loss." For a while, Philip was under the guardianship of a man named Downes. But, as if matters could not get any worse, this man became bankrupt, leaving Philip

virtually destitute. He had to leave the school he was attending and went to live with his sister, who had recently married a dissenting minister named John Nettleton. Here, the sixteen-year-old Philip waited to see what path might open up to him.

Philip had very strong thoughts about becoming a gospel minister. He requested an interview with the very well-known Dr. Edmund Calamy. Philip wrote of the interview, "I waited upon Dr. Calamy to beg his advice and assistance that I might be brought up a minister, which had always been my great desire. He gave me no encouragement in it, but advised me to turn my thoughts to something else. It was with great concern that I received such advice; but I desire to follow providence and not force it. The Lord give me grace to glorify Him in whatever station He sets me; then, here am I, let Him do with me what seemeth good in His sight."

Three weeks after this, Philip received a remarkable opportunity to study law, with all fees being paid for him. Yet, he was still very exercised about the ministry and felt to be in a great dilemma. What should he do? He set aside a whole day for prayer to seek guidance from God alone. On this very day, he received a letter from his former pastor in London, offering him a home, and offering to support his studies until a place at a theological academy could be found. He writes, "This I looked upon almost as an answer from heaven, and, while I live, shall always adore so seasonable an interposition of divine providence. I have sought God's direction in this matter, and I hope I have had it."

A place was soon found at a dissenting academy at Kibworth in Leicestershire. Sometime later, Philip was sent out to preach. He held two short pastorates before being invited by the church at Castle Hill, Northampton, in 1729. Initially, he turned down their request, although the church kept pressing him to become their pastor. He even went as far as preaching there from the text, "*And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done*" (Acts 21.14). Then, another remarkable thing happened. After the service, still feeling very

troubled about the whole matter, Philip was passing a doorway and overheard a young child reading aloud to his mother from the Bible: *“And as thy days, so shall thy strength be”* (Deuteronomy 33.25). The words struck him. Philip felt he had to reconsider his decision. He then wrote to the church: “My dear friends, after a long and impartial consideration of your case, and repeated addresses to the great Father of light for His guidance and direction, I can, at length, assure you that I am determined by His permission to accept your kind invitation, and undertake the pastoral care of you, with the most ardent feeling of sincere gratitude and affection.” He continued as pastor until his death in 1751.

After much suffering with the symptoms of consumption, it was hoped that the warmer conditions in Portugal might be beneficial to him. But this did not prove to be the case, and he passed away near Lisbon at the age of fifty.

A.T. Pickett

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH - PART 8

Isaiah – chapters 33, 34 and 35 are the last chapters of prophecy before the four historical chapters 36 to 39. Chapter 33 begins with “woe,” and it is the last chapter commencing in this way. In fact, the word “woe” appears only twice more in the whole prophecy of Isaiah – in chapter 45. It is not easy to follow the flow of the prophecy in the earlier part of this chapter, as the word alternates between denunciation of the enemies of the Lord’s people and declarations of comfort and truth for His people’s encouragement.

There is also prayer, as in verse 2: *“O LORD, be gracious unto us; we have waited for Thee: be Thou their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble.”* Verse 6 is prophecy which we might well desire the Lord to fulfil in our present day: *“And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the LORD is his treasure.”*

Although we live in days when it is claimed that we have more knowledge and understanding than ever before, alas, the underlying spiritual ignorance and darkness has hardly ever been so great!

There is a searching declaration and question asked in verse 14: *"The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"* John Gill believes these words apply to the church in all ages, describing the state of formal professors and hypocritical persons, rather than being prophecy concerning only the historical Israel of God.

The answer to these questions begins in verse 16 and effectively continues to the end of the chapter. The blessed state of the Lord's own people begins with this: *"He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure."* Immediately, there is a further precious promise: *"Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off."*

From verse 20 to the end are gracious words of promise and comfort for Zion, concluding with these words: *"And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity."*

Chapter 34 is prophecy regarding *"the day of the LORD's vengeance,"* coupled with *"the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion"* (verse 8). The awful judgments of God are clearly centred upon Idumea (verses 5 and 6). Some, such as Gill, believe that the destruction of Rome and all its adherents is foretold by this, but I would hesitate to understand it as specifically referring to that. It is better, I feel, to consider such prophecy as relating to all that are bound by and in the spirit of antichrist (see 1 John 4.3). Nonetheless, the severity of these judgments is very solemn, and we should tremble before the Lord in contemplation of them. In this fearful trembling, a direction is then set before us: *"Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read."* Dear young friends, in whatever state of fear

and perplexity you may come into, this is good advice: **do read the Word of God.**

Having prophesied the destruction of the enemies of Christ, the next chapter follows on, as it were, in the same location, i.e. the wilderness (verse 1). However, the prophecy now depicts the blossoming of the gospel church: *"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose."* This indicates a wonderful transformation of the desolate wilderness described in the latter part of chapter 34. I think of what is referred to in English history as "The Dark Ages," which were followed by the glorious time known as "The Reformation," from c. 1350 to 1560.

Verses 1 and 2 set the scene of this wonderful prospect. Verses 3 and 4 are powerful exhortations to the Lord's servants as the means by which this blessed reviving and prosperity will come about: *"Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; He will come and save you."*

Then verses 5, 6 and 7 describe the changes which will be wrought, referring in verses 6 and 7 particularly, to the transformation of the desolate wilderness.

An amazing prospect then appears in verse 8: *"And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."* This speaks of the Lord Jesus, who said: *"I am the Way"* (John 14.6).

Dear young friends, this **highway** is still there, passing right through this wilderness world. It still leads to the same glorious abode as prophesied in verse 10: *"And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."*

Brian Mercer

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about THINGS THAT ARE CLEAN OR UNCLEAN. 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. When the priest looked on a man with the plague of leprosy, what must he pronounce the man to be? (Leviticus 13.3)
2. What was the priest to cause the people to discern between? (Ezekiel 44.23)
3. What did God tell Peter he was not to call common or unclean? (Acts 10.15)
4. What did God say He would save the people from? (Ezekiel 36.29)
5. What did the leper say the Lord could do? (Matthew 8.2) In verse three, what did Jesus say to the leper when He touched him?
6. In Ezekiel 36, the Lord said He would sprinkle clean water upon His people, that they might be cleansed from what two things?
7. In Psalm 51, what did David ask God to create in him?
8. In that same Psalm, how did David ask God to wash him? And from what?
9. Write out the verse in Isaiah 64 that tells us what we are and what our righteousnesses are.
10. In 1 John 1, what are we told cleanseth from all sin?

ANSWERS TO SEPTEMBER QUESTIONS

1. The light. (Job 17.12)
2. Time. (1 Corinthians 7.29)
3. That he hath but a short time. (Revelation 12.12)
4. How short my time is. (Psalm 89.47)
5. The days of his youth. (Psalm 89.45)
6. Is the LORD's hand waxed short? (Numbers 11.23)
7. The Lord's hand. (Isaiah 50.2)
8. Redeem. (Isaiah 50.2)
9. The triumphing of the wicked. Job 20.5)
10. The glory of God. (Romans 3.23)

“I AM BLACK, BUT COMELY”
(Song of Solomon 1.5)

A chimney sweep, how black the skin,
Blacker by far it is within.
This secret, then, the sweep doth know,
Though black as hell, he's white as snow.

Water will wash or cleanse his skin,
But O! 'tis blood must cleanse within.
That blood that ran on Calvary's tree,
Though but a sweep, 'twas shed for me.

Whilst through the street, "'Tis sweep," I cry,
But oft within a heavy sigh.
A filthy sweep! But O! within
A den of unclean beasts is seen.

Though but a sweep, I oftentimes weep,
That Christ should own me for His sheep,
And on the cross should bleed and die
For such a filthy wretch as I.

What matters it, dear Lord, to me,
Though I a chimney sweep should be,
If through Thy blood I'm freed from all
The sin that issued from the Fall?

A chimney sweep of low degree,
Yet loved by all the sacred Three.
Electing love! What tongue can tell?
Though loved of God, deserving hell.

I envy not the rich man's gold,
If I on Christ but lay my hold.
There's something more I seek to win,
'Tis Christ in me and I in Him!

Though but a sweep, can I forget
The words that my dear Jesus spoke
When on the brink of hell I stood,
"I have redeemed thee by My blood"?

'Tis all of grace, the sweep must say,
That he was led to Christ "the Way."
If ever one has cause to bless,
Sure 'tis the sweep through sovereign grace!

