

GRACE & TRUTH MAGAZINE

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- A photograph of a father and a young child sledding down a snowy hill. The father, wearing a white winter jacket and a white hood, is leaning forward, smiling, and holding the child. The child is wearing a dark blue winter jacket with a fur-lined hood and a dark helmet. They are on a blue sled. The background is a dense forest of snow-covered trees.
- **Your Father Cares**
 - **Teaching Children**
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Does Anyone Care About Me?

A letter from a young man in jail recently crossed my desk: “I sit in here wondering if anybody on the outside really cares about me. I have nothing anymore. I have lost my dad, sister and best friend.”

Another story that I just read was about a traveling preacher who grew up in a Christian home during the late 1800’s, only 60 miles from where *Grace & Truth* is now located. His name was Charles Weigle. The *Hymn Of The Week* website says: “After returning home from an evangelistic

crusade, he found a note left from his wife of many years. She told him that she could no longer handle his preaching lifestyle and being gone from home so much, so she had decided to leave him. He became so sad and despondent that he considered suicide many times because he felt that no one really cared. His faith was later restored and he decided to write a hymn about what he learned during this difficult period in his life.” The hymn is well known: “No One Ever Cared For Me Like Jesus.”

*1. I would love to tell you what I think of Jesus, Since I found in Him a friend so strong and true;
I would tell you how He changed my life completely, He did something that no other friend could do.*

*Chorus: No one ever cared for me like Jesus, There’s no other friend so kind as He;
No one else could take the sin and darkness from me, O how much He cared for me.*

*2. All my life was full of sin when Jesus found me, All my heart was full of misery and woe;
Jesus placed His strong and loving arms about me, And He led me in the way I ought to go.*

*3. Every day He comes to me with new assurance, More and more I understand His words of love;
But I’ll never know just why He came to save me, Till some day I see His blessed face above.*

Spiritually, the first Person’s care that we see is that of the Lord Jesus, who died on the cross in our place. Only by believing can we then enter into a relationship with the Father and forever enjoy His care! The *Feature* articles this month are about the Father’s care. May they encourage your heart!

Paul

“Your Father Knows”

Matthew 6:8

by Paul Palmer, Sr.



As a young boy in Jamaica, I accompanied my father on foot from the Pedro Plains to the top of the Santa Cruz Mountains where we lived. We started the trip just before the sun went down and arrived at our destination just before sunrise. I did not know the way we would take or what to expect along the way. The only thing I knew was that I was with my father and that we were going home. I had complete confidence in the fact that he knew the way and would be there for me during the long dark night. He would protect me, help me, feed me and give me times of rest as we walked and talked together.

Such is our Father – but in a more blessed and perfect way. As Christians, those who have believed on the Lord Jesus, God is our Father. We delight to call Him “our Father” and we gladly acknowledge that we are His children:

• “As many as received Him, to

them He gave the right to become the children of God, to those who believe in His name” (Jn. 1:12 NKJV).

• “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God” (1 Jn. 3:1).

Our Father Revealed

It is the Lord Jesus who wants us to know that our Father knows and cares for His own. Among other things, He, the Lord Jesus, came to reveal the Father – to make Him known to us. No other person or angel could do so. It took One who ever was “in the bosom of the Father” (Jn. 1:18) to declare Him.

Seven times between Matthew 5 and 7 we find the words “your Father,” and three times “your heavenly Father.” Is there any doubt that we have a Father? No, none whatsoever! He is a loving Father who will always be there for us.

*“We have a Father in the heavens above,
We have a happy home prepared on high;
We have a Savior, whose surpassing love
Made Him content even for our sins to die.”*

(James G. Deck, 1802-1884)

Our Father's Knowledge

Our Father has perfect knowledge. He knows everything. The psalmist says, “O LORD, You have searched me and known me, You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O LORD, You know it altogether” (Ps. 139:1-4). He concludes, “Such knowledge is

too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain it” (Ps. 139:6).

“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God” (Rom. 11:33). “Your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him” (Mt. 6:8).

*“Abba, Father, words of mercy,
Words of comfort, words of love,
Covering all our needs and longings
Till we reach our home above!”*

(Miss Catherine Helene von Poseck, 1859-1953)

He knows our needs and is more than able to meet every one. He has promised to do so day by day. Let us trust Him continually. “And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen” (Phil. 4:19-20).

Our Father Gives

Our Father not only knows but He gives “good things to those who ask Him” (Mt. 7:11). “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning” (Jas. 1:17).

From a heart of love He gives to His children that which they need; that which is good for them. His great desire is for fruit to be seen in them and He is daily looking to

see more and more of Christ formed in His children. To this end, He may have to give us a pruning at times. Pruning involves the removal of dead or overgrown branches which prevent fruit bearing. Thus, pruning precedes fruitfulness: “You shall prune your vineyard, and gather its fruit” (Lev. 25:3), and “Every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit” (Jn. 15:2).

Is there anything new in my life today for the Father to appreciate? Was there anything yesterday for His pleasure? He only appreciates and finds delight in that which speaks of Christ.

Our Father Forgives And Feeds

Our Father knows; He gives and He forgives: “But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Mt. 6:15). Yes, our Father is a forgiving Father – and He loves to see a forgiving spirit in His children.

Our Father also feeds: “Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?” (Mt. 6:26). It is wonderful to be at the “Father’s table” and to enjoy fellowship with Him. “Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son,

Jesus Christ” (1 Jn. 1:3). He has provided food for our souls that we may grow and mature as Christians. He delights to see us feeding on Christ and becoming more like Him as we read the Scriptures, God’s Word.

Our Father Protects

He cares for the birds; Will He not care for us? Will He not protect us? The Lord Jesus said, “No one is able to snatch [us] out of My Father’s hand” (Jn. 10:29). We are safe and secure, sheltered by our Father’s hand.

Our Father Loves

He loves us with an everlasting love because we love the Lord Jesus (Jn. 14:21,23). The Father will certainly provide all that we need for the Christian pathway, and at the end of our journey the Father’s house awaits. The Lord Jesus said, “In My Father’s house are many mansions ... I go to prepare a place for you” (Jn. 14:2).

