



TOWARD THE MARK

***“I PRESS TOWARD THE MARK FOR THE PRIZE
OF THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS.”***

PHILIPPIANS 3:14

*A MAGAZINE FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS
OF ALL AGES*

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Dear Reader,

“Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?” (Psalm 85:6).

Dear Christian friends,

Do you feel it in your own soul: the dryness, the lack of the joy of the Lord in your soul? Are you going through the motions day in and day out? We are all busy with school, work, and the pressure that comes with our daily responsibilities. We might even be going to the meeting place with the people of God BUT have No progress in our Christian life, no real enjoyment of the Lord.

We need a present reviving first in our own souls! In many places where the work of the Lord was seen in prior years, all is dry and barren. The gospel is preached sometimes, the ministry is given as usual but as a formality with no conviction and sometimes with no reality. Why is this? Because we all need to be revived again.

Spiritual life is low, voices lifted up in prayer are seldom heard, and the reading of the Word of God is neglected. Our schedules are filled with many things and the entertainment of the world is taking a big part of our time and energy.

No wonder many are falling into temptations and are entangled with what the world offers them. We all sense, if we are honest with ourselves before the Lord, the lack of power and blessings.

Let us go to Him, confess our shortcomings, and cleave to Him with purpose of heart. Let us purpose in our hearts not to be defiled with the king's food. Let us not feed on things of this world and not fill our hearts and minds with that which has no eternal value. Let us fulfil our heavenly calling and be true pilgrims and strangers in this world. Let us be true to Him as our Lord. Let us witness the good confession before the world as our Lord did before Pontius Pilate. Let us not forsake our assembling together unto Him.

From longing hearts then, let the cry go forth, “Revive us again.”

Yes, again; for we cannot live upon yesterday.

May the Lord use this issue to strengthen, encourage, and help you to be established so that Christ may be displayed in your life. Thank you for your e-mails and notes of encouragement.

Please keep praying for the Lord's blessing on *Toward the Mark*.

Yours in our soon-coming Lord,

Emil S. Nashed

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Quotations from Scripture are generally taken either from the King James translation or the J.N. Darby translation.

MILK

"The truth shall make you free"

"DIVINE POWER IN THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS CHAPTER ONE"

There are three distinct presentations of God's power in the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans.

- In verse 4 we learn that the Lord Jesus is declared the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection of the dead.
- In verse 16 the Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth."
- In verse 20 the creation displays God's "eternal power and Godhead," so as to render man "without excuse" in his responsibility as His creature.

Beholding the creation, the mind is awed by the almighty power that keeps the "fixed stars" in their divinely ordered way in the distant realms of the vast universe, where these mighty, blazing orbs trace their appointed courses with almost incredible velocities through the shoreless oceans of space. The same mighty power spins the sun upon its axis and keeps the planets of the solar system whirling around it.

On earth, God has made the power of His creation available to men. Mighty rivers drive giant turbines to transform their power into electrical energy, and the hidden resources of power accumulated in the coal and oil reserves have been tapped to drive the engines man has made. Men have recently discovered that tremendous power is locked in the atoms of matter, and they have secured the key to open this amazing treasure house of power.

The evidence this almighty power brings to man of the existence of God leaves man without excuse. If God is so great and so glorious, as evinced in His creation, it is surely reasonable that the creature should render to Him the thanks and praise of which He is worthy. But man is so held in the bondage of sin, and in the power of Satan, that he will deny the very existence of God, and even if he accepts that God exists, it is but to refuse the adoration and homage that are His due.

God, in His wondrous grace, has put forth His power to deliver man from the bondage of sin and from the power of Satan. This divine power is found in the Gospel, and millions of those who once were ignorant of God, as blinded by Satan, have known the liberating power of the Gospel of God. To avail ourselves of this divine power, faith in the Son of God is required, for the Gospel is God's power unto salvation to everyone that believeth.

It is good to see the hand of God in creation, but this will never save the soul; God's power unto salvation is not in the message of creation, but in the word of the Gospel.

