

The Bible Standard



And they found the stone rolled
away from the sepulchre . . .

. . . he is not here

he is risen

IF

If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

New International Version

— 1 Cor. 15: 17 —

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I —
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Robert Frost (1875 - 1963)

Photograph used on cover and opposite page, courtesy of FreeStockPhotos.com

THE FORK IN THE ROAD presents a choice, an opportunity, and the road not taken is the one which captivates the imagination. The quiet lane, meandering around hidden bends is alluring, teasing the wayfarer with pleasant prospects.

The *What If*

One of the most popular films, shown on American television screens at the Christmas season, is "It's a Wonderful Life," the touching cinematic drama directed by Frank Capra, in which the altruistic George Bailey (played by James Stewart) suffers reverse in his business fortunes and attempts suicide in the raging river. A guardian angel rescues him, erases all trace of his past existence, and takes him on a tour of his community to show him that it would have fared adversely had he never lived. Loosely related to the classic story by Charles Dickens, "A Christmas Carol," this fantasy film touched a sentimental chord with 1940s America.

The *If Only*

Countless multitudes live lives of regret, reproaching themselves for decisions not made, roads not taken. Countless others regret the way they have travelled and burned up their time and talents in the pursuit of gambling, sexual pleasure, drugs, and mourning the loss of youth and vitality. Happily, such regret can, and frequently does, lead to reform and rehabilitation. Many credit their recovery to faith in Christ, and we commend all who devote their lives to assisting others to reform their lives.

For those who credit any outcome to Fate, it is easier to be resigned to one's lot. The philosophy that "you go when your number is up" often masks an irresponsible attitude to life and an unrealistic evaluation of risk and consequences. But for the majority of thoughtful people, life is often tedious, and without direction.

"Lift up a standard for the people" — Isa. 62: 10

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Increasingly, our young people have a careless attitude toward life. The rise in drug-taking and loose sexual behavior is indicative of a generation which is adrift. This forlorn state of affairs is not unique to our day. Describing the hedonistic attitude of his day, the Apostle Paul, speaking ironically, says in 1 Cor. 15: 32: "Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die." Jesus includes in His parable a caricature of the idle rich who says to himself, "Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry" (Luke 12: 19, *New International Version*).

Repentance for sin is an alien concept, and is seldom activated. Defendants accused of gross perversion and deep crime emerge from courtrooms and appear, unabashed, before the popular press wearing broad grins, and flashing V-for-victory signs; corporate business executives caught in the glare of the press spotlight for corruption and fraud, dodge and weave around the truth, to evade punishment. And each one of us, in our private lives often excuse our unseen transgressions and dismiss them with a shrug of the shoulder.

"Sin" is an unpopular word. Its original meaning was "to miss the mark," as an arrow gone astray, to commit an error of judgment. In the Christian context it has wider implications, and covers a gamut of errors, faults, and wilfully disobedient behavior. All of us are prone to sin, by natural disposition and — often — through choice, the free exercise of our will.

The Essential If

It was the will (*disobedience*) of one man, Adam, that plunged the race into sin, and it was the will (*obedience*) of one man, Jesus, to the point of self-sacrifice, that made the future recovery of the race possible. The contrary actions of these two perfect men were governed by their *wills*: Adam chose to serve himself, and the consequence was the loss of his habitat and prospects for himself and his future generations. It was only the mercy of God — operating in harmony with His justice — that permitted Adam and his wife to live on until their impaired vitality under the curse was exhausted. Jesus, on the other hand, chose not to serve Himself, but to serve others.

The logic of the argument concerning the equivalent transactional nature of the ransom-sacrifice is set out by the Apostle Paul in Rom. 5: 18, 19 (*NIV*):

Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that

brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

This correspondency is overlooked by many commentators on the Bible. The ransom-price is not merely the offsetting *obedience* of Jesus — it is the *perfect human life* that He sacrificed on the cross. It was a real transaction in justice, not merely a philosophical notion — Jesus *died*, and for parts of three days *passed out of existence*. In John 12: 32 He forecast that He would be "lifted up" — crucified — and that as a result He would (eventually) attract vast multitudes of believers. In this He predicted His resurrection.