*“How blest a home, the Father’s house!
There love divine doth rest;
What else could satisfy the hearts
Of those in Jesus blest?”*

*“The Father’s house, the Father’s heart,
All that the Son is given,
Made ours, the objects of His love,
And He, our joy in heaven.”*

(Mrs. J. A. Trench, 1843-1925)

GT

God And Father, We Adore Thee

**God and Father, we adore Thee,
Now revealed in Christ the Son,
Joying in Thy holy presence
Through the work that He has done.**

**Filled with praise we bow before Thee;
Thou art evermore the same;
With adoring hearts we bless Thee,
Magnify Thy holy name.**

**Worship, honour, praise and glory,
Would we render unto Thee;
Heights unsearched and depths
unfathomed
In Thy wondrous love we see.**

(EDWARD HENRY CHATER, 1845-1915)

OUR FATHER KNOWS OUR FATHER LOVES OUR FATHER CARES

by Kevin Quartell



“My Father and your Father.” —John 20:17 KJV

One of the greatest blessings we have as Christians is that we can call God our Father. Although the name “Father” was used of God a few times in the Old Testament, it was in the sense of God as the Creator or the One to whom reverence or honor was due (see Malachi 1:6). It was not until the Son of the Father (2 Jn. 3) came into this world that the name of God as Father was fully revealed. The Lord Himself stated that “neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him” (Mt. 11:27). Only the Son could reveal the Father. He did not become an angel to reveal Him to angels, but He became a Man in order to reveal Him to men (Heb. 2:16). For us to be able to know God as our Father required not only His incarnation, but also His death and resurrec-

tion because our sins stood in the way of this new relationship. It was only after He was risen from the dead, when His work on the cross was complete and all our sins were put forever away, that the Lord Jesus could give that wonderful message to Mary Magdalene, “Go to My brethren and say unto them, I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God, and your God” (Jn. 20:17). Through His finished work the Lord Jesus has set us in His own place before His God and Father. What a wonderful privilege! We hope that all of our readers know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and so can enjoy this relationship, for He Himself said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by Me” (Jn. 14:6). It is only in knowing Him that we can call God our Father.

OUR FATHER KNOWS US

“Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows ... And your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.”

—Luke 12:6-7,30

DO YOU EVER FEEL LIKE YOU HAVE been forgotten? More than once I have been waiting to see a doctor in his office when I have been forgotten because the receptionist failed to let the doctor know I had arrived. People, even those who are close and love us, may forget about us or our needs. But isn't it wonderful that our God and Father never forgets about us!

We are told in both Luke 12:7 and in Matthew 10:30 that He has all the hairs of your head numbered. Have you ever tried to count how many hairs you have or how many are on the heads of those you love? Our Father even knows if you have less hair today than yesterday. He is always up-to-date in His knowledge of everything about you and your circumstances! If He takes note in such detail about your hair, we can be sure that there is nothing in your life that escapes His notice or that

He forgets about. He knows your financial needs. He knows your health needs. He knows the needs in your marriage and in your family. He knows your spiritual needs and those areas where you may be struggling. He knows the needs you have that you have not even realized yet!

The Lord uses two birds to further describe our Father's knowledge and care of us. The first is a sparrow. In Luke 12 the Lord tells us that the Father does not forget one sparrow even though they are birds of little value. Similarly in Matthew 10:29 the Lord Jesus said that not one sparrow falls to the ground without our Father's knowing. He knows the circumstances of every sparrow in the world, and cares for all of them. Do you think He would care less for us? Scripture tells us that we are of more value to our Father than many sparrows.

The second bird mentioned to illustrate to us our Father's care for us is the raven (Lk. 12:24). The raven does not sow seeds or reap a harvest, yet God provides for its needs. Job 38:41 tells us that the young ravens cry to God for His food, and Psalm 147:9 tells us that God provides for them. Do you think that if God, as the Creator, hears the cries of the young ravens, knows what they need and provides it for them,

that as our Father He will not hear our cries as His children? Knowing our needs even better than we do, will He not provide exactly what we need? Of course our faith may be tested at times, but we can be assured that our Father hears and knows. We are of much more value to our Father than the ravens. Since He saved us from eternal judgment, we can trust Him for our day to day needs. The Lord Jesus assures our hearts that “your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things” (Lk. 12:30). We can trust His care and provision. “He that spared not His own Son, how will He not with Him freely give us all things?” (Rom. 8:32).

OUR FATHER LOVES US

“For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God.” —John 16:27

I AM SURE THAT EVERY BELIEVER reading this article knows and loves John 3:16. That verse tells us of God’s love which was demonstrated for the whole world (all the people in it) by His giving His only begotten Son so that whoever would believe in Him would not perish but receive eternal life. We believe, though, that

John 16:27 goes farther than this as the name Father implies a relationship. A man may know many children, but he does not become a father until he and his wife have children themselves. He then enters into this new relationship with them as their father. In a similar way, the name of God as Father implies a relationship. This is why the name of Father could not be used in John 3:16. God does not have a relationship with all the people in the world, but He does have a relationship with *those who believe in and love His Son*.

The Father had a relationship with His only-begotten Son even before the world began. The Lord Jesus spoke of this in John 17:24: “Thou lovest Me before the foundation of the world.” The Father has always loved the Son, and now, as Father, He also loves those who love His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and believe that He came forth from the Father. Before the foundation of the world, the only begotten Son knew the Father’s love. Now, all who believe are the children of God (Jn 1:12-13) and sons of God (Gal. 4:5), so we can know the Father’s love too.

John 17:23 is a verse that tells us something amazing: “Thou [the Father] ... hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me.” We are

loved by the Father with the same love as He loves the Lord Jesus! We cannot understand it, but we can rest and rejoice in this wonderful truth!

OUR FATHER CARES FOR US

*“Casting all your care upon Him;
for He careth for you.”
—1 Peter 5:7*

DO YOU HAVE CARES OR BURDENS? Are there things that weigh you down in your personal life, in your family, in your work or among the local assembly of Christians with whom you meet? I am sure that we all have heavy hearts sometimes. What are we to do with these burdens? The apostle Peter gave us the answer in the verse above. Notice that he did not tell us to cast “some of our care” upon our God and Father. He did not say, “Only cast your family cares upon Him,” “Only cast your money worries upon Him,” or “Only cast your light cares upon Him.” No, he said, “casting *ALL* your care upon Him.” Certainly all we have mentioned is included and much more, even anything that causes us a care, whether small or great. Why? Because He, our Father, cares for us.

We have seen that our Father

knows our needs. If He doesn't miss a sparrow's falling to the ground, certainly He sees that pressing trouble in your life at the present time. We have seen that our Father loves us. He gave His Son for us in order that we might be brought into a relationship with Him as His children. He loves us as His children far more than any earthly father has ever loved his own children. He knows us, loves us and cares for us.

It is interesting that the Greek word for “casting” literally means “to fling.” Don't hold onto that care, burden or anxiety – it is too great for you. Fling it into His arms and let Him carry it for you. He is strong enough to carry your troubles and you too!

THE PEACE OF GOD

“Be careful [or anxious] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” —Philippians 4:6-7

THESE VERSES REMIND US THAT WE can bring our little concerns, our big problems, our sicknesses, our families, our money worries –

“every thing” to God in prayer. Then while we wait for His sure answer according to our true need as He knows it (Phil. 4:19), we have the assurance that His peace will keep, or guard (the Greek is a military word, like “garrison”) our hearts. We need not be anxious.