Many vainly imagine that the recognition of God in His creation, in the beauties of nature, in the glories of the heavens, and in other works of His hands, is sufficient to secure a passport to heaven; but unless they believe in the Gospel of God concerning His Son, they can never have the blessing of God. To ignore the Gospel is to ignore the need of salvation, and to despise the provision that God has made in the riches of His grace.

The testimony of creation renders man inexcusable, but it does not bring to him the knowledge of God. God's power is seen in the creation, but God Himself is only known in the Person of the Son. Man is a sinner, and at a distance from God by sin, and the pretense of worshipping God and communing with Him in the works of His hands ignores the sinful condition of man, his guilt, and the need of salvation. There can be no true

worship of God apart from Christ; and the soul must first know God through the Gospel before it can approach Him in worship.

But the greatest demonstration of God's power is not in creation: "the exceeding greatness of His power" has been made known in the resurrection of His Son, and Jesus has been declared the Son of God with power by resurrection of the dead. When the Lord was upon earth He raised the dead. The widow of Nain's son, the daughter of Jairus, and Lazarus all testify to the mighty power made known in Jesus. Yet His own resurrection was the greatest exhibition of this divine power. The same power will be in evidence when the Lord Jesus comes to raise His loved ones from the grave, and also when He raises the wicked dead to stand before the Great White Throne for judgment.

Satan would fain have kept the Lord Jesus in death, but great as is his power, the power of the Son of God is infinitely greater. He was the Stronger Man on earth who bound the strong man and spoiled his goods. Even now the powers of darkness would utterly destroy every vestige of good in this world if they were able, bringing into desolation the whole scene; but they can only go as far as the Lord allows them, for "by Him all things consist" (Colossians 1:17).

The Christian as knowing God's power unto salvation, through believing the Gospel, delights to contemplate the subject of the Gospel, the Son of God, whose mighty power was seen in His resurrection, the same power that enabled Him to pass through this world in the perfection of holiness for the will of God; and the One whose divine power is displayed in all the creation. We rejoice to see His hand in creation, displaying His wisdom and His greatness; to see Him overthrowing all our foes in resurrection: and to know His heart of love made known in the Gospel.

MEAT

"Sanctify them by the truth"

' COGNATE TRUTHS OF 2 PETER 1

Peter's first epistle was addressed to the dispersed Jewish believers in the places named in the opening verse, and the second epistle is addressed to the same (2 Peter 3:1), but it is also addressed to "them that have obtained like precious faith with us" (2 Peter 1:1), so that we do well to avail ourselves of the precious ministry that the Spirit of God sent to believers among God's ancient people through the Apostle to the circumcision. The apostle's own summation of his first letter is, "This is the true grace of God wherein ye stand" (1 Peter 5:12); and he writes his second letter that the saints might ever have before them "the present truth" (2 Peter 1:12).

Grace and Peace (2 Peter 1:2)

In invoking "grace and peace" upon the saints, Peter joins the great apostle to the Gentiles who, in every epistle bearing his name, uses the same words in some form or other in his opening address. Every saint of God stands before Him in grace, but he also needs the resources of divine grace to sustain him in every aspect of his life in this world. It is the same with the assembly of God. Human resources are of no avail in divine things, only the resources of God's grace in Christ can sustain His assembly, but these resources are infinite and readily available in our exalted Head in heaven.

The "precious faith" that we have received from God has also brought with it peace towards God, so that our relations with Him

¹ Editor's note. Cognate in this context means "related" or "connected."

are undisturbed by all that surrounds us in this world: It is a peace that rests upon the work that Christ accomplished on the cross for the glory of God and our eternal blessing. But God would have us to be in the enjoyment of His peace, and of Christ's peace, and that peace should mark us in all our ways. Nothing can disturb the peace of the God of peace, and this can be ours in true enjoyment if our lives are marked by prayer, supplication and thanksgiving (Philippians 4:6–9). Christ's own peace has been left as a legacy to His own (John 14:27; 20:19, 21), to be known practically in all their circumstances and conditions of life (Colossians 3:15). All our ways are to be like Christ's, our "feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace."