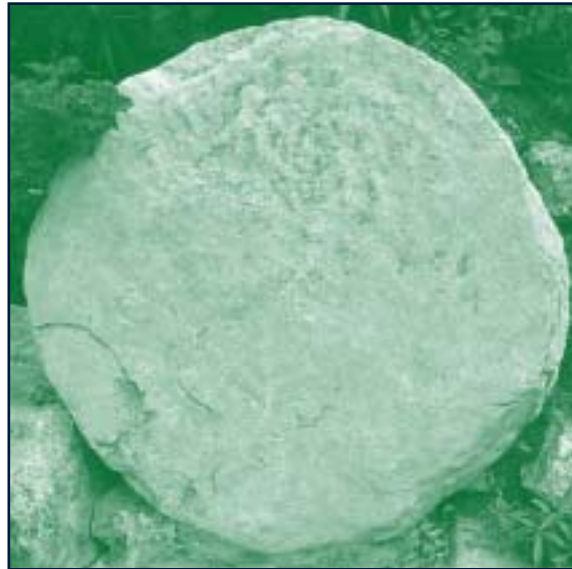
Had He remained dead, there would be no salvation, and His sacrifice would have been fruitless. And so He was raised. It is important to note that *He did not raise Himself*: He was raised by the power of God (Gal. 1: 1). By this, God guaranteed to all that His Son's sacrifice was acceptable and effective for salvation. It is on this assurance that the Apostle Paul

built his own faith and so encourages all believers.

It is the resurrection of Christ that secures our hopes for everlasting life. The Apostle Paul presents it this way: if Christ were not raised — then we would have remained in our sinful condition, with no hope beyond the present life. Christians would be in a most unenviable condition. Having exchanged in their affections the benefits and advantages of this world for the joy and exaltation of a future glory, they would be twice disadvantaged, sacrificing in vain, a pathetic people who had squandered the only life (on earth) they could ever have.

In defining His mission, Jesus said that He had come to "seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19: 10). He was willing to put Himself at risk to redeem the human family from the Adamic curse (see the following article, "The 7 Steps of Jesus"). He was motivated out of love for His Father, Whose plans and purposes He had embraced as His own ("I and my Father are one" — John 10: 30), and by compassion for the fallen race.

However, it was not merely the *virtuous obedience* of Jesus, nor His sufferings alone, that provided the redemption price. As Jesus Himself said, it was His "flesh" and His "blood" — in short, His life, His existence as a man — that paid the ransom-sacrifice required by Divine Justice (John 6: 51, 53, 55).



Imagine If . . .

Christ Had Not Been Raised

Had Jesus not been obedient unto death, there could be no salvation. But if He had died and yet not been raised, what then? This is the rhetorical question that underlies the argument of the Apostle Paul, quoted at the head of this article.

If Christ had failed in His mission, He would not have been rewarded with a resurrection. The Apostle Paul's saying that we would be still in our sins is another way of stating that we would remain condemned to die, for sin brings death. God, in His holy justice, could never reward sinners with eternal life. For this reason, Adam and Eve were denied access to the tree of life after their disobedience (Gen. 3: 22-24). Life is offered to the repentant sinner *only* on the basis of Christ's sacrifice — His ransom-merit.

But if Christ had not risen from the dead, He could not have appeared in heaven to present His merit (Heb. 9: 24). There would be no salvation, repentance would be fruitless — like that of Esau, who was denied it "though he sought it carefully with tears" (Heb. 12: 17). In such circumstances, God would be powerless to redeem: His justice would forever stand in the way of His mercy. We would be without hope in the world — forever — with no hope of recovery. Mankind would be dead, and forever dead, as though — in the words of Obadiah 16 — they had "not been."

If We Were Without God in the World

But some might argue that those who live their lives now with no belief in God seem to be quite happy, and do not go about in gloomy apprehension. They would say that Christianity is a crutch, that Christians are weaklings, lacking in self-confidence and competence. Yes, replies the Christian, we are weak. But we are strong through Christ. And if Christ had not been raised, where would the despised and poor of this world be? He has taken captivity itself captive, liberated the prisoner from the clamp of death, and given hope to those who had none (Isa. 35: 3, 4; 61: 1-4).

The truth is that most people live with hope in some form or other. Hope has been planted in the human heart by God as a consolation to His groaning creation (Rom. 8: 20-22). In practice, most people share similar virtues and vices with the general population, and take a practical approach to life which fosters enjoyment and appreciation of present blessings and privileges — family, friends, job satisfaction, and so forth. This world does not generally display an air of desolate, black emptiness — because Christ *has* been raised, and *has* overcome the world. In short, *there is hope*, whether all grasp it or not. If the world in which we live were universally and perpetually raw, merciless, and cruel, there would be fewer atheists and agnostics, for the natural, general drift of the human heart is toward hope. *Faith*, however, is a different matter, and not all possess it.

The Philosophy of Godlessness

Millions have fastened their faculty of faith to other objects than Jehovah — to the empty idols of self, fame, wealth, or pleasure. Large numbers put their faith in a Godless Evolution, though in day-to-day life, most people do not live in accordance with its philosophy of "red in tooth and claw." Some, atheistic or agnostic by upbringing or choice, have rejected any notion of God and Godliness. For such, man's existence has neither rhyme nor reason — a useless dead end.