Remember the Lord Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane brought everything in relation to the work He was going to accomplish on the cross to His Father in prayer. It is solemn to think that just the anticipation of the Cross brought such agony to our blessed Lord (Lk. 22:44). Notice, then, that when the Lord Jesus rose up from prayer He was characterized by perfect peace. His concern was for His disciples. Even when being unjustly accused, the Lord Jesus at just the right moment looked at Peter in order to begin the work of restoration in his soul (Lk. 22:61). None of us will ever have to face what our Lord faced in that solemn hour, but the same peace that He had can be ours. He has said: “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (Jn. 14:27).

When we believed on the Lord Jesus and in His finished work on

the cross, we received peace with God. As we bring everything to our Father in prayer we can enjoy our hearts’ being guarded by the peace of God, even if our circumstances have not changed. Then, later in Philippians 4, Paul speaks of the God of peace (v.9). We live in a world of turmoil, where everything is changing so quickly. However, nothing shakes God’s throne. We can enjoy communion with the God of peace, resting with Him in the midst of this restless world, knowing that He is with us.

LET US BE ENCOURAGED

Our Father knows if one little sparrow falls to the ground – how much more His eye is upon us. The Father loves us even as He loves the Lord Jesus. We can bring all our worries, anxieties and cares to our Father and fling them into His arms to carry for us. As we bring everything to Him in prayer, we can enjoy His peace guarding our hearts and minds in this weary world. We can know that He, the God of peace, is with us in our circumstances while we wait to meet the Lord in the air (1 Th. 4:16-17). Then He will bring us to the Father’s house where we will know our Father’s love and care throughout the eternal ages (Jn. 14:2-3; Eph. 2:7)! **GT**

THE PERFECT FATHER

by Stephen Campbell

“IF A SON ASKS FOR BREAD FROM ANY father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish?” (Lk. 11:11 NKJV). So spoke the Lord Jesus as He told His disciples what God the Father is like. If even an imperfect father on earth knows how to give what is good to his children, will not their heavenly Father give precisely what is needed?

We might have been hesitant to call God our Father if the Scriptures had not done so. It is a protective, nurturing, intimate relationship. Naturally speaking, it is a relationship that all sons and daughters seek in their own families. Of course, in families there are sometimes difficulties which inter-

rupt that relationship, whether through divorce, death or simply the failings of our earthly fathers. Yet God is not subject to those failings; and as we appreciate our relationship with Him as our Father we will find a sure foundation for our lives – not only spiritually, but physically and emotionally as well.

There are a few occasions in the Old Testament when God is called Father, especially in a national sense towards Israel. Moses asked the people, “Is He not your Father, who bought you?” (Dt. 32:6). “You, O LORD, are our Father; our Redeemer from Everlasting is Your name,” Isaiah affirmed (Isa. 63:16; see Isaiah 64:8 and Malachi 2:10). However, it is really in the New

Testament that God reveals the fullness of this relationship. We need the Lord Jesus Himself to open this relationship up to us because only He truly knows what it means to think of God as Father (Lk. 10:22). On the day of His resurrection, having dealt with our sins at Calvary, Jesus invited His own to remember that God is their Father (Jn. 20:17).

In this context it may be good to mention that there is a limited sense in which God is the Father of all humanity. In Athens, Paul used this truth to indicate the folly of worshiping idols. God made every human being “from one blood” and “in Him we live and move and have our being.” Therefore, Paul concluded, “we are the offspring of God” (Acts 17:26,28-29) – so it is not sensible to venerate [consider as holy] stone or metal objects we have designed ourselves. This reference to God as our Father in a general sense is an appeal to those with no knowledge of Him; but it does not imply that all mankind are now His children in a spiritual sense.

FAMILY PRIVILEGES

However, for believers in the Lord Jesus, the relationship with God as our Father is a marvelous blessing. There are several privileges connected with this relationship.

One is that we come to know the Father’s care. The Lord spoke emphatically of this, reminding His followers that God took care of the ravens and the lilies – and did He not value the disciples even more? Therefore, He added, “do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink ... [Your] Father knows that you need these things” (Lk. 12:29-30; also see Matthew 6:25-33).

By contrast, the nations of the world seek after these same things (Lk. 12:30); and here the word translated “seek after” has an added intensity. In our lives this means that we are surrounded by people who are fixated [preoccupied] on meeting their own needs. Thus, we may find it easy to develop the same obsession ourselves. For the believer, though, such anxiety is unfounded because our Father knows what we need! Not only that, but we can be sure His power is great enough to provide it. From Abraham to Paul, the Old and New Testaments overflow with examples of God’s ability to meet our physical needs.

As we appreciate the Father’s care we also learn to know His love. “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!” declared the apostle John (1 Jn. 3:1; see also John

16:27). Because of God's saving love, He provided redemption for our sins through Christ. But more than that, because of His character as our Father, He desires not only to save us but also to make us His own children. On earth the sense of our father's love may be lacking, and in extreme cases there may be abandonment or even hatred. But the Father's love is unchanging.

One important result of enjoying the Father's love is that it will preserve us from the love of the world. In the Scriptures the world is described as being specifically opposed to the Father. "If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world" (1 Jn. 2:15-16). The world presents itself as a place that can satisfy our every desire: "Why wait for God if we can find pleasure without Him?" This is what happened to Demas, who "loved this present world" and ceased his service for the Lord (2 Tim. 4:10; compare with Philemon 24). By contrast, the assurance that our Father loves and cares for us will help us overcome the world's attractions because we know we can trust Him rather than seek elsewhere for our needs.

If we forget our Father's care

and love we are not forsaken, for He employs still another aspect of our relationship: His correction. It is a poor father who neglects to consistently guide his children, as even the Lord's people have discovered to their sorrow (consider David in 1 Kings 1:5-6). Children gain understanding and maturity from the correction of their fathers, imperfect as they may be; and therefore the Scriptures conclude, "Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?" (Heb. 12:9). Discipline may not be pleasant, but it produces righteousness when we have learned from it, just as Paul learned to trust God's grace after receiving a difficult "thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor. 12:7-9). Moreover, the Father's discipline is a proof that we are indeed part of His family, reminding us again of our privilege to have a relationship with Him.

FURTHER LESSONS

These three aspects of the Father's relationship – His care, His love and His correction – suggest some additional lessons for us as well. When we remember that our Father knows our circumstances we can learn to depend on Him. Since He is aware of our needs and understands our weaknesses, He will surely provide what we require in a timely way.

We can also learn to be content. Because He is the Father of lights, who never turns aside or acts inconsistently with His character, He provides every good and perfect gift (Jas. 1:13-17). This means that anything He has *not* provided would not be good for us at the moment. Reminding ourselves that our Father knows, we can be thankful for precisely what He has given, whether little or much.