Life and Godliness (2 Peter 1:3)

All that is needed for our life in this world has been given to us by God's own power. In ourselves we are weak, but we have the power of God that enables us to live for His pleasure. When Paul exhorted Timothy to be "partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel," he knew that Timothy was weak in body and timid in spirit, but he also knew that what he exhorted could be done, for it was not in any strength of his own that he was to do this, but "according to the power of God" (2 Timothy 1:8). God is constantly watching over His own, every moment of their lives is under His eye, and He has provided in His divine power everything needed to carry out His will, to enable us to enjoy Himself and His things, and to preserve us until the coming of the Lord.

Godliness is neither valued nor desired by the men of this world; nor is there anything in the natural man that can give pleasure to God. The Scripture shows us that the secret of godliness is bound up with the Person of Christ who came into this world and has been received up into glory (1 Timothy 3:16). Engagement with the glorified Christ will enable us to lay hold upon the divine

power that has provided everything for us in Him, so that we might come out like Him in this world.

Glory and Virtue (2 Peter 1:3)

We have all things pertaining to life and piety through the knowledge of Him who has called us by glory and virtue. How wonderful is the knowledge of God! It is light for the path of the Christian through the darkness of this world; it is divine power to sustain him in all things, and at all times, for the will of God. The man of this world knows neither life nor godliness, for he knows not God. The life that God has communicated to His own is His own life, and it is the manifestation of this life, sustained in communion with Christ, that delights the heart of God.

God has called us by glory and to glory, and by virtue to virtue. The divine glory beckons us to the scene into which Christ is gone, and where we soon shall be with Him; and engagement with Christ in that glory enables us to walk like Him and for Him here. The virtue by which we are called is to be found in the precious faith that God has given us (v. 5), and we are to use diligence to this end. As a royal priesthood, we are to “show forth the praises” (or virtues) “of Him who hath called” us out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).

Exceeding Great and Precious Promises (2 Peter 1:4)

The promises that God gave to Abraham and to David were wonderful, and the saints of God down the ages looked for their fulfilment in Messiah. Many of these promises were fulfilled in the coming of the Lord Jesus, and many more will be fulfilled when He returns to set up His kingdom. But those whom God has called by glory and virtue have promises of a much higher order than those that belong to Israel as His earthly people. The heavenly promises that associate the saints with a heavenly Christ are indeed “exceeding great and precious.”

It is by these wondrous promises that the saints partake of the divine nature. What God has given to us in Christ and through Christ has brought us where we have part in the love, holiness, and righteousness of God. These things are ours as having the nature of God, but they are to be manifested in us practically as being the children of God. All that God has brought us into now, and all that yet awaits us at Christ's coming, is the fruit of the exceeding great and precious promises that God in His sovereign love and choice has given to those He has made His own. The promises of Christianity far exceed the promises made to Israel, and they are precious as founded upon the Living Stone, who is "chosen of God, and precious" (1 Peter 2:4).

Calling and Election (2 Peter 1:10)

In his first epistle Peter had written of the divine call (1 Peter 1:15; 2:9, 21; 3:9; 5:10), and in this chapter he has written of it in verse 3. Of the saints as God's elect he had also written in the second verse of the first chapter of the first letter. Now the apostle exhorts, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure." God has chosen and called His people that they might be for His pleasure in this world while waiting for the Lord to come and bring them into the fulness of the blessing He has prepared for them. We are not to live in this world as if we had our portion here, like those who are mere professors, and not the called and chosen of God.

God desires that the fruits of righteousness might be borne by His own, not barren and unfruitful like those who profess to belong to Him but who have no living link in their souls with Him. The fruit of the divine nature is to be cultivated in exercise of heart and displayed in all its beautiful traits in the daily life. In this way we make our calling and election sure; we show in our lives that we belong to God. Mere professors are liable to be ensnared again with what engaged them before they accepted the Christian profession, and to become apostates. In marked contrast, true

believers are waiting for their portion with Christ in His everlasting kingdom.