Evolution has bribed many intellects with its promise of freedom from a Divine overseer. The technology of space travel, as remarkable and brilliant as it is, would not today have the prestige it enjoys nor attract such bright minds as it does, were it not for its implied quest for extra-terrestrial life to support the notion that life itself is no more than a cosmic accident, replicated on other planets.

To those who take the Scriptures at face value, such a search is inherently futile. Man was *created* once, and the Savior has died but once. The lessons taught by an experience with sin and recovery from it occur only here on this earth, and are not to be repeated (Isa. 45: 18; 1 Pet. 3: 18).

Happily, there is an innate sensibility in the human heart which, however much it has been perverted, produces a more equitable way of life than we might have predicted. The residual image of God in man is still very powerful and nurtures a hopeful outcome. This is what we would expect, as God has promised a day in which He will judge mankind in the most benevolent manner, and bring restitution to this earth (Acts 3: 20, 21; 17: 29-31).

CHRIST IS RISEN

The reality of Christ's resurrection is our source of confidence and our joy. It is that which underpins all of our hopes, aims, and ambitions. In full flight of assurance the Apostle Paul speaks for Christians throughout the ages (Rom. 8: 33-39):

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

. . .

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

* * *

The 7 Steps of Jesus

AT THE AGE OF 30, Jesus made His vow of consecration to His Heavenly Father. That act was His passing the narrow gate that entered Him upon the way of sacrifice, a way that He travelled faithfully for the next 3½ years, until His death on Calvary's cross. In order to carry out His mission, it was necessary for Him to take seven steps, briefly described below.

FIRST STEP

Self- and World-denial

All people have the right to satisfy their selfish and worldly (social) needs, so long as it can be done without sin — without violating God's justice. Jesus had these rights, too, but because of His consecration to God's will it was necessary for Him to deny Himself of these proper needs whenever they conflicted with His loyalty to God and His Divinely given mission.

As to Jesus' selfish needs, a few examples may make it plain:

- He possessed a love for the approval of others, yet did not allow this proper human sentiment to stop Him from loyalty to His mission, despite its unpopularity with the world, though it brought Him the loss of His good reputation.

- He also did not allow His proper love for rest and comfort, even when physically weary, to prevent Him from giving a blessing to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well (John 4: 5-26).

- Further, when He recognized — in harmony with the Father's will — that His time had come to drink of the cup of crucial sufferings and a cruel death, He did not allow His love for safety to make Him flee from those who sought to arrest and put Him to death. Though He would have preferred it otherwise, His utter submission to the Father's will, and His joy to do the Father's will, moved Him to go through with His mission to the very end.

As to Jesus' worldly, or social needs:

- He possessed a perfect human love that desired to have a close association with His earthly family, yet in order to be faithful in doing His Heavenly Father's work, He denied Himself this proper social sentiment.

- He did not allow His love for His home town of Nazareth, which was undoubtedly dear to His heart, or any other earthly home, to interfere with His Messianic calling. Comparing Himself with the foxes and birds, He poignantly acknowledged them to be better off than He was as

respects a home, saying, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head" (Matt. 8: 20).

SECOND STEP

Study of God's Word

His being perfect and possessing a perfect memory, we may infer that Jesus' reading and study of the Old Testament from His youth up to manhood had enabled Him to memorize and understand the Scriptures from beginning to end. However, when He was begotten of the spirit after being baptized at the Jordan River, He became capable of understanding the Scriptures in a deeper, more spiritual sense. He went immediately into the wilderness to study and meditate upon the Word for 40 days and nights. When He emerged, He doubtless had learned enough about His mission to begin His ministry. He knew what was required of Him and what He would need to endure, as well as other deeper features of the Hebrew Scriptures.

He had gained not only a greater knowledge and understanding of God's Word (a matter of the mind), but also a greater delight in, and love for it (a matter of the heart, the affections — Psa. 40: 8).

In Psa. 1: 2, we read a prophetic description of Jesus: "His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." Psalm 119 also describes His appreciation of God's Word, as in verse 97: "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day."

In taking this second step, Jesus received the instruction, comfort, faith, peace, and power that He needed to faithfully carry out His consecration, and successfully complete the all-important mission with which the Father had entrusted to Him.

THIRD STEP

Spread of God's Word

Jesus was always searching for hearers and never missed an opportunity to spread God's Word, doing so regardless of place, time, or condition. His audience was generally divided into three groups: (1) disciples (His most important hearers and the ones to whom He gave the most attention); (2) the multitude; and (3) the religious leaders (those who opposed Him).

He spread the Word by His lectures, sermons, conversations, and parables, taking for subject matter those things from the Word itself — its doctrines, precepts, promises, exhortations, prophecies, histories, and types — that would best suit the needs and conditions of His hearers.