Further, we can learn to have the right perspective even in very difficult circumstances. For example, many of the Lord's people around the world live in great poverty. When we are forced to do without the comforts of this world we can be tempted to meet our needs in illegal ways (Pr. 30:9) or accuse God of dealing harshly with us (Ruth 1:20-21). We might even feel that our disadvantages will prevent us from serving the Lord. But remembering that our Father knows our need will keep us on a straight path, for He has been a faithful provider for generations (Ps. 37:25). God showed Hagar a spring of water for her dying son; He multiplied flour and oil for desperate widows and He does not stop showing His kindness to those in need today (Gen. 21:15-20; 1 Ki. 17:11-16; 2 Ki. 4:1-7; Ruth 2:20). We tend to focus on

what we don't have (even if we are relatively well off), but God focuses on what we *do* have (2 Cor. 8:12). "What is in your hand?" asks the LORD (Ex. 4:2). That is what He will use.¹

Among all the aspects of our relationship with God as our Father, one name has special meaning: the name *Abba*. It is an Aramaic word for father that implies a great deal of familiarity. Some have suggested it is like the English word "Papa." On two occasions (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6) Paul wrote that God's Spirit in us allows us to enjoy exactly this relationship with God as we call to Him, "Abba, Father!" There is only one occasion when the Lord Himself used this term: in the garden of Gethsemane, in His deep agony as He anticipated the suffering of the Cross (Mk. 14:36). This helps us appreciate the deep intimacy of this name, which is precisely the reality of our relationship with God as our Father. In our darkest moments, in our deepest difficulties, we can turn to Him because He knows and He cares. **GT**

Endnote

1. This line of teaching encourages the poor, but it does not negate the related responsibility of those who have this world's goods to share them with their brethren in need (1 Jn. 3:17).



THE FATHER CARES

FEATURE

by Richard Barnett

It is natural in this vast universe to wonder “How God could really care about me?” David echoed similar sentiments when he pondered: “When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained: What is man that Thou art mindful of him?” (Ps. 8:3-4 KJV). He certainly felt overwhelmed by it all, and so do we at times. But consider these illustrations:

- The mother who feeds her new-born baby every few hours and who stays up all night because her baby is sick does it because she cares for her helpless child.
- The farmer who plows his land, plants his seeds, waters them and roots up the weeds that rob them of the vital nourishment they need does it because he cares about his seeds.
- The painter who paints a portrait is not satisfied until he has applied the last stroke of his brush. He does it because he cares about his portrait.

Considering these examples, is it unreasonable to assert that God does indeed care for you and me?

We have a God that created us and has redeemed us by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus. Why then do we worry so much? There is a poem that goes like this:

*“Said the Robin to the Sparrow,
‘I should really like to know,
Why these anxious human beings,
rush about and worry so’
“Said the Sparrow to the Robin,
‘Friend I think that it must be,
That they have no heavenly Father,
such as cares for you and me.”*

The moral of this story is that we do have a heavenly Father who loves and cares for us far more than He cares for birds – for we are of more value than they. We are children of God by new birth according to John 1:12, which says, “But as many as received Him [Jesus], to them gave He power [authority] to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name.”

LOVING CARE OF OUR GOD

Prior to returning to His Father, Jesus strengthened the confidence of His disciples (and us) by stating that the Father loved them in the same way He is loved. Hence, in His prayer recorded in

John 17 He placed them (and us) in the care of His Father. We are the Father's love gift to the Son; and the Son, before returning to heaven, placed us in the care of His Father. We belong to the family of God and are therefore distinct from the world. To quote from a letter written to the family: "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God" (1 Jn. 3:1).

God, therefore, does not treat us in the same way He does the world. This world is under judgment, though God in His grace is willing to save anyone who comes to Him by faith in Jesus Christ. The foregoing is of extreme importance for it is in bringing us into relationship with Him that the constant, loving care of our God and Father is assured. This amazing fact is a wonderful source of comfort, especially if you have ever been tempted to question His care. The disciples were guilty of this when they asked during a storm-tossed boat trip with Jesus, "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" (Mk. 4:38). With great power and majesty He stilled the storm! The power of God is boundless and that power is at work on our behalf by His Holy Spirit that dwells in us, in order to give us victory over sin and to conform us more and more to the image of His Son. "He giveth power

to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength" (Isa. 40:29). We are weak, but He is strong, and His strength is made perfect in our weakness (2 Cor. 12:9-10). Furthermore, by the power of the Spirit, Christ was raised; and by that same Spirit our mortal bodies shall be quickened (made alive) (Rom. 8:11). After stilling the storm, the Lord rebuked His disciples for their lack of faith.

Chastening is a part of His loving care for us too: "For whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Heb. 12:6). Martha on one occasion complained, "Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?" (Lk. 10:40). The tender heart of our God is grieved when we question His care.

KNOWLEDGE OF OUR GOD

Let us now consider the knowledge of our God, which is infinite and perfect and forms an integral part of His care for us. There is absolutely nothing that He does not know about you and me. The following Scriptures express His limitless knowledge:

- "The Lord *knoweth* them that are His" (2 Tim. 2:19). In the midst of the confusion of Christendom, which is comprised of all who have made a profession of faith in Christ, the Father knows

His children. It is impossible for Him to overlook or to be mistaken about even one of them.

- “But He *knows* the way that I take: when He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:10). The way may be rough and rocky and filled with sorrow. But just as He did for Job, God intends to turn your troubles into a refinery in which you will be purified and come forth as gold. Gold is refined by applying intense heat. As the impurities from the molten gold rise to the surface the refiner skims them off. When he sees himself reflected in the gold, he turns off the heat.
- “Thou *knowest* my down sitting, and my uprising” (Ps. 139:2). What precise and attentive care – He takes notice of when we sit down and when we rise up! Mr. Darby put it well when he penned: “A holy Father’s constant care, keeps watch with an unwearying eye ...”
- “Your Father *knoweth* that ye have need of these things” (Lk. 12:30). Jesus taught His disciples that when it came to their temporal needs such as food and clothing, they were not to be filled with anxiety. “Consider the ravens,” He said, for they do not sow seed, nor reap a harvest, and yet God feeds

them. You are far more valuable than the birds of the air. Do you think that by worrying you can add eighteen inches to your height? Jesus continued, “Consider the lilies how they grow.” They do not labor or twist cotton into thread to make their clothing, and yet not even king Solomon in all his glory was dressed like them. If God so clothes the lilies – “how much more will He clothe you!” (v.28).

- “I *know* the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end” (Jer. 29:11). God’s purpose for us is ultimately to make all things work for our blessing, both now and for eternity. Just think of it, our past has been wiped clean by the blood of Christ, our present is working for our good and our future is bright with the hope of eternal glory.
- “For He *knoweth* our frame; and remembereth that we are but dust” (Ps. 103:14). We are clothed with infirmities such as sickness, persecution, weariness, sorrow and weakness – all of which are very trying to our faith; and for which mercy and grace are needed. Having a great high priest who is none

other than Jesus, the Son of God, we are invited to “come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).