In bygone days, with venom foul,
I've called damnation on my soul.
Then who has greater cause to say,
'Tis Christ, the Truth, the Life, the Way.

Let none despise the filthy sweep,
But rather, with him let them weep
That Christ should own me for His son
And for my life lay down His own.

Though black without, 'tis worse within,
'Tis nothing but a mass of sin.
Yet, after all, I'm white and fair,
More comely than the roses are.

Comely I am through God's dear Son,
He has on me His robe put on,
Which makes the sweep, when let to see,
Ofttimes to say – "Why me! Why me!"

Contributed – Author unknown

The Friendly Companion



“And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew ...
but He saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid.”
John 6.18,20

November 2022

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

One of the most common topics of conversation among older people is the weather. It makes up so much a part of our lives. It may affect the plans we make or the things we do. We love the sunny, warm days, with a light breeze to keep us cool. We may even find days to be soothing and comforting when rain gently falls to water the earth. However, every year brings some stormy seasons, when the weather becomes violent. Such storms make us feel vulnerable and weak.

At the time of our writing, the Atlantic coast of Canada has experienced the dreadful effects of hurricane Fiona. Many homes have suffered severe damage, and one woman was swept into the sea. Meanwhile, the state of Florida and eastern coast of the United States are experiencing the powerful winds and torrential rains of hurricane Ian. Such powerful storms leave vast destruction behind them.

When the month of November comes around, those who live in the Northern United States, especially around the Great Lakes, expect the winter storm season to begin. Strong winds from the Arctic region move across Canada and cause the November gales to blow upon the Great Lakes, creating extremely dangerous waves. The sky, at such times, appears very dark and foreboding. The waves can reach heights of twelve to fourteen feet, and sometimes even higher.

Such tempests draw people to the lakeshore to view, with a measure of wonder and awe, as the waves come crashing into the shore. While standing safe and secure on the shore, the wild waves and the roaring do not fill us with any alarm. How different it is for those who are in ships during such storms. In Psalm 107, we read of those who *“go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters: these see the works of the LORD, and His wonders in the deep. 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 reel to and fro, and*

stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end." This is a picture of what the Lord does in the lives of His people. There are times when storms of troubles, temptations or trials come upon them. Some must endure even fiercer storms of persecution. Yet, they are all brought to cry unto Him, and He delivers them. *"He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so He bringeth them unto their desired haven."*

We must not think that the Lord's people will be free of storms as they journey through life. The Lord's disciples had to experience such storms, even when the Lord was with them in the ship. It was in the storms that the power and Godhead of their Lord was seen. He needed only to speak a word, *"Peace, be still,"* and there was a great calm.

In Psalm 89, the question is asked, *"O LORD God of hosts, who is a strong LORD like unto Thee? or to Thy faithfulness round about Thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them."*

Perhaps some of you have had storms in your life, or you may have them in time to come. They will fill you with great fear, and they will seem to drive you back, to sink you under the great waves. May you remember what those in the Scriptures did at such times: ***"They cried unto the Lord in their trouble."***

How often in such stormy trials, poor, needy souls have sung or read the words of John Newton:

Begone, unbelief, my Saviour is near,
And for my relief will surely appear;
By prayer let me wrestle, and He will perform;
With Christ in the vessel, I smile at the storm.

With loving wishes from the Editor.

THE GREAT LAKES

The Great Lakes of North America are a series of five, very large, interconnected, freshwater lakes, with certain sea-like characteristics. They have waves and currents, but no tides.

They are Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, Lake Huron, Lake Michigan and Lake Superior. All, except Lake Michigan, share boundaries with Canada. This small map shows the geography of the lakes, pertaining to the story below.



OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

On November 21, 1847, one hundred and seventy-five years ago, a ship carrying Dutch immigrants caught fire and burned, just a few miles short of its destination in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. The ship, called the *Phoenix*, was thought to be carrying two hundred and seventy-five passengers, along with a crew of twenty-five. Only forty-three persons survived. The loss of life made this disaster the fourth-worst tragedy in the history of shipping on the Great Lakes. The only known item that remains is the old, stained and worn Bible shown on the front cover picture. After inquiring about the location of this Bible for many years, we recently found it to be in the Maritime Museum in Manitowoc, Wisconsin.

During 1846 and 1847, immigration from Holland was exceptionally high due to a movement of religious reform that was sweeping through Holland and most of Europe. Authorities began clamping down on the reformers, causing many to seek refuge in other lands. By the thousands, people sold their

homes and began the perilous journey to America. Upon arrival in New York, many travelled by land to Buffalo, on the shore of Lake Erie, where they booked passage on a sailing schooner or one of the new steamers. Most immigrants considered the water route through the Great Lakes to be safer and easier than travelling over the land to their new homes in the Midwest.

The *Phoenix* was a wooden steamship which had been launched only two years before. It departed from Buffalo, New York, for its last scheduled trip of the year on November 11, 1847. Most of the passengers were Dutch immigrants, and many of them were children. The ship also carried a cargo of molasses, coffee, sugar and hardware.

Through most of the voyage along Lake Erie, up Lake Huron, and down Lake Michigan, the ship was battered by high waves and strong winds. It was not a pleasant journey. There was cargo to be unloaded at Manitowoc, Wisconsin, thirty miles north of Sheboygan. After a journey of many weeks and thousands of miles, they were almost to their destination.

While docked at Manitowoc, the skies finally cleared and the waters became calm. It was a bitterly-cold night. The captain gave orders to proceed with all possible speed. Stokers cast six-foot log sections, sticky with sap, into the boilers in the engine room. By 1 am, the *Phoenix* was on its way for the last, short segment of the long journey.

At about 2 am on November 21, a boiler-man smelled smoke in the engine room. He found that the boilers were overheated and had set fire to wooden beams overhead. At first, the fire seemed manageable. The crew and passengers were organised into bucket brigades, and the captain ordered all fire hoses to be put into action. The helmsman turned the ship towards shore. However, the flames suddenly began to billow out of control. The engine-room crew was forced back, and the fire began to consume the ship. As steam pressure was lost, the fire pumps could not operate, and the ship came to a halt about nine miles north of Sheboygan and five miles from shore.

The *Phoenix* carried only two lifeboats, and first-class passengers were allowed to get into them first. The boats, each

carrying twenty people, slowly pulled away into the darkness. After struggling to shore, exhausted and very cold, the survivors started a fire to warm themselves. Hours later, they were found, many still in their nightclothes and suffering from burns. The remaining passengers were faced with the awful decision of perishing in the fire or in the icy-cold waters. Some clung to boards but died from the cold. Three persons were later rescued, as they clung to the ship's wreckage.

Sheboygan, Wisconsin, was just a small frontier hamlet at the time. A judge, who lived on a high hill overlooking Lake Michigan, awoke at 2:15 am and noticed an orange, flickering glow in the distance. He quickly rushed down to the harbour, where a large wooden pier jutted out two hundred feet into the lake. A small steamer was tied to the dock. The judge awakened the crew and pointed out the glow. It soon proceeded toward the burning ship, but they were too late. The *Phoenix* had burned nearly to the water line. Two men clinging to the rigging, and another clinging to a drifting bit of wreckage, were rescued.

As word of the disaster spread, homes and hearts were opened to the refugees. Some immigrants had relatives in the area. Others were left destitute and alone in a strange land. Money and clothing were gathered to help them. Eventually, most of the survivors settled in the surrounding areas. Many people have descended from the little group of immigrants. Stories of that terrible night have been told and retold – stories of cowardice, great heroism, fear and calmness in the face of certain death.

The Bible pictured on the front cover must have been a prized possession of an immigrant family. It is unknown how it survived, but it reminds us of the word in Scripture: "*But the Word of the Lord endureth for ever*" (1 Peter 1.25).

Adapted from numerous sources

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**THE TEMPLE IS FINISHED**

Work on the temple went on fast. Great stones were used, and timber was laid in the walls. The enemies of the Jews came to see what they were doing. They asked, “*Who hath commanded you to build this house?*” They wrote a letter to Darius, king of Babylon, hoping he would command the Jews to stop building. Darius searched the records in Babylon. He found that many years before, Cyrus had commanded the Jews to return to Jerusalem and build the house of God.

Darius told the enemies of the Jews to “*let the work of this house of God alone.*” He said that money should be given from the king, “*that they be not hindered.*” Darius also said, “*And that which they have need of ... let it be given them day by day without fail.*”

The elders of the Jews builded and prospered, and the temple was finished. The children of Israel kept a dedication of this house of God with joy.