The Gospels record numerous occasions in which Jesus prayed publicly and privately, but the greatest of all His recorded prayers is the one that He offered just before leaving the upper room for Gethsemane, and is regarded as His High-Priestly prayer.

Because of His vast knowledge and perfect character, Jesus was unrivalled as an expounder of God's Word. His hearers "wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth" and even His enemies declared, "Never man spake like this man" (Luke 4: 22; John 7: 46).

FOURTH STEP *Practice of God's Word*

This step refers to Jesus' exercising and crystallizing all the graces of character, and is the most important of the seven.

Because of His perfection, when He became spirit-begotten it was unnecessary for Him to go through the steps of developing, strengthening, and balancing the character graces. However, he did need to have these graces made unbreakable, and that took place throughout the 3½ years of His ministry. The means that were used were the trials, sufferings, and persecutions which He experienced, all of which enabled Him to "learn obedience" (Heb. 5: 8).

There are numerous graces of character which Jesus exercised — the greatest being faith, hope, self-control, patience, piety (duty love to God), brotherly love (duty love to one's neighbor), and unselfish love (sacrificial love) — 2 Pet. 1: 5-7. These graces permeated His character and enabled Him to accomplish good for all with whom He came into contact.

FIFTH STEP *Watchfulness*

For Jesus, watchfulness meant the mental, moral, and religious scrutinizing and guarding of His disposition, thoughts, motives, words, acts, surroundings, and the influences operating on Him. Though it was essential for Him to be watchful at all times, it was especially crucial during temptations — these times being danger times, as well as testing times. In order to become the merciful and faithful High Priest to His people, He had to be tested on all points of character, yet never yielded to sin (Heb. 4: 15).

He was especially tempted when, in the wilderness, Satan suggested that He use His miraculous powers to satisfy His hunger; to use other than Divinely pleasing methods to be successful in His ministry; and to serve Satan in order to bring about an earthly Kingdom. His watchfulness, informed by His knowledge and His use of the Scriptures, which He quoted in rebuttal, enabled Him to recognize these as temptations and defeat them (Matt. 4: 1-11).

The most severe temptations and trials came shortly before and in the Garden of Gethsemane, at which time He was tempted to plead that His cup be *removed*. The cup symbolized the kind of death He was about to face — public crucifixion, with all its shame and disgrace. His watchfulness enabled Him to recognize that it was not God's will to grant release from this cup, and as a result, He was completely and joyfully submissive to the Father's will (John 12: 27; Matt. 26: 38-42).

He faced severe temptations in His experiences following His Gethsemane struggle, for undoubtedly His flesh craved deliverance from the physical and mental sufferings that He faced. But He held firm and was able to overcome all these temptations and prove faithful unto the end.

SIXTH STEP *Prayer*

Prayer is closely related to watchfulness. Always being in harmony with His Heavenly Father, Jesus' prayers were based upon His delight to do His Father's bidding, and they were always answered. The good things He requested in prayer were almost always for His spiritual needs, most of which are expressed in the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6: 9-13).

His prayers contained all seven elements that make up prayer:

- Invocation
- Praise
- Thanksgiving
- Acknowledgement of dependence on God
- Petition
- Communion
- Assurance

Unlike ours, the Master's prayers did not request forgiveness for His sins — for He had none.

The Gospels record numerous occasions in which Jesus prayed publicly and privately, but the greatest of all His recorded prayers is the one that He offered just before leaving the upper room for Gethsemane, and is regarded as His High-Priestly prayer (John 17). This prayer consists of five petitions (one for Himself, three for the Apostles, and one for the rest of the Church), with the balance of the prayer being an expression of beautiful communion with His Father.

SEVENTH STEP
Endurance of Evil

Jesus took this final step while taking the other six, in particular during trialsome experiences when He was called upon to endure evil. The evils He endured took on many different forms, such as losses, disappointments, the faults of others, hardships, necessities, temptations, opposition, alienations, fickleness of the people and His disciples, sorrow, sickness, persecution, and pain unto death.

When we think of all the evils that He suffered, and meditate upon the faithfulness by which He bore all of them perfectly, we joyfully proclaim, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain" (Rev. 5: 12). If we have given our hearts to the Lord in consecration and are taking the same seven steps, and ever feel like slowing down or giving up, let us consider Him and "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1: 29, 36; Heb. 12: 2, 3).

* * *

HAVE WE EVER contemplated the unspeakably calamitous results that would have set in, if Jesus had not arisen from the dead? Such a contemplation would be well to be made for the good of all.

If Jesus had not arisen from the dead, God would have been proven unwise, powerless, unjust and loveless; as well as a falsifier and perjurer. He would have been defeated in His conflict with Satan. His plan would have proven a failure. Jesus would have made a failure of the purposes of His carnation, His ministry, His sufferings and death. He would have passed out of existence for all eternity. He would not have gained glory, honor and immortality, nor heirship, executorship and vicegerency of God. . . .