- “For I *know* their sorrows” (Ex. 3:7). I do not know what grief you may be experiencing at the present time. You may have been misunderstood and excluded from the company of some, a dear friend maybe betrayed you, or you may have lost someone very dear to you and now you feel alone in this world. Perhaps someone has said evil, false things about you. All of these are a source of pain and distress. But God knows all about them and He is not unmindful of your sorrow. The apostle Peter, who wrote about suffering, encouraged us with these words: “Casting all your care upon Him for He careth for you” (1 Pet. 5:7). We would never know the comfort of our Father unless we were permitted to taste of the sorrow, for “blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted” (Mt. 5:4). God is “the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort” (2 Cor. 1:3).

OUR RESPONSE TO GOD'S CARE

- Be trustful. One has said, “Worry is interest paid on

trouble before it becomes due.” From my own experience most of the things that I have worried about never came to pass. A care-free attitude on the other hand is most pleasing to God, for it is the evidence of one who trusts Him in spite of everything that is going on – whether on the inside or outside.

- Be thankful. Let us, therefore, train our hearts to “praise the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men” (Ps. 107:8); and to say, “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits” (Ps. 103:2).
- Be prayerful. “Be anxious for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6-7).

May these few words encourage you to look up into the face of our God and Father, and say: “Father, regardless of my situation, I know that You love me and therefore I will trust You.” Finally, may you be kept peaceful, in the peace of God and in His loving, tender care. **GT**



The purpose of this column is to help you study the Bible on your own. Look up the Bible references and think about them before writing your answers. Do not send this study to us, as this is not a correspondence course.

DISCOVER WHAT THE PREACHER HAS TO SAY IN ECCLESIASTES

CHAPTER 8 – By Alan Groth



“Who is like a wise man? And who knows the interpretation of a thing? A man’s wisdom makes his face shine, and the sternness of his face is changed.” Ecclesiastes 8:1 NKJV

A challenging question begins this chapter: “Who is like a wise man?” As we follow the words of the Preacher, the wisest man who lived on earth, we will gain wisdom for ourselves and become those who are wise.

Read Ecclesiastes 8

1. How does wisdom change a wise man? _____

2. Why are you to keep the king’s commandment? _____

3. What two things are we not to do? _____

4. What can the king do? _____

5. What will keeping the king’s command bring to a man? _____

6. What does a wise man’s heart discern? _____

7. So why does this increase misery for a man? _____

8. Is there any hope offered for a dying person in verse 8? _____

9. What kind of ruler is described in verse 9? _____

10. What will stop a wicked man? _____

11. Will they be remembered? _____

12. Evil and the wicked are mentioned in verses 11-13. What is the outcome of them?

v.11 _____

v.12 _____

v.13 _____

13. Write what is vain in verse 14? _____

14. What did the Preacher commend in verse 15? _____

15. Why? _____

16. God is at work. The Preacher observed it. Write out his discovery.

Next month we'll *Discover* more of what the Preacher has to say in our study of Ecclesiastes.

Divine Titles

AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

Part Two

by A. J. Pollock

Having considered Elohim, Jehovah and the compound names of Jehovah in the first two parts of this series, we will now consider a few other divine titles found in the Old Testament.

El (The Mighty God)

The first mention of this name is in Genesis 14:18-20 where Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God who is the possessor of heaven and earth, blessed Abram. The title occurs over 240 times in the Old Testament and is particularly numerous in Job and the Psalms. It means the Mighty God, One victorious in power. It sets forth the true God in contrast to the false gods of the heathen. The following extracts indicate this character of God: “a jealous God,” “a mighty God,” “a mighty God and terrible,” “a God who avenges” and “God greatly to be feared” (KJV).

El is likewise allied to the grace of God, as the following interesting passage shows: “There is no

other God [*Elohim*] besides Me, a just God [*El*] and a Savior; there is none besides Me” (Isa. 45:21 NKJV). How wonderful that the mighty God is our Savior. The full revelation of this is seen in the name “Jesus,” a translation from Hebrew words into Greek meaning “*Jehovah* Savior.”

Elyon (High, Highest, Most High)

This is a word for God which signifies High, Highest and Most High; and it refers to God some 31 times. It is applied once to Melchizedek, who is typical of our Lord, and the title applies several times to the temple as indicating its very sacred character. In Daniel it is connected with the

saints of the Most High. It is a title of great dignity. Sometimes it is used as an adjective as allied to another name of God, as for instance, “I will praise the LORD [*Jehovah*] according to His righteousness, and will sing praise to the name of the LORD [*Jehovah*] Most High [*Elyon*] (Ps. 7:17). Note: Sometimes *Elyon* is spelled *Gnelion*.

Adonai

(My Lord Or Lordship)

This name of God occurs first in Genesis 15:2. There we read, “But Abram said, ‘Lord [*Adonai*] GOD [*Jehovah*], what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?’” The name *Adonai* occurs about 300 times in the Old Testament and, being plural like *Elohim* (the only two names of God in Scripture in the plural), enshrines the thought of the Trinity. Its meaning is my Lord or Lordship.

It would be well to recall that the title *Jehovah*, whether translated as “GOD” or “LORD,” is always printed in most translations of our Bibles in small capital letters, while *Adonai*, always translated as “Lord,” is printed in small letters with an initial capital only. *Adonai* is largely used in the Psalms, Isaiah and Ezekiel. It is often expressed as “The Lord

GOD [*Jehovah-Adonai*].” It was a name used largely by the LORD’s people in Old Testament times when turning to God for help, guidance, mercy and compassion.

The Angel Of The LORD

This expression, the Angel of the LORD [*Jehovah*] occurs over 100 times in the Old Testament, meaning messenger or agent. Sometimes it describes an angelic messenger and other times it refers to the LORD Himself – the context easily makes it clear. The context of Genesis 16:7, for instance, clearly proves the Angel of the LORD is the LORD Himself. None but a divine Person could say, “I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude” (Gen. 16:10).

That Hagar recognized this is evident. We read, “Then she called the name of the LORD [*Jehovah*] who spoke to her, You-Are-The-God-Who-Sees; for she said, ‘Have I also here seen Him who sees me?’ Therefore the well was called *Beer Lahai Roi* [the well of the One who lives and sees me]” (Gen. 16:13-14).

A striking case of the Angel of the LORD (Ex. 3:2) being *Jehovah* Himself is seen when the LORD

called to Moses from out of the burning bush, saying, “I am the God of your father – the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Ex. 3:6).

There is a beautiful variation of this title found in Isaiah 63:9: “In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saved them; in His love and pity He redeemed them; and He bore them and carried them all the days of old.” None but a divine Person could use words such as these.

Referring to a day yet future we read, “In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the Angel of the LORD before them” (Zech. 12:8).