QUESTIONS

1. To whom did the enemies of the Jews write a letter?
2. What should be given from the king?
3. What did the children of Israel keep with joy?

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. Stop working.
2. Haggai and Zechariah.
3. Zerubbabel and Joshua.

Contributed

*“And they
builted, and
finished it”*

Ezra 6.14

BIBLE LESSONS

**GIBEONITES MADE HEWERS OF WOOD AND
DRAWERS OF WATER**

Joshua and the leaders of Israel wondered what they should do when the Gibeonites came to them. They would not have felt uncertain if they had only remembered the Word of the Lord spoken by Moses. In the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses wrote, *"When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, ... And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt **make no covenant with them**, nor shew mercy unto them"* (Deuteronomy 7.1,2). How clear was God's commandment! There are so many things that God has made plain in His Word, yet we feel uncertain about them because we fail to study and remember what He has said.

Joshua asked the men of Gibeon, *"Who are ye? and from whence come ye?"* They answered him, *"From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of the LORD thy God: for we have heard the fame of Him, and all that He did in Egypt. And all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites, ... to Sibon ... and to Og."* Rahab had spoken nearly the same language, and she had been spared. Joshua and the elders of Israel were deceived by the appearance of the Gibeonites. They looked at the mouldy bread, the tattered garments and worn-out shoes. The Bible tells us the fault they were guilty of: they *"asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD."* They made peace with the Gibeonites. The princes of Israel made an oath that they would let them live.

Three days later, the children of Israel came to the cities of Gibeon and found they had been deceived. So often, the people were at fault, but now the leaders had been in the wrong. The people murmured against Joshua and the elders, but they were kept from destroying the Gibeonites because of the oath made in the name of the Lord God.

Joshua told the Gibeonites that they would always be bondmen to Israel. They would be *"hewers of wood and*

drawers of water for the house of my God." The men of Gibeon told Joshua that they knew that God had commanded Moses to destroy all the inhabitants of the land. Their words must have been a sharp rebuke to Joshua, for he and the princes of Israel had failed to remember the Word of the Lord by Moses.

Not far from Gibeon was the wicked city of Jerusalem, with its ruler, Adonizedec. He had heard of the league between Israel and Gibeon, and his city was filled with great fear. He knew Gibeon was a much larger city than Ai, and its men were mighty warriors. He joined with four other kings and their armies to fight against Gibeon. The kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon encamped against Gibeon to make war.

The Gibeonites quickly sent a message to Joshua, saying, "*Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us.*" Though the men of Gibeon had deceived them, Joshua and Israel were faithful to their oath. All the mighty men of valour went out with Joshua to deliver the Gibeonites.

Joshua had, no doubt, learned the solemn lesson of failing to seek help and direction from the Lord. It is very beneficial if we learn from our mistakes. In answer to his prayer, the Lord said to Joshua, "*Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee.*"

Joshua and his army went up from their camp in Gilgal and journeyed all night, coming upon the five kings suddenly and unexpectedly. The kings and their armies were so unprepared that they could hardly get into battle formation. They soon began to flee in different directions. Above them, the sky grew dark, and without warning, great hailstones began to fall upon them. The God of Israel, whose power they had heard of in the destruction of Pharaoh and his kingdom in the Red Sea, was now fighting against them.

The Bible tells us, "*They were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.*" In this also, God put a difference between His people and their enemies. The hailstones must have fallen all around, yet none of the Israelites were killed by them.

You can read about this in Joshua chapter 9 verses 14 to 27, and chapter 10 verses 1 to 11.

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the fault that Joshua and the elders of Israel were guilty of? (10 words)
 2. What did Joshua say the Gibeonites would always be to Israel? And what would they be for the house of God? (7 words)
 3. What five cities with their kings came out to fight against Gibeon?
 4. What were the first three words and the last ten words that God spoke to Joshua concerning the armies of the five kings?
 5. What did God cause to fall upon the armies of the five kings?
- 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. Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin.
2. Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali.
3. He wrote them.
4. The Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites and the Hivites.
5. Servants.

THE VALUE OF THE SCRIPTURES

If there is anything in my thoughts or style to commend, the credit is due to my parents for instilling in me an early love of the Scriptures. If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity.

Daniel Webster

Editor's Note: Daniel Webster was an esteemed lawyer who also served in the U.S. Congress as a representative and senator. He served as Secretary of State for three presidents and was an advocate for Biblical instruction in all schools.

HIM

Dr. S.D. Gordon tells of an old Christian woman whose memory was beginning to fail in her advanced age. She had once known large portions of the Bible by heart. Eventually, only one precious text stayed with her: *"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day"* (2 Timothy 1.12).

After a while, part of that text slipped from her memory, and she would quietly repeat, *"That which I have committed unto Him."* At last, as she hovered between life and death, her loved ones noticed her lips moving. They bent down to see if she needed anything. She was repeating over and over to herself the one word of the text, *"Him – Him – Him."* She could remember only one word from the whole Bible, but she had the whole Bible in that one word. *"And unto Him shall the gathering of the people be"* (Genesis 49.10).

Adapted from "I am the Way"

THE LIGHT-GIVING WORD

"The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (Psalm 119.130).

The missionary, Mr. Moffat, was once travelling on a long journey with his companions. Travelling in Africa at that time was very different from today. There were no inns to rest in, nor shops in which to buy food. The missionary had travelled far, and he and his companions were tired, hungry and thirsty. The sun was very hot and made them especially weary. At night, the lions prowled about, ready to seize anyone who did not have a strong guard or a good fire to keep them away.

The missionary wanted to spend the night in a nearby village, so they could get some food and water, and sleep without fear of the lions. However, the people were heathens, not knowing about God. They did not know that God had sent Mr. Moffat to their country to teach them. They spoke very roughly to the missionary and his companions, and told them to keep at a

distance. The weary travellers could see the water of a river, but they could not get to it. The missionary asked the people to give them a little water, but they refused.

At that time, a brass button was an unusual thing to the people of Africa, and valued by them. The missionary offered to give them the four buttons left on his coat (for he had parted with all the others) if they would let him have a little milk, but this was also refused. So, the missionary and his companions sat down on the ground, hungry and thirsty, to spend another sleepless night. The rough words of the heathen people made Mr. Moffat fear that they intended to do them harm. They were ignorant of the command of God: *"Thou shalt not kill."* But, he also knew that the Lord was able to keep them safe: *"He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep"* (Psalm 121.4). He who kept Daniel in the den of lions, and shut their hungry mouths, was with His servant in the heathen land. He who sent the ravens to feed Elijah by the brook Cherith, can prepare a table in the wilderness, and provide flesh for His people. *"Happy is he that bath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God!"* (Psalm 146.5)

There was a hill between the village and missionary's group. When the evening began to darken, they saw a woman coming down the hillside towards them. She carried a bundle of wood on her head, and she had a vessel of milk in her hand. She laid down the wood, gave the milk to the weary travellers, and returned to the village without speaking a word. They watched in the direction she had gone, and they soon saw her coming back again. Now she had a cooking vessel on her head, a leg of mutton in one hand, and a jug of water in the other. She sat down on the ground, made up the fire, and put on the meat; but still, she did not speak a word. They asked her again and again who she was, but she would not answer. The missionary, who understood her language, affectionately entreated her to tell them why she showed such unlooked-for kindness to strangers. A tear stole down her dark cheek, and she replied, "I

love Him whose servants you are. Surely, it is my duty to give you a cup of cold water in His name! My heart is full; therefore, I cannot speak the joy that I feel to see you in this out-of-the-way place.” The missionary questioned her further and found that she had been brought up in a missionary school a long way off. Her relatives were still in heathen darkness. They had forced her to leave them, and to go to this distant village. The missionary wondered how she kept her faith and love so bright in this far-off place, with none to teach her. The woman took from her breast a copy of a Dutch New Testament that she had received in the missionary school. She said, “This is the fountain whence I drink; this is the oil which makes my lamp to burn.” The missionary took it in his hand. It was a Testament printed by the Bible Society, one of those very Testaments which was sent out into every corner of the earth.

Adapted from The Little Gleaner 1916

THE FAMILY BIBLE

Many years ago in England, a poor family was in great need and distress. Following the death of her husband, the scanty possessions of the widow were to be sold at a public auction. This was necessary to pay off all the debts that they owed.