There would have been no enlightenment, justification, sanctification and deliverance for the Church, no Gospel-Age ministry of it to itself and the world, no Great Company, no Youthful Worthies; and the Ancient Worthies would be dead forever. There would be no Second Advent, no first resurrection, no Kingdom of God, no Millennium, no lifting of the curse, no restitution, no final rewards of the faithful, no destruction of evil and no eternal enthronement of good and Ages of glory after the Millennium with the post-Millennial work of the Elect. The Word of God would have proven to be a delusion, our faith vain, the Apostles false witnesses and preachers, the Church the most miserable of all men, the faithful dead forever; we would be yet in our sins!

Unspeakable calamities indeed!

Prof. Paul S.L. Johnson in *Christ—Spirit—Covenants*, pp. 281, 282

of interest . . .

A week-long conference on the future of the world's supply of fresh water convened in the Japanese city of Kyoto in March. The third World Water Forum brought together about 10,000 delegates from 150 countries to debate solutions to the crisis facing more than one billion people who have no access to clean water. Though the conference was overshadowed by the crisis in Iraq, its organizers claimed that their discussions will have a larger and longer-lasting impact on mankind in the 21st century than current events in the Middle East.

Global water use has more than doubled since 1950, but one person in six has no regular access to safe supplies, and diseases from contaminated water affect 200 million people each year. Agriculture accounts for about 75% of worldwide water consumption, and industry 20%, much of it wasted.

United Nations experts told delegates that better harvesting of rainwater would have an important role to play in easing the shortage. Although there is agreement on the need to take action, some of the solutions are controversial. Pressure groups claimed that the forum was dominated by private corporations who favor grand projects such as dams and large-scale water diversion schemes, instead of simpler, "greener" technology. One model promoted as beneficial is China's practice of capturing rainwater in storage tanks, using a simple, ancient technology; the tanks supply irrigation and drinking water to about 15 million people.

— Reported by the *British Broadcasting Corporation*

BIBLE QUESTION BOX

Q Did Jesus really go to hell when He died?

A Isa. 53: 12, prophetically speaking of Jesus, says that He “poured out his soul unto death.” By His soul, the Scriptures mean His life, His being, for according to Gen. 2: 7, man does not have a soul, but *he is a soul*. Jesus became a man for the purpose of giving His life, His soul, as a corresponding price, as a ransom sacrifice, for Adam and the entire race of mankind which was in Adam’s loins when he sinned (Rom. 5: 18; 1 Tim. 2: 5, 6; Heb. 2: 9).

When Jesus died, He did not merely *appear* to die, but He *actually* died. His human life was utterly extinguished. He was in the unconscious condition of death until the third day, when God raised Him up “from the dead” (Acts 10: 39, 40; Rom. 8: 11). Jesus did not go to a place of eternal torment — a myth invented by the heathen and made more God-dishonoring by the errors of the Dark Ages and their supporters.

Rom. 6: 23 teaches that “the wages of sin is death.” Ironically, those who, on the contrary, teach that the wages of sin is not “death” but eternal life in torment — a place which they improperly call “hell” — are unknowingly consigning themselves to the supposed eternal torment, as Jesus never paid such a price for their salvation. In order to pay such a price, Jesus Himself would have had to be consigned to eternal torment.

Hell Explained in the Bible

The word “hell” in the Bible is the English translation of several Hebrew and Greek words. The one Old Testament word translated *hell* is the Hebrew word *sheol*, and its corresponding word in the New Testament is the Greek word *hades*. Both of these words are used in the Scriptures to mean the grave, the unconscious condition of all souls, good and bad, after death, from which only an *awakening* from the death state can deliver any of them (Dan. 12: 2; 1 Cor. 15: 22).

Another word in the New Testament translated “hell” is *gehenna*. This word, however, is generally used in the

Scriptures to describe absolute and everlasting destruction, with no opportunity of being awakened from the dead. This condition is reserved only for the wilfully wicked.

This state of eternal annihilation is pictured in the book of Revelation by a “lake of fire” where it is also called “the second death” (Rev. 20: 12-15; 21: 8). In Rev. 20: 14 a distinction is also made between the first “hell” (*hades*) and the second “hell” (*the lake of fire*) by saying that the first “hell” was cast in “the lake of fire.” The explanation is that when all those in *hades* (the Adamic death condition in the tomb) are awakened from the dead during the time of Christ’s Kingdom, it will then be proper to say that the first “hell” will have been destroyed forever.