Power and Coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:16)

The religious systems of the world are filled with “cunningly devised fables,” which have originated in the heart and mind of man as inspired of Satan, and many have been deceived by them. But everything in the Christian revelation is transparent, God having chosen His own instruments and witnesses for making His truth known. Simon Peter had been a witness of the divine power made manifest in Jesus in this world, but it is not to this he refers in this Scripture. He could readily have spoken of what he had seen when Jesus raised the dead, and opened the eyes of the blind, but the Spirit of God had other instruments for this. To Peter the Spirit gave the privilege, in speaking of the “present truth,” to recall the scene on the “holy mount” and to tell of its significance.

What Peter saw on the mount of transfiguration, and what he heard, left a lasting impression on his heart and mind. In witnessing the glory shining in the face of Jesus, and in hearing the Father’s voice telling that Jesus was His own Son, there was the divine assurance of the majesty of Jesus, and of His power and coming. The supreme glory shining in the face of Jesus was the evidence of His power, power that had already been manifested in His path of sorrow and would soon be displayed in the subjugation of all His foes and in the introduction of His kingdom.

Moses and Elias foreshadowed the saints who would share the heavenly side of His kingdom, those who would receive the touch of His resurrection power and those raptured to heaven without dying. Peter, James, and John, whose feet were upon the earth, told of the earthly company who would be with Jesus in the day of His glory. It was essential that Jesus should come in His glory to give effect to that which the disciples saw that day, even as Jesus had said to them. “There be some standing here, which shall

not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom” (Matthew 16:28). What was foreseen that day will soon have its fulfilment when Jesus comes again.

Honor and Glory (2 Peter 1:17)

The subject of conversation on the glory mount was of the coming departure of the Lord Jesus Christ. Soon He would go up to Jerusalem and be rejected and crucified, but after His sufferings were over there would be the honor and glory reserved for Him by the Father. How delighted the Father had been with the path trodden by His beloved Son, which brought constant, unbroken joy to His heart: and what confidence the Father had in the Son as to all that immediately lay before Him. Anticipating the completion of the work He had given Him to do, the Father indicated on the holy mount what He had in store for the One who had glorified Him and would glorify Him again.

Already Jesus has been “crowned with glory and honor” at God’s right hand (Hebrews 2:9), but Peter looks forward to the time when there shall be the public display of that which he saw on the mountain, and of what we see by faith now as we look up to heaven and see Jesus. The honor and the glory are His because of what He has done, but also because of who He is, as declared by the Father that day, “My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

The Day Dawn and the Day Star (2 Peter 1:19)

The dawning of Messiah’s Day had been long looked for by saints in past dispensations. While on earth the Lord Jesus said to the Jews, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it and was glad” (John 8:56). In faith’s vision, Abraham saw the day of Christ. David, as the sun set upon his kingdom, in his last words spake of that glorious day, saying, “And He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds” (2 Samuel 23:4). On the last page of the Old Testament Malachi also saw that day, writing, “Unto you that

fear my Name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings” (Malachi 4:2).

Zacharias, the father of John Baptist, saw in Jesus “the Dayspring from on high” visiting His people (Luke 1:78). It was not yet the time for the dawning of the day of Christ, but as the Dayspring there was the springing up of the beams of Messiah’s light, not to herald the day, but to enlighten His faithful remnant, to bring to them the “knowledge of salvation...by the remission of their sins.” It was the same light that would illumine the earth in a coming day, but it now brought the knowledge of God to His people, “to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

The prophetic word is a lamp that gives light before the dawn of the day, a day much spoken of in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; but there is also the day star, or the morning star, which faith beholds in the darkness before the dawn. We are left in no doubt as to this Day Star, for the Lord Jesus has said, “I am...the bright and Morning Star” (Revelation 22:16). While we wait for the Lord to come and usher in the day of His kingdom and glory, we have Himself to engage and fill our hearts; Himself as the coming One, the Herald of the coming Day.