The widow was present at the auction, as one piece after another was sold. Finally, the old family Bible, which was an heirloom, was offered for sale. “Let me at least keep this,” begged the poor woman, but the man in charge paid no attention to her. Weeping, she reached for her precious Bible, which someone was examining. In order to have at least a small remembrance of the old Bible, she quickly cut a cord, which held a worn wrapper around the Bible for protection.

The wrapper fell into her hands, and with it came two dingy looking, yellow papers. Each of those old papers was a bank note of five-hundred-pound sterling. Each was worth a large amount of money in that day.

On one of the bank notes was written, in her mother's handwriting, "When you are in distress, may the Holy Scriptures be your refuge."

On the other bank note the father had written, "The eyes and ears of the heavenly Father are never closed."

The sale was stopped at once. The widow had enough money to pay off all her debts and to supply for the needs of her family in the future. The widow carried her precious Bible home, thanking and praising the Lord. God moves in a mysterious way.

Adapted from Religious Stories for Young and Old, Volume 2

"GOOD IS THE WORD OF THE LORD"

When Oliver Cromwell entered upon the command of the Parliament's army against Charles I, he ordered all of his soldiers to carry a Bible (called Field's) in their pockets. Among the rest, was a wild, wicked young man who had run away from his apprenticeship in London to live in drunkenness, self-indulgence and looting. This hardened young man was obliged to carry a Bible like the others. Being one day ordered out with an attacking party, he returned to his quarters in the evening unhurt. When he was going to bed, pulling the Bible out of his pocket, he observed a hole in it. Curiosity led him to trace the depth of the hole into his Bible. He found the bullet had gone as far as Ecclesiastes 11.9. He read the verse: "*Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.*" The words were sent home into his heart by the Holy Spirit. He became a changed man and a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. He lived in London many years after the civil wars were over. He used to remark to Dr. Evans that the Bible was made the means of saving his soul and body too.

Friendly Companion 1901

SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF THE EARLY LIFE OF JAMES DENNETT

James Dennett was editor of the *Gospel Standard* magazine between 1884 and 1891. He was also pastor of Frederick Street Strict Baptist Chapel, Birmingham, for many years.

Back in April 1839, a very sad boy was travelling on a coal barge (narrow boat) from Oxford to Birmingham. James had lost his mother when he was under two years of age, and he had lived with his grandmother for the last nine years. His grandmother, to whom he was very attached, being a widow and over seventy years of age, was struggling to look after him and his siblings. So the children were sent to live with their father, who had recently remarried. Young James Dennett, being the youngest of the four children, found this removal particularly difficult. It did not help that his stepmother took an instant dislike to him, treating him cruelly, and sending him straight out to work. After working at different jobs for a little while, he went without work for a week, and his stepmother refused to feed him! Upon finding another job, he actually moved out of the home and lived in lodgings – at the age of twelve!

Without any parental restraint, James was soon taken up with the ways of the world. He married when he was twenty, but still pursued the mad career of sin. However, the time came when the Lord began a work of grace in his heart. He was twenty-six years old when he received a letter informing him of the sudden death of his brother from cholera. The Lord used this sad death to bring James to a solemn realisation that one day **he** must die. He felt that if he had died instead of his brother, **he** would be in hell! He writes, “O the horror of mind that I felt, and the terrors of hell – how they did afflict my soul! Now, for the first time in my life, I **felt** what it was to be a sinner in the sight of a holy God, and my sins stared me in the face. God was a terror to me, my own shadow seemed to affright me; the world appeared a horrible wilderness; hell stared me in the face, and I saw no way to escape. Thus, I continued for some weeks, and my flesh wasted from my body.”

James started attending church, but went from one place to another. He received no comfort or hope at any place, the preaching being the law: "Do and live." He needed mercy, and he kept begging God to be merciful to him. He felt he could not pray at all; yet, in looking back at that time, he understood that his cries and groans were from a broken heart and contrite spirit. His wife and others around him wondered what was happening, but he could not explain it to them. One day, he took up the Bible (whether this was his first time reading the Bible, it is not clear) and read from the Acts of the Apostles. When he read chapter 16 verse 30, the words, "*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*" were applied by the Holy Ghost, and he felt his soul leap for joy. That was the very language of his heart. That was what he so longed for! Hope sprang up. When he read the apostle's answer, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,*" he had such a sacred feeling. Joy was imparted to his soul, and he had a sight, by faith, of the Lord Jesus as the Saviour of the lost.

It was around that time that James was requested by a friend to try a chapel where the doctrine of election was believed. That was the chapel in Frederick Street, Birmingham, where he would eventually become pastor. He very reluctantly agreed to go, because he did not like to think that God chose some and not others. The text was from Psalm 23 verse 6. "*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.*" He writes of that time: "While the minister was speaking of David and how the Lord preserved him whithersoever he went and at last took him to glory, and that at times the Lord so anointed him with the oil of divine grace that his cup ran over, such joy and peace flowed into my soul that my cup ran over. It was indeed a feast of fat things to me, and I feelingly exclaimed with Ruth, 'Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God'" (Ruth 1.16).

This gospel peace continued for about twelve months, but then James came into a period of darkness, and he began to backslide. One particular Lord's day morning, an old friend of

his called and invited him out for a walk. James could not see that it was altogether wrong; so, instead of going to chapel, he went for this walk. The very next day, such a state of misery came upon him that he knew he had done wrong and sinned against God. He begged God to forgive him and promised that, by God's grace, he would never do the same again.

During this period of time, his first wife must have passed away, although James does not mention it in his account. He remarried in 1858. After joining the church at Frederick Street Strict Baptist Chapel, he became very exercised about the ministry. The more he tried to put the thought away, the more powerfully it came upon him. After being questioned by some about his exercises, the matter was brought before the church. They sanctioned him to go forth into the public ministry, but very quickly, James was invited to become their pastor, which he felt constrained to accept.

After being the pastor at Frederick Street for about fifteen years, James received an invitation to the pastorate at Galeed Strict Baptist, Brighton. He felt led to accept this invitation, which must have been very upsetting to the godly at Birmingham. He commenced at Brighton in January 1876. However, his health very quickly began to fail, and within six months, he was quite unwell. He went away for six weeks of rest and change, but with no improvement. He then sent a letter of resignation to the church at Brighton. It appears that as soon as the church at Birmingham heard of this, they very quickly re-invited their former pastor back, which he accepted. He commenced again at Birmingham in January 1877, where he remained until his death in 1900.

A.T. Pickett

A day will come when those who are not born again will wish that they had never been born at all.

J.C. Ryle

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES**THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH – PART 9**

We now come to the four historical chapters of Isaiah 36-39, inclusive. The same ground is covered in 2 Kings, chapters 18-20, and also briefly in 2 Chronicles 32. So, why the apparent repetition? There are at least two reasons: first, for confirmation of the other records, written by different persons; second, to make the prophesies of Isaiah stand out all the more as being by the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit. It is evident from this historical interlude that Isaiah was a real person, living in times when the Lord appeared and delivered His own chosen people.

The first of the four chapters announces the coming of the Assyrians against Judah and Jerusalem. The king, Sennacherib, occupied himself with the siege of Lachish, but he sent one, Rabshakeh, to Jerusalem with a great army. Rabshakeh may have been an apostate Jew, and he was evidently fluent in the Hebrew language. (How often, some of the worst enemies are those who have turned traitor from within! Was it not one of the twelve, even Judas Iscariot, who betrayed our Lord?) Rabshakeh was very bold and brashly denounced the people, their king (Hezekiah) and their God. He even claimed to have been sent by the Lord to destroy the land of Judah.

In chapter 36 verse 21, we have a good example of loyal obedience, as we read of the people of Judah: *“But they held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king’s commandment was, saying, Answer him not.”* Dear young friends, it is good counsel to be obedient to those in authority over us. In the present instance, the silence of the people was the best defence against the evil words of Rabshakeh. Nonetheless, the appointed servants of the king rent their clothes as they went to tell him all about it, which resulted in the king doing the same in the first verse of chapter 37.

But Hezekiah did the right thing under these grave threats, for he *“went into the house of the LORD.”* He did so again, as

recorded in verses 14 and 15: *“And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up unto the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. And Hezekiah prayed unto the LORD, saying...”* It was a good prayer, recorded in verses 16-20, the final plea to God being: *“that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that Thou art the LORD, even Thou only”* (verse 20).