That Jesus went to hell when He died, we see from Acts 2: 27, 31 (compare Psa. 16: 10): “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell”; “His soul was not left in hell.” The word for “hell” in Acts 2: 27, 31 is *hades*, showing that Jesus’ soul, or being, was only to remain in the death state temporarily — in His case, for parts of three days. It would have been inaccurate for the Apostle Peter to have used the word *gehenna* in these verses, for that would have implied that Jesus was a wilfully wicked sinner, and consequently would not have experienced a resurrection — both things the Scriptures unquestionably deny.

For an examination of every Scripture in which the word “hell” occurs, please write for our 60-page booklet, *The Hell of the Bible* (price, 25 cents); and for the explanation of the parable of “The Rich Man in Hell,” see *The Bible Standard*, No. 371 (a copy free on request).

Q In 1 Pet. 3: 18, 19 we read that Jesus “went and preached unto the spirits in prison.” How and when did He do this?

A The “spirits” in this verse are those angels, spirit creatures, who became disobedient “in the days of Noah,” by materializing in human form and taking wives as they chose, and thereby producing giant hybrid offspring, the *nephilim* (Gen 6: 2-5; 1 Pet. 3: 20). As a result of their disobedience, God imprisoned or restrained

them from some of their former liberties and privileges. Jude 6 declares that “those angels who kept not their own principality, but left their own habitation, he has kept in perpetual chains under thick darkness, for the judgment of the great day” (*The Emphatic Diaglott*).

In 1 Pet. 3: 18 we read, “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” — He was raised and made alive as an invisible Divine being. Then v. 19 states that it was *by this* — by Jesus’ experiences in suffering, death, and resurrection, that “he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.”

Could our Lord have actually witnessed to those imprisoned spirits during the time He was dead, in the unconscious condition of death? It is not stated this way. Rather, it was by His *example of suffering and sacrifice* that He preached. His entire *course*, from step to step, preached a sermon in righteousness to the fallen angels. (Preaching without words is done also, for example, by the heavens and by Abel’s example — Psa. 19: 1-4; Heb. 11: 4).

As we read in Eccles. 9: 5, 10, “the dead know not any thing” (Eccles. 9: 5, 10).

Q As a representative of Christ’s Church, the Apostle Paul writes in Col. 3: 4: “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory,” and again in Rom. 8: 17: “if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” My question is, When was Jesus *glorified* — at His resurrection, His ascension, or as the above verses seem to imply, when His Church would all be with Him in glory?

A For Jesus to be glorified implies His installation in power, office, and honor (John 17: 5; Eph. 1: 20-23). The Apostle John sheds some light on when this took place when he states that “the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7: 39, *American Standard Version*). The time setting of this verse was during Jesus’ earthly ministry. After He finished His sacrifice, Jesus was raised on the third day and ascended into heaven 40 days later. Ten days after that, the spirit was poured out upon the assembled disciples at Pentecost (Acts 2: 1-4, 33). This demonstrates that prior to Pentecost our Lord had been glorified, for the holy spirit could not be given until He was glorified.

There is Scriptural evidence that Jesus’ glorification occurred not at His resurrection, but at His ascension. This is suggested in Rev. 5, in which Jesus (through the Apostle John) gives a picture of His own glorification. We first find the description of a search for One who would be worthy to become the Interpreter and Executor of God’s Plan (vs. 1-4).

The personal glory that Jesus received at His resurrection was not the same as the glory or majesty of office in which He was installed when “he ascended up on high” and was made a sharer of the Father’s throne.

Next, a worthy One is found, Who is spoken of as “the Lion of the tribe of Juda” (v. 5). This same One is then pictured as a Lamb, which leaves no doubt that it refers to Jesus (vs. 6, 7). Finally (after His resurrection and ascension), He was glorified, and then proclaimed worthy by an innumerable company of angels (vs. 9-13).

Glorification Versus Change of Nature

Jesus’ glorification, however, should not be confused with the change of nature He experienced at His resurrection, by which He was raised a spirit being of the highest nature — the Divine nature. When Jesus was a human being, He of course had a human body (John 1: 14), but in the resurrection, He received a Divine body, an inherent quality of the Divine nature being immortality (1 Cor. 15: 42- 47; Heb. 1: 3-5).

The personal glory that Jesus received at His resurrection was not the same as the glory or majesty of office in which He was installed when “he ascended up on high” and was made a sharer of the Father’s throne (Mark 16: 19; Phil. 2: 9). The latter glory and majesty, along with His Church, will be made manifest to all mankind in the Millennial Kingdom on earth (Isa. 35; Rom. 8: 19).

At our Lord’s Second Advent His Church, His Bride, were to meet Him and be with Him eternally (1 Thes. 4: 16, 17). The promise in Col. 3: 4 is that when Christ, in His Second Advent shall appear, then the Church shall also appear with Him in glory, with glorious spirit bodies of the Divine nature (1 Cor. 15: 39-44; 2 Pet. 1: 4). In Rom. 8: 17, the word “together” does not mean that the Church enter into the same glory as their Lord at the same instant. Just as their suffering with Him does not imply that the Church suffered at the same time, but that they shared the *same kind* of suffering, similarly, their being glorified with, or together, with Him is in the sense of their sharing the same glory with which our Lord has already been glorified.