Here the desire of the apostle is that the Day Star should arise in the hearts of the saints. The bright prospect of the coming of the Lord is to be in the hearts of His own, so that our every thought, word and action should be colored with the prospect of His coming. Is the coming of our blessed Lord ever before us? Has the Day Star really risen in our hearts? It is blessed to have the knowledge of the coming of the Lord, for many saints are ignorant regarding this precious truth; but it is one thing to have this as a doctrine, and another to have it written indelibly on our hearts, giving character to all that we are, and to all that we do. To have Christ Himself, as the coming One, enshrined in our hearts is to have the Morning Star as risen in our hearts.

EXERCISE

"Exercise thyself unto piety"

HOW CAN I BE MOTIVATED?

At a time when human wisdom and philosophy is trying hard to add to or to modify the revealed truth of the Word of God, and this kind of thing becomes attractive to many minds, I want to urge every believer with all my heart to spend much time considering the most simple, vital facts of Christianity. If we have grown up with the knowledge of these things, our tendency is to take them for granted without vitally taking to heart and enjoying the great significance of every detail of what God has revealed in the person and work of His beloved Son. There is marvelous power in the right appreciation of all these things, power that only a child of God can know.

-Take time to meditate upon the wonder of the incarnation of the living God in the lowly person of the Lord Jesus. Though Himself the infinite, eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent God of the universe, He has become Man in marvelous grace (Philippians 2:5–7), a Man of perfect dependence and faith, whose every act and word and thought was beautiful for its simplicity, with grace and truth wonderfully blended in every detail of personal life and of His dealing with others.

-Think also of the amazing wonder of the willing sacrifice of this Lord of glory, when He was "led as a lamb to the slaughter," Everything connected with that unique death of Calvary is worthy of our deepest consideration and meditation, whether it is His humble dignity in submitting to the bitter enmity of mankind against Him, or in the more astounding, awful bearing of the outpoured judgment of God against our sins (the details of our guilt—1 Peter 3:18) and against sin (the root principle of evil personified as the horrible enemy of God—2 Corinthians 5:21).

Consider too that that sacrifice has totally cleansed every believer from his guilt (1 John 1:7) and has liberated him from the cruel bondage of sin (Romans 6:22). This deliverance is not understood by many Christians, though they have perfect title to it, and none of us properly take in the fullness of its significance.

-Another matter for our attentive contemplation is that all believers are “accepted in the Beloved” (Ephesians 1:6). Christ is the Beloved of God, who has been raised from the dead and exalted to God’s right hand, and “in Christ” every believer is just as perfectly accepted and beloved as He Himself is before God. **Let us take time to think deeply of His exaltation and our acceptance in Him.** Yet let us refuse utterly the common teaching today of “self-love,” self-esteem,” and “self-worth.” This is merely confidence in the flesh. “In the flesh” man is worthless: “They that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Romans 8:8). But “in Christ” you are of great value to God, for this is a position of absolute perfection.

-Connected with this is the wonderful fact of the Spirit of God having come to actually indwell every child of God in this present age of grace, to give understanding (1 Corinthians 2:12) and power (Acts 1:8) for true Christian life and testimony. This fact and all that is involved in it is worthy of our time to give it greatest consideration.

How good to be reminded too that Christ is our Great High Priest at God’s right hand, who cares for us in perfect grace, preserving believers from danger, trouble, and evil (Hebrews 4:14–16). Also He is our Advocate with the Father, mercifully restoring us if we sin (1 John 2:1). We greatly need His intercessory work yet may too easily forget its significance.

Let us also greatly rejoice that not only are individual believers so greatly blessed by these things, but that Christ also is “the Head of the body the Church” (Colossians 1:18).

He is keenly interested in every member of His body, and we ought to be too. He has united believers together in a unity that can never be broken and expects us also to act on this established truth, having real love for His assembly and understanding the significance of all that is involved in His headship of the body.