Shaddai (The Almighty)

This title for God is first mentioned in Genesis 17:1. In seven instances the word God [E] is combined

with *Shaddai* and is generally translated “The Almighty.” Some interpret the name as “Almighty in sustaining resources” (as the mother’s breasts for her baby). It occurs 48 times in the Old Testament, 31 being in Job. There the thought stands out preeminently [above all others] that the Lord is Almighty. This is in character with the book of Job where we have the story of the controversy God had with Job, who got no relief or blessing until he arrived at a right estimate of himself in the presence of God. In chapter after chapter Job sought to vindicate his own self-righteousness while debating with his three friends. Finally God spoke to him, which brought him to the true confession, “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:5-6). So Job found his highest blessing in this discovery and learned at last that the Lord is very compassionate and full of tender mercy (Jas. 5:11).

It would be well to recall that the title Jehovah, whether translated as “GOD” or “LORD,” is always printed in most translations of our Bibles in small capital letters.

Related thoughts shared by Walter Scott

Most High God is a beautiful millennial title, occurring four times in the typical kingdom picture of Genesis 14:18-24. It also occurs several times in the Gentile book of prophecy – Daniel. “The Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth” (KJV), will receive the worship of the millennial nations, and pour down His blessings upon them. The heavens and the earth will be filled with blessing and be vocal with praise. Melchizedek, in whom were united priesthood and royalty, points to Christ. It is in Christ that every glory centers and He alone is able and worthy to bear the double glory of kingly power and priestly grace, as said the prophet, “He shall be a priest upon His throne” (Zech. 6:13). Now, this blessing from God to man and from man to God (Gen. 14:19-20) is exercised mediatorially [having someone that goes between]. The coming kingdom, both in its celestial (upper) and terrestrial (lower) spheres, will be received from the Father (Lk. 19:12) and then for 1,000 years the Lord Jesus – the true Melchizedek – will:

- Sway the scepter in righteousness,
- Be God’s representative in the creation,

- Unite all things in the heavens and on the earth,
- Be the link of blessing from God to man, and
- Be the channel of worship from man to God.

At the close of His glorious reign He will deliver up the kingdom to God (1 Cor. 15:24-28) in the divine perfection in which it was received. Thus the kingdom and all its connected glories will be mediatorial in character.

The expression “Most High” in Daniel 7:27 is in an interesting passage showing the connection between the glory celestial and the glory terrestrial: “And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people [Jewish people] of the saints [that is, the risen and glorified saints dwelling in the heavenly places] of the Most High whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.” While earthly dominion is committed to the Jews on earth; the heavenly glory and rule over the earth will be enjoyed by the saints risen and glorified, and immediately associated with Christ. The connection between the heavens and the earth and the saints occupying both spheres is

(adapted from *The Bible Handbook*)

similarly shared in Revelation 21:12,24,26 and Hosea 2:21-23.

Abraham, the pilgrim and stranger called out from an idolatrous world to walk with God, would find in the revelation of the **“Almighty God”** a sure and all sufficient resource. “God Almighty” in His grace, “Almighty” in His sustaining power, “Almighty” in divine resources and “Almighty” for an arm of flesh to lean upon – such would seem to be the force of this grand patriarchal title. To the pilgrim fathers of Israel God revealed Himself as the Almighty (Gen. 17:1, 28:3, 48:3) – the everlasting and memorial name of Israel’s divine Savior (Ex. 3:15). In announcing to Moses the approaching deliverance of His people, God thus spoke to His servant, “And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; but by My name *Jehovah* was I not known to them” (Ex. 6:3). No doubt, the fathers of the people were for a long time familiar with the title “*Jehovah*,” as it is often found before the nation of Israel’s history. But God did not reveal Himself to the fathers as *Jehovah*, but as “God Almighty.” Thus God has revealed Himself to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as the “Almighty” One; to

Israel as “*Jehovah*” and to Christians as “Father.” How appropriate!

How divine is the wisdom in the use and value of these several displays and revelations of God. If a saint walking in the path of lowly obedience to the Word of God will clear himself from all false and unholy fellowships – sacred or secular – as did Abram (Gen. 12) in his day, how great are the divine resources and aids for such an one today! If the exhortations of 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 are imperative, calling for prompt and godly action, we find the encouragement and sustaining grace to be of the most blessed character now. Could anything exceed the sweetness of those words? “I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (vv.17-18).

In the first book of Holy Scripture [Genesis] the “Almighty God” tells of all sustaining power and grace for the pilgrim saint and stranger. Meanwhile, the last book [Revelation] reveals God under the same title as all consuming in wrath and judgment toward unrepentant sinners (19:15). **GT**

Look for the continuation of this Series next month!



The Holy Spirit

IN THE LIGHT OF THE BIBLE

Part Two

by Erwin H. W. Luimes (adapted from “Fire From Heaven?”)

The Seal Of The Holy Spirit

When someone is converted he receives the Holy Spirit as a seal. A seal is like a stamp, an imprint which reveals that the person is the property of God. But a seal goes further than a simple stamp. A stamp can perhaps be rubbed out, but with a seal no one is allowed to break it. In this way the tax authorities or the police can seal an office or a house and there is no one who then has the right to enter it. In the same way the Holy Spirit is a seal on the believer: His indwelling guarantees the fact that the believer is *saved* and that he is the *property of the Lord Jesus* for eternity. Only someone who is stronger than God would be able to change this – and no such person exists (read Ephesians 1:13, 4:30; John 10:28)!

The Anointing With The Holy Spirit

Every person who is converted and believes the gospel of salvation, putting his trust in the Lord Jesus, receives the Holy Spirit. God’s Spirit comes to live in him. But God’s Word also speaks of our being anointed with the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 1:21; 1 Jn. 2:20,27). This is another aspect of the one, same fact. The anointing emphasizes that God’s Spirit is given to us because we are chosen by God and that His Spirit is now leading us into the full truth. It goes so far that those who are born of God, according to 1 John 2:20, now know all things. This is a consequence of our position in Christ; it is our ability, in principle, to know everything through the help of the Holy Spirit and without the need for the “new light”

offered by the false teachers the apostle John was warning about – it is our ability, even though at the same time we still have to learn many things in practice.

Baptism With The Holy Spirit

On the day on which he is sealed with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13), the believer is added to the Church, the Body of Christ, which has existed for twenty centuries now. The Church was formed on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, when the believers at the time were baptized with one Spirit to form one new Body, an entity and unity unknown until then and to which all believers ever since have been added. This is the only event in the Bible which is mentioned in connection with baptism with the Holy Spirit (Mt. 3:11; Acts 1:5,8, 11:16; 1 Cor. 12:13).

Some people would like to be baptized “with the Holy Spirit and with fire,” but they do not understand that they are asking for something impossible. In Matthew 3:11-12, which speaks about this, it is also explained that baptism with the Holy Spirit is for believers. Likewise, Acts 1 only mentions that within a few days the disciples would be baptized with the Holy Spirit, but not with fire!