* * *

LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY

— Luke 11: 1 —

IT IS AS NATURAL for us as Christians to pray to our Heavenly Father as it is for children to chatter to their earthly parents. And what can be more delightful to a mother or a father than to have a child confiding its thoughts without reservation, fully trusting, knowing that a loving and sympathetic ear is always open?

But we do not have to be voluble in our prayers. God does not ask us to pray at great length, or to use eloquent words. As the poet has said: "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed." God undoubtedly knows what things we have need of, without our asking, even as a mother often knows beforehand what is the unspoken wish of her child.

In the closest and most enduring of human friendships, words are not necessarily the binding agent that draws and keeps two individuals together. Good conversation and the exchange of profound thoughts may pass many an hour, but times of silent companionship may be equally heart-warming. There is a meeting of minds, the sharing of a kindred spirit, that does not depend upon speech. And so it is in our friendship with God. He is always there for us.

Yet our conscious, purposeful approach to God in prayer is undoubtedly pleasing to Him. The disciples of Jesus, observing His close intimacy with the Father in prayer, desired instruction, that they too might gain a deeper relationship with their God. The prayer Jesus gave them, for all its simplicity, has served many a Christian whose own faltering words seemed inadequate, and has brought immense comfort.

Constancy in Prayer

How many friendships wither and die for want of constancy! The unwritten letter, the forgotten promise, the neglected visit, all ring the death knell to friendship, and people are the poorer for its loss. How our Heavenly Father must grieve when His friends do not keep in touch! Though His mercies never fail, and He continues to provide our needs whether we ask or not, can it be that in justice He does not bless us so richly if we do not keep our friendship warm and alive?

The spiritual life does have its ups and downs, and the Lord understands that we have to pursue the ordinary duties of life and fulfill our obligations in the family, in our employment, in the community and among all with whom we have to do. In our modern environment, it is not easy to escape the

mental and emotional tensions that press all around us and disturb our peace, but the consciousness of the Lord's abiding and benevolent presence is a wonderful support.

Starting the day with God can work wonders

In coming to God we need not fear that He is too busy with matters of greater importance. Coming to Him is an evidence of our need and of our trust, and asking Him each morning to take charge of our day ensures that we have the Divine overruling in all our affairs. He hears us!

We do not have to detail each expected problem, or instruct the Lord as to how matters should go. Anxiety fits a Christian as little as distrust of mother-love becomes a child, and in the heart that relies on God, worry can find no place. Only if we permit the pressures of life to separate us from Him, shall we lose that peace of God that helps us to trust even where we cannot trace His leadings.

Continuing in Prayer

A Christian minister, asked by a class of young schoolchildren if he prayed all day, explained that he was always "in touch" with God, but not always talking to Him. They understood. It is the heart attitude that counts. At moments of crisis the thoughts do indeed fly to God for help, but that help is not absent as we perform our daily duties, giving our minds conscientiously to the task in hand. In this way we find He answers our unexpressed prayers, those desires and sentiments embedded in our hearts.

At the Close of the Day

Nightly prayer is for most Christians our chief meeting time with our Maker. It seems impossible to maintain a close relationship with Him, to build a Christlike character and a firm faith structure, without prayer; more than this — without *regularity* in prayer. But how often, at the end of a busy day, we find ourselves failing to draw near and show him our love and gratitude! Even when upon one's knees, the mind wanders, and the cares of the day and the morrow creep in. He knows our weakness — but there is a remedy.

Putting our praise, our thanks and our petitions into audible words, talking softly with our loving Father — be the words ever so simple — wonderfully focuses the mind and heart, and brings such a blessing that we shall never willingly forgo this greatest of privileges. "*Lord, teach us to pray.*"

* * *



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MEMORIAL DATE FOR 2003

Our Lord's Memorial falls on Monday, April 14, after 6:00 p.m.