It is clear from what follows that the king's prayer was accepted in heaven above, and the Lord God of Israel immediately sent His answer in verses 22-35. A very full answer it was, making it abundantly clear that God will bring judgment on those who dare to scorn His great and holy name. *“Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel.”*

It is wonderful that God, in the same answer to Hezekiah's prayer, also tells how He will bless *“the remnant that is escaped”* and that *“shall go forth.”* It is full of gospel promise: *“And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward”* (verse 31).

How powerfully and swiftly God dealt with this great enemy! *“Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand”* – 185,000 – *“and when they arose early in the morning, behold they were all dead corpses.”*

Chapters 38 and 39 bring this godly king Hezekiah before us again, to show he was but a man: firstly, in affliction (chapter 38) and secondly, in the pride of his fallen nature (chapter 39).

Many, many people have been thankful for the encouraging account of Hezekiah's affliction. He entered into deep waters under the sentence of death. Again, we have an example of sincere and honest prayer, which was wonderfully answered. Not only did the Lord heal Hezekiah, but He gave him a most remarkable sign that He would do so: *“Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun*

dial of Abaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down" (verse 8). Much conjecture has been made as to the exact fulfilment of this promise, but without doubt, only the mighty power of God could have done it. The Word of God is in perfect order, for after this declaration, we have twelve verses from Hezekiah's own pen giving the detail of the low place he came into under that sentence of death. Even as we read his writings, the wonderful sign which God promised for Hezekiah's encouragement provides a measure of the great depth the poor man must have sunk to in his soul's experience. What a short, but effectual, prayer there is in verse 14: *"O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for me."*

The amazing sign given to Hezekiah did not exceed the great wonder of the dear man's deliverance: *"O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt Thou recover me, and make me to live. Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back"* (verses 16,17). Then, it is all praise, all praise, as it will be for every blood-bought sinner who receives the full pardon of every sin and is brought to heaven at last.

The chapter ends on a practical note, explaining the means by which the Lord was pleased to heal Hezekiah. (The means are not to be overlooked.)

At the very end, we see where Hezekiah's heart was through it all: *"What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?"* (verse 22).

Brian Mercer

If God and His Word are not known and received, the devil and his works will gain the ascendancy; if the evangelical volume does not reach every hamlet, the pages of a corrupt and licentious literature will.

Daniel Webster

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about HARVEST or HARVEST 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 242 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. What does the ant provide for herself in the summer? And gathereth in the harvest? (Proverbs 6.8)
2. What were the children of Israel to bring to the priest when they reaped the first harvest? (Leviticus 23.10)
3. In harvest, what part of the field were the Israelites to leave for the poor and strangers? (Leviticus 23.22)
4. What is said about the son who sleepeth in harvest? (Proverbs 10.5)
5. When did the Lord say, in Hosea 6, that He had set a harvest for Judah?
6. In Matthew 13, what did the Lord say they should let the tares and wheat do until the harvest?
7. In the same chapter, the Lord said the harvest was what?
8. In Luke 10, the Lord said that the harvest truly was what? What did He tell them to pray the Lord of the harvest to do?
9. In Revelation 14, an angel said that the time was come for the Lord to thrust in His sickle and reap. Why?
10. In Jeremiah 8, what follows the words: *"The harvest is past, the summer is ended"*?

ANSWERS TO OCTOBER QUESTIONS

1. Unclean. (Leviticus 13.3)
2. The unclean and the clean. (Ezekiel 44.23)
3. What God had cleansed. (Acts 10.15)
4. Their uncleanness. (Ezekiel 36.29)
5. Make me clean. I will; be thou clean. (Matthew 8.2,3)
6. All your filthiness and all your idols. (Ezekiel 36.25)
7. A clean heart. (Psalm 51.10)
8. Throughly. Mine iniquity. (Psalm 51.2)
9. *"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rages; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."* (Isaiah 64.6)
10. The blood of Jesus Christ. (1 John 1.7)

A THUNDERSTORM

“The voice of Thy thunder was in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook” (Psalm 77.18).

The awful thunder rolls,
The rain descends in floods;
The power which controls
The elements, is God's.

Therefore, I will not fear
Although the lightnings flash,
For God is very near
When peals of thunder clash.

He who in days gone by
The winds and waves did stay,
Who lives and reigns on high,
The elements obey.

And well I know this much,
That while He reigns on high,
No earthly storms can touch
The apple of His eye.

What is the outward storm
To that which is within,
Which fills with soul alarm
Lest perish we, in sin?

The earthly storms are meant
The parched earth to revive,
And inward ones are sent
To keep my soul alive.

Lord, I would not repine
When raging billows roll,
For, if Lord, I am Thine
They good shall bring my soul.

O, keep me close to Thee,
Teach me to grow in grace;
If painful my lot be,
O, let me see Thy face.

By Thy Almighty power
Teach me my helplessness;
In every trying hour,
O, be Thou near to bless.

Lilian Grace Robinson (1884-1940)

The Friendly Companion



“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”
(Matthew 16.26)

December 2022

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

Recently we heard that a pair of 1880's Levi blue jeans, found in an abandoned mine, was sold at auction for \$87,400. It was reported that two or three similar pairs of jeans exist and are found in museums. The average cost of old, vintage jeans is about one hundred dollars. A denim expert said that this pair of one hundred and forty-year-old jeans was durable enough to be worn.

The man who found them has spent five years exploring abandoned mines, but he has never found a pair of jeans of equal quality. Two men joined together to purchase the blue jeans. They expressed a desire to sell them to the Metropolitan Museum of Art or the Smithsonian Institute in Washington D.C.

There was no sales ticket on these jeans, such as we find on items of clothing when we go shopping. Most of us would have considered them to be of little worth. We would have been ready to throw them away. We would consider it an extreme waste of money.

When we begin to understand the ruined state that all mankind has fallen into as sinners before God, our condition is worse than those old, worn-out, dirty, offensive-smelling jeans. When the eyes of our understanding are opened by the Holy Spirit, we see something of our sinful ways, vile thoughts, evil lusts, filthy desires and abominable pride. What an awful condition we are in! We may hear it described by ministers or read accounts of those in the Bible, yet until a work of grace is begun in our hearts, we do not feel that we are in such a state.

The hymnwriter, John Fawcett, describes this experience in hymn 238:

But when, great God, Thy light divine
Had shone on this dark soul of mine,
Then I beheld, with trembling awe,
The terrors of Thy holy law.

How dreadful now my guilt appears,
In childhood, youth and growing years;
Before Thy pure discerning eye,
Lord, what a filthy wretch am I!

When this is felt, we are ready to conclude that God will have nothing to do with us. We are nothing but darkness. He is nothing but light. We are full of pollution. He is perfect holiness. *"We are all as an unclean thing"* (Isaiah 64.6). He is spotlessly pure.

How can God do anything but cast us away from Him? This question has troubled men from the earliest times. The history of Job took place very early in biblical times, and he asked the profound question, *"How should man be just with God?"* (Job 9.2) *"For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; ... yet doth He devise means, that His banished be not expelled from Him"* (2 Samuel 14.14). These *"means"* are the things God has done in His dear Son, the Lord Jesus: the holy, righteous life that He lived to provide a robe to cover them; His sufferings and death to cancel the penalty of the law and to satisfy the anger of God against them; and the shedding of His precious blood to pay the exceedingly great price to set them free.

The exorbitant price of \$87,400 for old, worn-out, denim jeans could not improve their condition. However, the work of Jesus and the price He paid for poor sinners completely changes their state before a holy God. No longer are they seen in their unclean and sinful state, but rather in a perfect righteousness, without fault, before the heart-searching eye of God. He will say of them: *"Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee"* (Song of Solomon 4.7).

And did the darling Son of God
For sinners deign to bleed?
The purchase of that precious blood
Must needs be rich indeed.

God's wisdom would not pay for toys
So great a price as this;
'Tis God-like glory, boundless joys;
'Tis unexampled bliss.

Gadsby's Hymn 803 (2nd part)

The Lord Jesus was willing to pay the greatest price to purchase His people. They are "*not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold ... but with the precious blood of Christ*" (1 Peter 1.18,19). The blood of Jesus is so precious because it cleanses from all sin, makes an atonement for the soul and speaks for poor sinners in the court of heaven, where it is sprinkled before God.

With loving wishes from the Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

Perhaps you have gone to buy something from the store, and you had to pay for it by weight. That is especially true when you buy meat, fruit and cheese. Sometimes, packages of food have already been weighed, with the price marked on them. Otherwise, the product may be placed on a scale when you check out. In most cases, a digital scale provides an accurate measurement.