What sweet meditation too may be ours at the promised prospect of the coming of the Lord Jesus (John 14:3). This should be just as real to us as those things that are already accomplished facts, for it is just as certain. Its significance and attendant circumstances may well occupy our grateful reflection. If you are not glad to think of welcoming His coming at any moment, then search your heart before the Lord, and have every hindering thing banished, so that you can “rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Romans 5:2).

In all these simple facts of living truth (and in many more that have not been mentioned here) there is such power as to vitalize and stimulate the believer to wholeheartedly follow and serve the Lord Jesus. We need the pure truth of God for this. Timothy, a young man, was told by Paul, “Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all” (1 Timothy 4:15, NKJV).

It is clear that at the most we have very little time left us in which to truly serve the Lord; and to be a true witness for Him we ought to know well the facts concerning which we witness.

L. M. Grant.

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES!

1. Who was told by the Lord to anoint the tabernacle with oil?
2. Where did the men of the tribe of Judah anoint David as their king?
3. Who was the first woman to tell the Lord Jesus that he was the Christ, the Son of God?

REST

"Shall I not seek rest for thee that it may be well with thee?"

THE BLESSINGS OF A BROKEN HEART AND A CONTRITE SPIRIT

God clearly shows us in His Word the mind and attitude of heart that is well-pleasing to Him. There are several Scriptures where the Spirit of God tells us what kind of behavior pleases the heart of God and what blessings He has promised where there is such an attitude. It is our purpose in this article to meditate upon four passages in the Old Testament that show the attitude which is suitable to every one of us in our days. When such an attitude characterizes our behavior, we shall enjoy the seven promises that God gives in connection with this mind that is so pleasing to Him.

"The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit" (Psalm 34:18).

The mind and attitude that God desires to see in us and which is mentioned in each of the four passages we are considering is described in the following terms: our spirits and our hearts should be broken, contrite, and humble. Our whole being, our whole attitude of heart is humbled in the presence of God. We submit our will completely to the will of God. We feel deeply our own failure and mourn the sorrow and poor condition of the people of God. Not only will we weep and mourn certain days (Nehemiah 1:4), like Nehemiah, but we will also continue in prayer, as did that faithful servant of the Lord. "And confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against Thee: both I and my father's house have sinned. We have dealt very corruptly against Thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments which Thou commandedst" (Nehemiah 1:6-7).

When this is the way we approach our God, we shall find His promises fulfilled in our lives. The first two of them are mentioned in our verse:

1) God is near to us

If the Lord sees such a broken heart, He says to such, “I am near.” The disciples on their way to Emmaus asked the Lord, “Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent” (Luke 24:29). Considering the condition of His testimony on earth, don’t we have to say, “it is toward evening” and the day of grace is “far spent”? Is there not the same desire in our hearts, to ask: “Lord, abide with us, be near to us”? This verse shows that the attitude of a broken heart has the assurance of His nearness.

2) I will save

When we see such a lot of sorrow and so many problems and trials, how do we react? Are we looking for a “solution” in a carnal manner? We won’t find one. On the contrary—we may make things worse. But perhaps, like the apostle Paul, we are at the point where “we are perplexed” (“seeing no apparent issue,” 2 Corinthians 4:8). If in such a situation we really have a contrite spirit before the Lord then He will save us, He will show us the way so that we can add, like the apostle, “but not in despair” (“but our way not entirely shut up”). The Lord will show us a way. This may not be the easy way—but we will have the certainty that it is His way.

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise” (Psalm 51:17).

There are two further blessings in this verse:

3) A sacrifice, acceptable to God

The verse quoted above is preceded by the words: “For Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it: Thou delightest not in burnt offering” (v. 16). Several passages in the Old Testament show that God did not delight in sacrifices that were offered in a

wrong attitude of mind. A few quotations will illustrate this. “Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (1 Samuel 15:22). “Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High” (Psalm 50:13).