Why? Because baptism with fire indicates something terrible:

submersion in the fire of God’s judgment. Every tree which does not bear fruit (every person who does not live to the glory of God) will be cut down and thrown into the eternal flame; even the ax is ready, very close to the root (v.10)! Equally close is the judgment of God for those who reject God and shall be thrown into the inextinguishable fire! So “baptism with the Holy Spirit and with fire” can never happen to the same person; you cannot receive the Spirit of God and at the same time go into the eternal fire. This is why the expression “baptize with fire” is never used in reference to believers.

But it goes even further. Nowhere in the Bible do you find that believers today must pray to receive the Holy Spirit or to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Only in Luke 11:13 does the Lord Jesus tell His twelve disciples (the apostles) that the Father will give them the Holy Spirit when they ask Him. This is a promise which we see fulfilled in Acts 1 and 2. When the Lord Jesus had gone up into heaven, the disciples met together in a room and persevered in prayer while they were waiting for the coming of the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit. The promise was fulfilled and their prayers were answered when a short time later, in Acts 2,

the Holy Spirit came upon them. The Lord Jesus came to the earth once, not time and again; and in the same way the Holy Spirit came to the earth once and will continue to live here in the Church until the Church is taken up into glory. This one time “outpouring of the Holy Spirit” on this group of individual believers, in the Bible, is called “baptism with the Holy Spirit.”

Nowhere else in the Bible do you read about baptism with the Holy Spirit. Nowhere do we find a believer in the Bible who prayed to be baptized with God’s Spirit, and neither do we read about a church that was praying for this.

If your experience and emotions show you something else, you must simply mistrust your experience because the Bible is the ultimate authority for a child of God. Otherwise you are in danger of being misled by your emotions, through which Satan works, and of believing in something that is plainly contradictory to God’s Word.

Negative: To Grieve Or Quench The Holy Spirit

When a believer sins the Holy Spirit is not taken away from him.¹ But God’s Spirit is grieved (Eph. 4:30). When a believer continues to ignore warnings and admonitions by the Spirit through his conscience and the Word of

God, the working or activity of the Holy Spirit in this believer (or collectively, in the assembly life) is quenched (1 Th. 5:19). This continues until he confesses his sin and can again enjoy complete fellowship with the Father and the Son (1 Jn. 1:9).

Positive: Being Filled With The Holy Spirit

When the Holy Spirit has every opportunity to guide us, He will lead us into complete truth (Jn. 16:13). We will be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18) – and this will become evident. But this is not revealed through ecstasy, as is customary in certain religions or paganism when someone is possessed by higher (occult) powers. No, it is revealed through a life in fellowship with the Lord, a life of prayer, worship and thanksgiving, a life in which as believers we encourage one another to follow the Lord faithfully (Eph. 5:18-21; Col. 3:16-17).

For What Purpose Does The Holy Spirit Dwell In The Believer And In The Church?

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a special and unique blessing for the believers of our time only; it was not known in the dispensations before. Though the Holy Spirit from the very beginning was working in souls and came upon

some of them for special purposes and tasks, He only came to *live* in the believer and in the Church as a whole from the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 and after (see John 7:39; Acts 1:5; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22).

As we have already seen, He came to cause us to worship the Father and to glorify the Son. The Spirit does not glorify Himself and He definitely does not bring about the glorification of any person, however spiritual he or she may seem to be or however great his gifts may seem to be in the eyes of people (Jn. 4:23-24, 16:13-14)!

This is why the singing of Christians and the Spirit-led thanksgiving and worship of believers should never be an endless repetition of superficial phrases without substance, accompanied by rhythmic or even ecstatic music as has been customary among pagans since the days of Cain's descendants (Gen. 4). Words which are (or seem to be) Christian but which are accompanied in this way are a mixture of Christianity and paganism – characteristic of Babylon, the great harlot in Revelation 17:1.

Many contemporary Christian songs have hardly any spiritual depth and do not reflect the abundance of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are hidden in Christ. They tend to be like the mantras of some religions or other

forms of paganism, which seem to have found their way into certain forms of gospel music as well.

No, Christian worship is something spiritual, something which is brought about in our spirit by the Spirit of God through reflection on the glory of the Person and the work of Christ. This is expressed in a spiritual way, not with overt pomp and circumstance or features which appeal to the flesh. We do not come to adoration or true worship through drumming or rhythmic clapping and dance which is meant to lead us into ecstasy and to cause us to lose self-control, as is sometimes the case in what is supposed to be worship.

No, it is the Holy Spirit who leads us to live soberly, righteously and godly (Ti. 2:12) – and this applies to our worship too. Outwardly, this is calm and solemn, but it rises up from the depths of our hearts to God and is brought about through His Spirit. This worship is the believer speaking openly to his Savior, Jesus Christ, and to his Father in heaven, to glorify Him because of His great love and because of the majesty of His Person.

Let us not use idle repetitions of little substance, as pagans still do. God's Word warns us expressly about this in Matthew 6:7 and Ecclesiastes 5:2. Some believers have the habit in their prayers and

songs of endlessly repeating the same question or remark. They sing twenty-five times or more that Jesus has saved us. They pray endlessly, “Will You please do this?” This endless repetition is far from adoration or worship. Let us be realistic: Would we speak in this way to our father or mother? They would consider this to show a lack of respect or trust. How much less should it be that a child of God address God with such an ill-considered, repetitive sentence?

As we draw to an end, let us take note that when people are glorified for their gifts, whether it is a vicar, pastor, priest or church denomination, when authority is wielded by people and everything is centered around a person, when nothing can be done without the agreement of a person, whatever his title may be (3 Jn. 9-10) – then it is abundantly clear that this is a work that is not brought about by God’s Spirit because He did not come to the earth to glorify people.

May we follow the exhortation presented by God Himself through the apostle Paul, “Do all

to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31 NKJV). “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen” (Eph. 3:20-21). **GT**

¹ Bible passages such as John 14:16 and 1 John 2:27 show clearly that the Holy Spirit remains in the believer eternally. The case of David in Psalm 51:11 was very different. Firstly, David was an Israelite under the law; he lived long before the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 and hence long before the Holy Spirit came to the earth to live in believers. At the time of the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit worked on earth but did not live here in any person or company. Then He was not known as a divine Person (the truth of God’s trinity is only clearly taught in the New Testament). This means that the translation “Do not take Your spirit of holiness from me” is more accurate than “Do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.” The apostle John tells us that the Holy Spirit could be *with* Old Testament believers, but in the future would be *in* them (from Acts 2 on, as explained).

**The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a special and unique
blessing for the believers of our time ...
He came to cause us to worship the Father
and to glorify the Son.**

SECOND KINGS



“Also the children of Israel secretly did against the LORD their God things that were not right, and they built for themselves high places in all their cities.”