In the 1950's, electric scales were invented. They were designed with a gauge to measure the force of weight that is placed on the scale. That is converted into an electrical signal, which is received and converted into a weight reading.

Years ago, a balance scale was used, like you see on our front cover picture. The seller would place a standard weight on one side and the product to be purchased on the other side, until both sides of the scale were balanced. If it was unbalanced, you would either pay too much, or you would receive more than you paid for. That would not be right, would it?

When the Editor first began to work in the building industry, he fondly remembers going to a hardware store to purchase nails for building cabinets and other things in the houses. Usually, ten pounds of nails of three different lengths were

purchased. The owner of the hardware store had a scale similar to the one on the front cover. He put a ten-pound weight on one side and filled a tray on the other side with the nails until the scale was evenly balanced. There was always a lot of dust in the tray, which neither of us paid any attention to, as it had no significant weight.

God has a balance that is far more accurate than the digital or electronic scales of the present day. In Proverbs 16.11 we read, *"A just weight and balance are the LORD's: all the weights of the bag are His work."* We are also told: *"A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is His delight"* (Proverbs 11.1). Job's desire was to be weighed in *"an even balance"* (Job 31.6).

God weighs our actions and our words in His balance. When God puts the weight of His holy law on one side of the balance and poor sinners, like ourselves, on the other side, the scale does not balance. We are counted as *"the small dust of the balance."* Thus, David writes in Psalm 26.9, *"Surely men of low degree"* – the least or poorest – *"are vanity, and men of high degree"* – the greatest or wealthiest – *"are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity."*

Perhaps you remember when King Belshazzar saw a hand writing on the wall, and Daniel was called to interpret. One of the words on the wall was *"TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting"* (Daniel 5.27). Belshazzar was weighed on God's scale of righteousness, and the scale was unbalanced. He did not meet God's standard of measurement. How solemn!

The truth is that, by nature, we are all found lacking because of sin, just as Belshazzar was. What can possibly balance that scale? Only one thing: the blood of Jesus Christ. *"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"* (Romans 6.23). Jesus Christ, through His death, has balanced the scales of God's justice for His people. We read, *"Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other"* (Psalm 85.10). May that be true for each of us.

FALSE WEIGHTS

My employer often told the following anecdote about a person who had a general shop in a small village in Sussex. He kept a magpie in the shop, which had been taught to talk. This man had a set of weights which were very much worn and no longer accurate; however, he continued to use them. When he expected the inspector to come and examine the weights, he put new ones on the counter, and hid the old ones.

One day, when he went out to get orders from customers, he saw the inspector coming. He ran home and called out at the shop door, "Missus, put the short weights behind the counter; here comes the inspector." The inspector soon came and found the weights to be accurate. He was leaving the shop, when the magpie called out, "Short weights behind the counter."

"Oh!" said the inspector. Walking round to the other side of the counter, he soon found the short weights. The man was fined two pounds for his dishonesty, which was a considerable amount at that time.

In His Word, the Lord commands, "*Ye shall have no unrighteousness ... in weight, or in measure. Just balances, just weights ... shall ye have*" (Leviticus 19.35,36).

Adapted from Little Gleaner 1893 by A. Hollingdale

DOER OF THE WORD

A poor woman in the country went to hear a sermon, and, among other evil practices, the use of dishonest weights and measures was spoken about. She was much affected with this discourse. The next day, the minister, according to his custom, went among his hearers. Calling upon the woman, he asked her what she remembered of the sermon. The poor woman complained much of her bad memory and said she had forgotten almost everything. "But one thing I remembered," she said. "I remembered to burn my bushel."

Adapted from the Little Gleaner 1893

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**EZRA PRAYS FOR A SAFE JOURNEY**

Several years after the temple was finished, Ezra led another large group of Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem. Ezra was a priest and a scribe. He studied the laws of God and taught them to the people.

Ezra was sent by the king of Babylon to see how the people in Judah and Jerusalem were getting along. The king said that any Jews who wanted to go with Ezra could do so. They were to bring silver and gold from the king and from the Jews in Babylon for the house of God.

Ezra thanked the Lord for putting such a thing into the heart of the king. He gathered the people at the River Ahava before leaving Babylon. They prayed unto the Lord for a safe journey. Ezra was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers to protect them. He had told the king that *"the hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him."*

The Lord delivered Ezra and the Jews from those who laid in wait to harm or rob them. After a journey of nearly four months, they arrived safely in Jerusalem.

QUESTIONS

1. Ezra was what two things? (5 words)
2. What did they pray unto the Lord for? (3 words)
3. What was Ezra ashamed to ask the king for? (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. Darius (or the king of Babylon).
2. Money.
3. A dedication.

Contributed

*“So we
fasted and
besought
our God for
this”*

Ezra 8.23

BIBLE LESSONS**THE BATTLE WITH FIVE KINGS**

What an exceeding great army the five kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon had when they all joined together to fight the Gibeonites. Joshua and the Israelites destroyed many of them, and God rained hailstones from heaven, which destroyed more than Israel had slain. Yet the five kings remained alive, and many from their armies.

Joshua and the people of Israel now realised the importance of the Lord's word to Moses: *"I will send My fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee"* (Exodus 23.27). Israel diligently pursued the five kings of the Amorites and their armies, as they tried to escape. The five kings tried to hide in a cave at Makkedah. When this was reported to Joshua, he commanded his soldiers to roll a great stone upon the mouth of the cave and to set a guard.

Joshua told his army to keep pursuing their enemies, even though the kings had been captured. They were to destroy the hindmost (last) part of them, so they could not escape and enter into their cities. The sun was starting to set, and soon it would be dark. Joshua realised that many of the Canaanites would escape through the night. If only they had more daylight, so they could completely destroy these five armies! Yet, no man had ever stopped the day from turning to night.

When we read of the great victories of faith in Hebrews chapter eleven, Joshua's name is not mentioned; though what he and Israel did in overcoming the great walls of Jericho is recorded. The wonderful answer to prayer that Joshua obtained by faith at this time must equal all the others that are related in that chapter.

Joshua cried unto the Lord in the sight of all Israel, *"Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon ... So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and basted not to go down about a whole day."*

The fleeing armies of the Canaanites must have been longing for darkness so they could escape. Yet, the night never came to

hide them. Joshua proved what the Lord Jesus said to His disciples, *“And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive”* (Matthew 21.22). It meant that the earth had to stop in its rotation! What an impossible thing! Yet, nothing is too hard for the Lord. The Bible tells us, *“There was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel.”*

There was another miracle that the Lord performed for Israel beside the hailstones and the sun standing still. You may remember that Israel had journeyed the night before, fought through the day, and now, for another whole day (night and day), they pursued their enemies. The Lord renewed their strength for the extended day. The Lord promises His people, *“They shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint”* (Isaiah 40.31).

When the armies of the five kings had been destroyed, the people returned to Joshua. Joshua commanded them to open the mouth of the cave and bring the five kings to him. These once proud and mighty kings spent the last day of their lives in darkness. When they were brought out, Joshua made them lie on the ground and commanded the captains of his army to put their feet upon the necks of these kings. Then, Joshua had a message from the Lord for all Israel: *“Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the LORD do to all your enemies against whom ye fight.”*

Afterward, Joshua slew the kings and buried them in the cave where they had hidden.

You can read about this in Joshua chapter 10 verses 11 to 27.

QUESTIONS:

1. Where did the five kings try to hide? (5 words)
2. What did Joshua command the sun to do? (5 words)
3. For how long did the sun haste not to go down? (4 words)
4. What follows the words *“And there was no day like that before it or after it”*? (next 10 words)
5. When the kings were brought out, what did Joshua command his captains to do? (9 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. They asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord.
2. Bondmen. Hewers of wood and drawers of water.
3. Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon.
4. *"Fear them not ... There shall not a man of them stand before thee."*
5. Great hailstones.

GOOD DEEDS

Do as much good as you possibly can, and you will be amply rewarded in doing it. However, always remember that no good deeds will merit God's favour or give you a title to heaven.

Nothing short of a saving interest in the Lord Jesus Christ will do this for you. Those who possess this interest, will necessarily bring forth good fruit. Jesus said, *"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me, ye can do nothing"* (John 15.5).

Adapted from The Little Gleaner 1885

THE WEIGHT OF A PRAYER

It was a quiet day in Herr Schmidt's grocery shop, but outside it was pouring rain. The time was soon after the Second World War. It seemed like just an ordinary day, and Herr Schmidt was taking note of what was needed to restock his shelves. While he was still busy behind the counter, the doorbell rang.