In Malachi, where the low condition of the people of God was very serious, God said plainly, “I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand” (Malachi 1:10). Against this background we can remember that in Psalm 51 God says that there is sacrifice which He will accept—the contrite attitude of a broken spirit. Not only should the body of the believer be “a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God” (Romans 12:1), but our right attitude of heart is also most precious to Him.

4) I will not despise you

The kind of attitude we are considering is one that the world despises. Those that gather to the Name of the Lord Jesus alone, perhaps here and there literally “two or three,” and who humbly mourn the humiliating condition of the Christian witness, are often in the eyes of the religious world only a poor, despised testimony. But the Psalmist could say, such a “broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.” And is not His approval what we should really value?

“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isaiah 57:15).

God introduces Himself as the high and lofty one, whose Name is Holy. And when He says that He dwells in the high and holy

place, inhabiting eternity, we can easily understand this. He is the Holy One, “dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto” (1 Tim. 6:16). Solomon rightly asked the question, “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee” (1 Kings 8:27). Do we not bow in worship and adoration as we go on and read of another dwelling place of God?

5) I will dwell with you

“I dwell...with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit.” God promises His presence and fellowship. The Lord Jesus said to His disciples, “If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him” (John 14:23). Connecting these two verses we could say that where our love to the Lord manifests itself in obedience to His Word in the right attitude of mind and heart we will experience this personal communion with the Father and the Son. “And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full” (1 John 1:3–4).

6) I will revive

This intimate fellowship of the soul with God results in joy and revival. If God promises to revive, faith can say confidently with the Psalmist, “Thou, who hast shewn us many and sore troubles, wilt revive us again” (Psalm 71:20). “Though I walk in the midst of trouble, Thou wilt revive me” (Psalm 138:7). The means God uses to revive us is usually His Word: “I will never forget Thy precepts: for with them Thou hast quickened me” (Psalm 119:93). This very personal encouragement in fellowship with God will further the desire in our hearts that the whole people of God may be revived, and therefore we pray, always considering our own weakness and failure, “O LORD, revive Thy work” (Habakkuk 3:2).

“But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word” (Isaiah 66:2).

Here we have an added characteristic of the mind that God looks for: one that “trembleth at My word.” We have already seen that the Word revives us. Yes, we may rejoice in the Word “as much as in all riches”; “as one that findeth great spoil”; “for they are the rejoicing of my heart” (Psalm 119:14, 162, 111). But on the other hand, it is the holy Word of God that speaks with authority to our hearts and consciences. Are we “trembling” at His Word, and endeavoring to order our lives according to it? Or do we try to adjust God’s Word to our behavior when we have to some degree already departed from it?

7) I will look to you

So, the Lord says, if there is the broken heart and the contrite spirit acknowledging the authority of My Word, then I will look to you with divine approval. “The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry” (Ps. 34:15).

Let us once again broaden our view from our personal situation to the collective testimony for Him and the place where He has set His Name. Even Solomon, the king, had the desire that God would look at this place: “Now, my God, let, I beseech Thee, Thine eyes be open, and let Thine ears be attent unto the prayer that is made in this place” (2 Chronicles 6:40). Let us listen to God’s answer to Solomon’s prayer: “Now Mine eyes shall be open, and Mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place... and Mine eyes and Mine heart shall be there perpetually” (2 Chronicles 7:15–16). Not only My eyes and My ears, says the Lord, but also My heart is at this place where the saints are gathered to My Name. This is surely a thought to revive us in these last days.

Michael Vogelsang

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q. What is the meaning of the laying on of the hands in Acts 13:3 and 2 Timothy 1:6?

A. This question is one which has caused some concern to many over the years. In Acts 13 Barnabas and Saul are identified by the Spirit of God to the assembled company “for the work to which I have called them,” and as a mark of identification and fellowship they “laid their hands on them.” **The expression “laying on of hands” simply refers to the act of literally placing one’s hands on another as a mark to identify with them; nothing is transferred from one person to another.**

The Apostle Paul took Timothy with him to assist in the service when visiting Derbe (see Acts 16). In 1 Timothy 4:14 we are told that the gift which had been given to him had been recognized “with the laying on of hands of the presbytery [or elderhood]”; in doing this, they expressed their fellowship with Timothy’s service in the use of his gift.