GENERAL CONVENTIONS FOR 2003

At-a-glance

France: August 1-3

Nigeria: *Umunkiri*, June 27-29; *Danfodio Road Primary School, Aba, Abia State*, November 28-30

Poland: *Rzeszow*, July 12-14; *Krakow*, July 15-17; *Lodz*, July 18-20; *Bydgoszcz*, July 21-23

United Kingdom: *Hyde*, England, August 1-3

United States: *Massachusetts*, April 25-27; *Michigan*, May 24-26; *Philadelphia Area*, July 3-6; *Ohio*, August 15-17; *Illinois*, October 3-5; *Oklahoma*, November 7-9

Details

United States

Massachusetts, April 25-27 (Friday-Sunday)

Site: Holiday Inn, 245 Whiting Farms Road, Holyoke, MA 01040; telephone: (413) 534-3311 *Rates and Reservations:* \$82.28 (includes tax), for 1-2 people; noon meals \$12.95 donation. Reservations must be made directly with the hotel by March 24: *mention the Laymen's Home Missionary Movement Convention to secure special rate.* Please inform us how many are expected to attend meals and if transportation from the airport is required. Contact Mr. and Mrs. G. Vanags, 982 E. St. North, Suffield, CT 06078; or Mr. and Mrs. D. Herzig; telephone: (860) 478-3847; e-mail: dansue@herzig.net.

Michigan, May 24-26 (Saturday-Monday)

Site: Comfort Inn Muskegon, U.S. Route 31 at Sherman Boulevard, Muskegon, MI 49444; tel.: (231) 739-9092 *Rates and Reservations:* For 1-2 people, \$59.95; 3 people, \$65.49; 4 people, \$71.04 (11% tax included); children 18 and under stay free with parents; Continental breakfast included (served in motel lobby). *Please make your reservations with the hotel by May 2. Request the discount rate for the LHMM, and for a confirmation number.* Each room must be individually guaranteed as early as possible by credit card or check; you may cancel with 48 hours notice. For further information contact Mrs. Carlla Olson; telephone: (231) 894-4131; e-mail: colsoncjo@juno.com

SERVICES BY VISITING MINISTERS

The General Editor, Bernard W. Hedman

Massachusetts Convention, April 25-27

Carl W. Seebald

Massachusetts Convention, April 25-27; *Michigan Convention*, May 24-26; *Chicago, Illinois*, June 21, 22

Ralph Herzig

Massachusetts Convention, April 25-27; *Auburn, Massachusetts*, May 11; *Michigan Convention*, May 24-26; *Springfield, Massachusetts* June 1

Richard Blaine

Michigan Convention, May 24-26

Robert Herzig

Springfield, Massachusetts, April 6; *Massachusetts Convention*, April 25-27

Jan Wojnar

Massachusetts Convention, April 25-27; *New Haven, Connecticut*, May 18; *Pittsfield, Massachusetts*, June 8

John Detzler

Ukraine, June 28-30; *Germany*, July 5-6; *Rzeszow, Poland*, July 12-14; *Krakow, Poland*, July 15-17; *Lodz, Poland*, July 18-20; *Bydgoszcz, Poland*, July 21-23; *French Convention*, August 1-3

Leon Snyder

April: *Waycross, Georgia*, 1, 2; *Marietta, Georgia*, 5, 6; *Reidsville, N. Carolina*, 8; *Wilmington, N. Carolina*, 9; *Manteo, N. Carolina*, 10; *Norfolk, Virginia*, 11; *Springfield, Massachusetts*, 13, 14; *Pittsfield, Massachusetts*, 16, 17; *Wrentham, Massachusetts*, 18; *Auburn, Massachusetts*, 19; *New Haven, Connecticut*, 20; *Chester Springs, Pennsylvania*, 23; *Massachusetts Convention*, 25-27; *Erie, Pennsylvania*, 28; *Canton, Ohio*, 29; *Sand Ridge, W. Virginia*, 30
May: *Michigan Convention*, 24-26

Baron Duncan

Pittsfield, Massachusetts, April 13

Tom Cimbur

April: *West Palm Beach, Florida*, 5, 6; *Barbados*, 8-10; *Trinidad*, 11-15; *Jamaica Convention*, 18-21; *Keystone Heights, Florida*, 23; *Michigan Convention*, May 24-26

Don Lewis

May: *Chicago*, 3, 4; *Michigan Convention*, 24-26

June: *Lethbridge/Taber, Alberta, Canada*, 13; *Calgary, Alberta, Canada*, 14, 15; *Osoyoos, B.C., Canada*, 17; *Seattle, Washington*, 21, 22; *Eugene, Oregon*, 23; *Spokane, Washington*, 25; *Moscow, Idaho*, 26

James Shaw

Mustang, Oklahoma, April 27; *Michigan Convention*, May 24-26

Evangelists' Services

Robert Branconnier, *New York City*, June 15 (*revised date*)

Jon Hanning, *Sand Ridge, W. Virginia*, May 10, 11

Harry Hammer, *Grand Rapids, Michigan*, April 5; *Muskegon*, April 6; *Minneapolis*, June 7, 8

Dan Herzig, *Boston, Massachusetts*, June 22

Harold Solomon, *Boston, Massachusetts*, May 25

Robert Steenrod, *Derry, Pennsylvania*, April 6; *Beechgrove, Tennessee*, June 15

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