A lady, who seemed tired, came to the counter and quietly asked, "If it is possible, have you any food that I could give my children?"

Herr Schmidt raised his eyebrows and asked, "How much money do you have?"

The woman replied, "I have nothing to give you but a little prayer."

Her request did not move Herr Schmidt. He could not turn his shop into a relief organisation. This was his livelihood. "Write the prayer on a piece of paper," he said, almost mockingly, and tried to get on with his work.

To his astonishment, the woman produced a slip of paper from her coat pocket, saying, "I have written it already."

Schmidt was so confused that he took the slip of paper, but at once, he regretted that he had done so. What should he do with it? What should he say? Suddenly, an idea flashed into his mind. Without reading what was on the paper, he put it on the scales, saying, "Now we will see how much food this slip of paper is worth."

The shop doorbell rang again, and more customers came in. They stood watching at the front counter. Schmidt took a kilo of bread and put it on the scales. To his astonishment, the scale did not move. He took some packets of butter, a bag of flour and some eggs, and put them on the scales too. But the scale did not move! By now, Schmidt was completely puzzled, but he said nothing, as the other customers were watching. He heaped more on the scales, but still there was no movement.

Schmidt tried hard not to show how annoyed he was, but he could not. His face was red with confusion, and this filled him with dismay. At last, he said, "I cannot get any more on the scales. Here is a bag. Pack all the things in it, and leave me to get on serving my customers."

The woman tried hard to suppress her tears. She began to pack the food into the bag, and now and again wiped a tear with her sleeve.

Herr Schmidt stole a glance at her. He saw that, although he had given her quite a large bag, it was still not quite full. Without saying a word, he took a large piece of cheese and pushed it over to her.

The woman profusely thanked him for the food and was gone. After the other customers had been served, Schmidt began to examine the scales. He shook his head and ran his finger through his hair, saying, "Now what is the matter here?" He was soon aware what had happened. The scale was broken; but that was strange, since it was working perfectly before the woman came.

Schmidt, the grocer, is now an old man, and his hair is white. But, as before, he shakes his head and runs his fingers through his hair. He never saw the woman before that time, and he never saw her again. Yet, he remembers her better than any other customer. He often thinks of her, and he knows what happened was not his imagination. The slip of paper which the woman left him, he keeps safely – and on it are the words: "Please, Lord, *'give us this day our daily bread'*" (Matthew 6.11).

Adapted from The Children's Story Hour

THE CHRISTMAS DINNER

It was very near Christmas day, when two young children spoke to their mother with very sorrowful faces, after playing with their little friends. One of them said, "Mother, Henry is going to have a nice plum pudding for Christmas dinner, and beef too, mother, and you know we will not have any." Another little one added, "Sally says her mother has got such a bouncing leg of mutton."

The poor woman found this appeal from her dear children almost too painful to allow her to speak for a time. Although she had tried to commit her needs to the Lord, she had no money for such a dinner. Then she said, "Oh, my dears, what are you saying? You know I generally get you nice bread and butter, and now and then a rice pudding. You should not be discontented. Remember, my dears, how God sent His judgments among the children of Israel in the wilderness for murmuring against Him about their food."

Not long after this, a knock was heard at the door. When it was opened, an unknown person delivered a large basket of food. It was found to contain a large quantity of vegetables and a fine leg of mutton. Mrs. Smith immediately called her children to see the basket of food, and reminded them of their recent discontent. One of them immediately exclaimed, "Oh, mother, pray to God for us, that His judgments may not come upon us for murmuring!"

The mother, doubtless, did not fail to take advantage of this remarkable providence to impress upon their minds the goodness of the Lord Jesus unto all those who call upon Him. Yes, and that precious Saviour still says to His needy family, "*Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things*" (Matthew 6.32)

After a considerable lapse of time, a relative of Mrs. Smith died, leaving her property to the poor woman. It would give her sufficient income to live comfortably upon. However, her own brother disputed her title to it, and it was sent into a court of law. Here was another trial for faith! But she had a powerful and never-failing Advocate in heaven. She cried unto Him, and what has that cry of necessity done? Has it not moved the great, omnipotent God to arise and bare His mighty arm on behalf of His suffering people? The Lord spoke to the children of Israel in captivity in Egypt, "*I have surely seen the affliction of My people ... and have heard their cry ... for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them*" (Exodus 3.7,8).

While the case remained undecided, the husband of Mrs. Smith suddenly came home. She had heard nothing of him for years. Somehow, he learned that property had been left to his wife, and he wanted to lay claim to it. Here was another sore trial. He was the same immoral, abusive character that he had been in the past. She was in constant prayer to God and sought for His direction and protection.

In a short time, the judge, contrary to all expectation, decided the case. He said, "The property evidently belongs to Mrs. Smith, and she shall have it."

Before she had received any income from the property, the Lord removed her husband suddenly by death. Here, then, was a complete deliverance. Mrs. Smith was favoured to live in peace and comfort, as a monument of the goodness and constant care which an unchanging God exercises towards His redeemed family.

Adapted from The Sower 1883

THE WEIGHT OF THE WIND

“For He looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven; to make the weight for the winds; and He weigheth the waters by measure” (Job 28.24-25).

It was only discovered by scientists in modern times that the air actually has weight. This passage in Job, however, written thirty-five or more centuries ago, indicated that the two great terrestrial fluids of air and water, forming the atmosphere and hydrosphere of the earth, are both “weighed” by God’s careful “measure” to provide the right worldwide balance of forces for life on earth.

The remarkable power of God in weighing is also noted in Job 37.16: *“Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge?”* Clouds are composed of liquid drops of water, not water vapour, and water is heavier than air, so how are they “balanced” in the sky? *“For He maketh small the drops of water: they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof: which the clouds do drop and distil upon man abundantly” (Job 36.27,28).*

Meteorologists know that the weight of the small water droplets in the clouds is “balanced” by the “weight of the winds” – air rushing upward in response to temperature changes. Eventually, however, the droplets coalesce to form larger drops that overcome these updrafts and fall as rain. *“By watering He wearieth the thick cloud” (Job 37.11).* The coalescence is probably triggered electrically in the clouds themselves, *“When*

He made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder” (Job 28.26).

Although these verses are not couched in the jargon of modern science, they are thoroughly scientific and up to date. *“Lo, these are parts of His ways: but how little a portion is heard of Him? but the thunder of His power who can understand?” (Job 26.14).*

Henry M. Morris – Institute of Creation Research

SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF THE EARLY LIFE OF RUTH BRYAN

The preface to *Letters of Ruth Bryan* begins, “Ruth Bryan stands in no need of introduction to the Christian public as a stranger ...” That is not the case now. No doubt many readers have not heard of her before.

Ruth Bryan was born in London in 1805. Her mother was the third wife of her aging father. A little while after Ruth was born, her father was called to the pastorate of Zion chapel, Nottingham. Ruth was the only child of this marriage. Her father had children from his previous marriages, but these had all grown up and left the family home.

Although Ruth’s mother was concerned about bringing her up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, she seemed to lack motherly compassion. When Ruth became ill or was hurt, her mother showed no sympathy at all, and she expected Ruth not to complain! This must have been incredibly hard for Ruth, especially when she witnessed other children receiving tender compassion from their mothers. However, the Lord had so ordered it, that when Ruth was severely afflicted in the later years of her life, she herself made nothing of it.

Ruth appeared to be a very kind, loving girl, diligent in her duties. She was sent to a day school, where her behaviour was excellent. She struggled to make friends, being very reserved and shy. Many mistook this to mean that she was proud and above them. That was far from the truth, as she had a very low opinion of herself. Her reserved manner only veiled her intense

feelings. Already, at this young age, the Holy Spirit had begun the work of grace in her heart. She had a very strong sense of sin and struggled much with the plague of her own heart and constant failure to overcome those heart sins (sinful thoughts). For many years, Ruth was greatly troubled that she could see no definite time of a conversion.

When of age, her father sent Ruth to a writing school for girls. This was greatly used of God in the excellent letters she wrote throughout her life, having immaculate handwriting and an ability to structure sentences in a precise way. At the age of fifteen, her aged father felt that Ruth should learn a trade, so she was apprenticed to a milliner, who makes and sells hats.