In contrast, when we read in 2 Timothy 1:6, “stir up the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands,” the word used here for “putting” means “conferring upon.” **This gift conferred upon Timothy was an apostolic gift given by Paul** through the Spirit of God and was to be used in a manner consistent with the verse 7: “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

In the case of the elders they identified and had fellowship with Timothy “**with the laying on of hands**”; the gift was given to Timothy “**by the hands**” of the Apostle Paul as the instrument of God’s power.

So, in accord with verse 7, in this day of weakness and departure the realization of the presence of the spirit...of power and love

and a sound mind, enables us, as it did Timothy, to walk worthy of Christ for His glory and the blessing of His people.

JAP

ANSWERS TO SCRIPTURE SEARCH!

1. Moses (Exodus 40:9)
2. Hebron (2 Samuel 2:4)
3. Martha (John 11:27)

THE LAST FLIGHT

The proof was in the DNA of the two large bones found in October 2008 at the crash site in California. They belonged to the unfortunate Mr. Fossett. In September 2007 he took off in a single-engine plane and just disappeared until a plane-crash site was found. Parts of a plane were found, but that was not conclusive. Not even finding his shoes and driver's license were absolute proof that Fossett was the man who had died in that shattered plane until the bones were found and tested for DNA. That ended all doubt.

He was a 63-year-old millionaire, an adventurer who notched up 116 records in balloons, airplanes, sailboats, gliders, and airships. He climbed more than 400 mountains and swam the English Channel. But one flight was his last, and he never returned. The largest air and ground search in U.S. history, involving dozens of planes and hundreds of people over an area of 17,000 square miles, failed to find him.

His flight into eternity is considered an accident. He couldn't fly over this mountain peak, and he didn't plan on the sight of the mountainside rushing into his windshield. He was planning his next world speed record, but his record making is finished.

You and I will never match or exceed his records. For example, in 2005 he was the first person to fly a plane around the world without refueling. But we will compare in one way. You and I will also have a last flight. He suddenly went into eternity—an unplanned flight. So will we.

The Lord Jesus Christ spoke of a man who had great plans for his future. In the Gospel of Luke chapter 12, he said he would pull down his barns and build bigger ones to store the plentiful harvest he had just reaped. He would take it easy and retire on Easy Street.

He said, I have “enough...for many years; take [it easy], eat, drink, and be merry” (v. 19).

God said, “Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then who will get it all?”

He was so busy that he forgot about God, about his soul, and about the end of this life. The Lord Jesus said the poor rich man was not rich toward God. He abruptly left everything behind and stepped into eternity. No replay possible.

You might not be an adventurous person that does things like Mr. Fossett did, but death is real and there is no guarantee when you will meet it. Many people faced it in the last two years because of a virus called Covid 19. It is true some people were old and not in the best of health, but many young and healthy people also died from contracting the virus, and many others around the world died from other causes.

So, the most important question to you, my friend, demands serious consideration: “Where are you going to spend eternity?”

How much wiser it would have been to have followed the advice in the Bible: “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found”! That applies to all ages and conditions, but the day will come when He can no longer “be found.” We are no surer of tomorrow than the rich man nor the flier.

One second after your death it will be a matter of no consequence to you whether you die in a palace or in a cellar. But your whole eternity will hang upon the state in which you die.

There is no denying the fact that “The wages of sin is death”; but it is equally true—“the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

Yea, God commends His love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died on the cross for us. Divine love would bless the sinner, but divine holiness would not make light of sin. The full penalty of guilt passed upon the sinless Substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ. He took our place in death and judgment that we might have life. The love of God—the work of Christ—urge you to turn to the Son of God whose words are: “He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life” (John 5:24).

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31).