A small extract from her diary around this time, reveals the great concern she had over her never-dying soul. "Oh, keep me humble, keep me from self-deception! Begin the good work, if not yet begun! Oh, may I not be a castaway! Break, break this stony heart! How long, Lord, how long? Make me **feel**. Oh leave, leave me not! Suffer me not to perish! Mercy, mercy is all my plea; for Christ's sake, have mercy upon me! Oh, precious, precious Christ Jesus, be Thou my Saviour, Husband, Friend – **my** Jesus and my all. Jesus, Jesus! Oh, that Thou wert precious to my soul."

Two years into the apprenticeship, her father passed away. This had a great effect upon Ruth, as her mother wished her to end the apprenticeship and stay at home with her. So, Ruth tried to earn a little by plain sewing, yet they struggled to make ends meet. In an attempt to help with the finances, her mother made a decision which affected Ruth for the rest of her life. Her mother decided to take in single men as lodgers. Bearing in mind that Ruth was about seventeen, this appeared a very unwise step for her mother to take.

One of the young men who lodged there appeared to be manly and confident. A close friendship developed, and Ruth fell deeply in love with him. To win her favour, he became very religious outwardly, with Ruth almost determined to be the means of his conversion. Her mother, and all the acquaintances

around her, could see through this young man's outward show of religion and self-confident nature. They tried to warn Ruth, but she would not listen. She was almost infatuated with him, and believed all the others were wrong in their harsh judgment and distrust of him. It was a very, very sad day for Ruth when she discovered that this young man was, not only a complete hypocrite in his religion, but he was also in a relationship with another woman at the same time as herself. The effect upon Ruth was tremendous! Not only did she feel the anguish and betrayal, but also the shame that she had been so deceived and made to look like a fool. From a young age, Ruth kept a written diary for the whole of her life. She meticulously jotted down the details of each day. However, the pages written during the time of her friendship with this young man were torn out and probably burned in the fire. Some time later, a close friend made reference to that sad time in her life. Ruth replied, "If you love me, you will never speak on that subject again while I live." She plunged into the depths of sorrow and distress, shutting herself away from all social contact for a time. It has been written that "her mourning was long and deep." As nothing is recorded, we can only believe that the dear Lord sustained her and helped her through this most upsetting period of her life.

For a number of years, Ruth had very great doubts about the reality of her religion. She knew that she was a great sinner and longed to obtain the mercy of God through the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, she dared not presume! Her diaries record the many spiritual struggles that she had, with the longing for the Lord Jesus to reveal Himself as her Saviour. It was on a Lord's day in February of 1838, when hearing a sermon, that the Lord seemed to take her aside and revealed Christ to her soul as her own precious Saviour. She writes of this occasion, "I had entered into the house of God with a sentence of condemnation, as it were, hung around my neck and came out with a free pardon in its place, signed by the infinite Jehovah." She was overwhelmed with joy and thanksgiving.

In the latter part of her teenage years, symptoms of cancer first began to be manifested in her body. The cancer remained dormant for many years, before breaking out in a most terrible form, causing her much suffering and pain. During this period of her life, the early lessons taught by her mother of making light of pain, were put into practice. This was evident in her ability to endure suffering without complaint. She passed away in July of 1860 at the age of 55.

A.T. Pickett

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH – PART 10

Though short, in many ways Isaiah chapter 39 is a sad chapter. It is another warning, among many in the Word of God, that pride is a great evil. Hart's hymn on pride (287 in Gadsby's) is so true and very instructive.

Against it preach, it prompts the speech;
Be silent, still 'tis there.

How subtle is the onset of pride! Hezekiah received letters and a present from the king of Babylon, and his heart was lifted up in a moment. He completely forgot to give God the glory for his recovery, and instead chose to show the messengers from Babylon all his possessions. Can this really be the same man who had cried out not so long before: "*O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for me*"?

Dear young friends, do be careful if and when those in the world around you seem to be paying more attention to you than you would normally expect. There could be a hidden snare under it all.

In answer to Hezekiah's weakness in pandering to the apparent friendliness of his enemies, there came a solemn rebuke from none other than the Lord of hosts: "*Behold, the days come, that **all** that is in thine house, and that which thy*

*fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: **nothing** shall be left, saith the LORD.” “All” was to become “nothing” – because of pride. Surely, we would be thankful that the chapter closes with renewed evidence of the work of grace in Hezekiah’s heart: “Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken.”*

Before I venture on into chapter 40, I will just mention something that was pointed out to me recently. There are 66 chapters in Isaiah, and there are 66 books in the Bible. The 39th book (Malachi) in the Bible marks the end of the Old Testament, and the 40th book (Matthew) marks the beginning of the New Testament. In some ways, the 40th chapter of Isaiah marks a new section of the prophecy.

The first two verses of chapter 40 are full of the substance of the gospel of Jesus Christ. *“Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.”*

Immediately, in verse 3, there is a cry which is cited in all four of the gospels, as: *“Make His paths straight” / “Make straight the way of the Lord.”* Verse 3 actually says: *“Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”*

Verse 4 goes on to tell us how this preparation work will accomplish much under the Holy Spirit’s power: *“Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low...,”* followed in verse 5 by the blessed outcome: *“And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.”* Of course, the whole passage up to verse 11 speaks of the literal coming of the Lord Jesus, concluding in verse 11, with the lovely figure of Jesus as the Shepherd over His flock.

Verses 12 to the end are no less important, telling of God’s omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence. The greatness and tenderness of His wisdom is revealed: *“With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the*

path of judgment, and taught Him knowledge, and showed to Him the way of understanding?” (verse 14) and then: “Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard...” (verse 27).

Verse 29 is a wonderful declaration of truth upon which we should surely ponder more often: *“He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength.”* This declaration is then amplified in the last two verses of the chapter: first of all, putting man in his right place. Dear young friends, verse 30 speaks to you! *“Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall.”* It is not pleasant to the natural ear at all, but may the Lord give you His grace to think over it.

Secondly, in verse 31, the Word spells out the way in which the gifted power and the increased strength will affect the subjects of it: *“But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”*

Chapter 41 is well-known for the three *“Fear [thou] nots”*, which appear in verses 10, 13 and 14. Isaiah 41 verse 10 has been a word of help and blessing to many of the Lord’s tried and tempted people. The writer feels to be much in need of the fulfilment of it, even as I write. In reading it out to my dear wife just now, I was drawn on to the next verse, 11. What an amazing promise the Lord gives here! *“Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.”* In fact, the Lord’s judgment against the spiteful enemies of His people continues in verse 12. This, then, leads into the double repetition of the *“Fear not”* in verses 13 and 14. *“Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.”*

Brian Mercer

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about THE WORTH OR VALUE OF THINGS. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor or Mr. Baker, either by post or by e-mail. (See page 266 for the addresses). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. Of how much greater worth was a Hebrew to be counted than another hired servant? (Deuteronomy 15.18)
2. The people who followed King David said that he was worth how many of them? (2 Samuel 18.3)
3. Wisdom could not be valued with what three things? (Job 28.16)
4. What else could not be equal to it or be valued with it? (Job 28.19)
5. What did Job say was made of nothing worth? (Job 24.25)
6. What was said to be of little worth in Proverbs 10?
7. In Luke 12, Jesus told His disciples they were of more value than what?
8. What price did the children of Israel value the Lord Jesus at in Matthew 27?
9. In Job 13, what did Job say his friends were?
10. In Genesis 23, Ephron told Abraham that the land with the cave of Machpelah was worth how much money?

ANSWERS TO NOVEMBER QUESTIONS

1. Meat; food.
2. A sheaf of the firstfruits.
3. The corners of the field.
4. He causeth shame.
5. When they returned from captivity. (Hosea 6.11)
6. Let both grow together. (Matthew 13.30)
7. The end of the world. (Matthew 13.39)
8. Great; send forth labourers into His harvest. (Luke 10.2)
9. For the harvest of the earth is ripe. (Revelation 14.15)
10. "We are not saved." (Jeremiah 8.20)

MY SOUL

I weighed the earth – its wealth untold,
Its vales of green and hills of gold;
The mines of many a far-off land,
With treasures hid beneath the sand;

The monarch's crown and costly gems,
(The scale moved not for diadems);
The heights of fortune and of fame;
The glory of a noble name.

Next came the sciences; and then
The pleasures of the sons of men,
With all the eminence that art
Or skill or learning can impart.

And lastly, all designed or done
By mortal man beneath the sun:
Against all these I weighed my soul
And found it far outweighed the whole.

Author unknown
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OUR MAGAZINES

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Brethren, pray for us.

G.L. TenBroeke