—2 Kings 17:9 NKJV

This book continues the history of the two separated kingdoms, with the prophet Elisha replacing Elijah as God’s witness both of truth and grace. Other prophets also witnessed and suffered for their faithfulness. The book of Kings gives special prominence to the ministry of the prophets in contrast to the books of Chronicles where the priests and Levites are more often noticed.

Again, no believing king is found in Israel (the ten tribes) in spite of the grace of the prophet Elisha. Israel’s growth in evil led to the invasion of the land by the king of Assyria, who carried them captive out of their land. Since that time the ten tribes have been lost sight of, and only God knows where to find them and bring them back to their land as He will do in days yet to come.

Judah continued in the land for some time longer. The reigns of two godly kings, Hezekiah and Josiah, stand out beautifully in contrast to the general downward trend. Yet both these reigns ended in the sadness of human failure; and eventually Judah was carried captive by the Babylonians.

This is another book of solemn admonition in its application to us. It again emphasizes equity and truth in government. It shows that the true place of man is one of thorough subjection rather than of prominence and authority, which in every case proved beyond the capacity of men – even godly men – to be entrusted with. How all this cries out for the coming of the one true and faithful King, the Lord of Glory! **GT**

*This column is taken from the book “The Bible, Its 66 Books In Brief.”
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What is the concept of “appearance of evil” as found in 1 Thessalonians 5:22? My family, friends, coworkers and my fellow believers who are younger versus the ones who are older all seem to have a different idea of what appears evil. So how can I really know which things are okay and which ones are wrong based on this vague standard of “appearance”? By some people’s view they would not even be found in some of the situations where the Lord was, such as the wedding where all the wine was being served in John 2. Please help me.

It is interesting to compare how different translations of the Bible render this verse. I have checked 18 different English translations that I have in my library and find that only the two oldest of these (*Douay/Rheims* and *King James Version*) employ the word “appearance.” One other translation, the *New American Standard Bible*, gives this word in a footnote as an alternate rendering.

Seven translations render the verse “Abstain from every form of evil.” One uses the verb “avoid” while another the words “keep away from” every form of evil. Two translations say to “keep away from every kind of evil” and two others say to “avoid every kind of evil,” while still another says to

“abstain from every sort of evil.” One translation simply says, “Don’t have anything to do with evil.”

Rather than using the word “evil,” two translations use the word “wickedness,” one saying to “abstain from every form of” it and the other to “hold aloof from every form of” it. Thus it is plain that what is meant by the verse is not whether something appears evil which, as the questioner indicates, people often do not agree on. What God’s Word is directing us to do is to have nothing to do with that which is evil or wicked.

It is obvious that if we look to people to define what is right and wrong we will have many conflicting answers. The Christian must look to God’s Word to settle such

questions, not to the world. God's standard is not vague. He has absolute standards and He has communicated His standards to us in His Word. There has only been one Person who lived according to God's standards perfectly, and that was our Lord Jesus Christ. He alone could say, "He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him" (Jn. 8:29 NKJV).

The Lord Jesus is the only true Model to show us what is right and wrong. He is and ever was holy. His life on earth glorified God in its every detail. We know that we will never attain perfection while we are here on earth, but He is the standard God has given us to emulate. The apostle Paul confessed that he had not attained and was not perfected, but said he was pressing "toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12-14).

Let's consider another remark or two on the question at which we are looking. God's Word shows us the folly of a young per-

son rejecting the wisdom older people have gained by experience and instead going to his young contemporaries for counsel. The experience of Solomon's son Rehoboam when his father died and he was to ascend the throne is an outstanding illustration of this (1 Ki. 12; 2 Chr. 10). But in the final analysis, God's Word must answer our questions of what is good and what is evil, not people, whether old or young.

People's opinions change; so do laws and decisions of courts. God's standards are increasingly being rejected. What God terms wickedness, man now is defining as personal liberty and as human rights. Same sex marriage is a case in point. Those who stand for what the Bible plainly says are even accused of hate crimes! Ultimately we will have to give account of ourselves to God for the choices we make in life. May we earnestly try to please Him, praying for guidance when we are unsure what He wants us to do.

—Answered by
Eugene P. Vedder, Jr.

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

But let him ask in faith, with no doubting ..."

—James 1:5-6



TEACHING CHILDREN THEIR NEED OF A SAVIOR

by Charles H. Spurgeon

“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” —Ephesians 6:4 KJV

Let's spend a short time looking at the institution that was connected with the remembrance of the Passover. “It shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD's passover” (Ex. 12:26-27).

Inquiry should be aroused in the minds of our children. Oh, that we could get them to ask questions about the things of God! Some of them inquire very early while others seem diseased with much the same indifference as older folks. We have to deal with both orders of mind. It is good for our children to observe often the Lord's Supper, and for us as parents to explain to them the meaning of this ordinance for it shows forth the death of Christ. The Lord's Supper should be placed in view of the rising generation that they may then ask us,

“What mean ye by this?”

Now, the Lord's Supper is a perpetual gospel sermon and it dwells mainly upon the sacrifice for sin. You cannot explain that broken bread and that cup filled with the fruit of the vine without reference to our Lord's atoning death. You cannot explain “the communion of the body of Christ” without bringing in, in some form or other, the death of Jesus in our place and stead. Let your little ones, then, see the Lord's Supper and let them be told most clearly what it sets forth. Dwell much and often in their presence upon the sufferings and death of our Redeemer. Let them think of Gethsemane, Gabbatha (Jn. 19:13) and Golgotha; and let them learn to sing in plaintive [mournful] tones of Him who laid down His life for us. Tell them Who it was that suffered, and why.

When attention is focused

upon the best of themes, let us be ready to explain the great transaction by which God is just and yet sinners are justified. Children can well understand the doctrine of the atoning sacrifice; it was meant to be a gospel for the youngest. The gospel of substitution is a simplicity, though it is a mystery. We ought not to be content until our little ones know and trust in their finished Sacrifice. This is essential knowledge and the key to all other spiritual teaching. If our dear children know the cross, they will have begun well. With all their “gettings” may they get an understanding of this, and they will have the foundation rightly laid.

This will necessitate your teaching the child his need of a Savior. You must not hold back from this needful task. Do not flatter the child with misleading rubbish about his nature being good and needing to be developed. Tell him he must be born again. Don't bolster him up with the fancy of his own innocence, but show him his sin. Mention the childish sins to which he is prone and pray the Holy Spirit to work conviction in his heart and conscience.

Deal with the young in much the same way as you would with the old. Be thorough and honest with them. Flimsy religion is neither good for young nor old. These

boys and girls need pardon through the precious blood as surely as any of us. Do not hesitate to tell the child his ruin; he will not else desire the remedy. Tell him also of the punishment of sin and warn him of its terror. Be tender, but be true. Do not hide from the youthful sinner the truth, however terrible it may be. Set before him the coming judgment and remind him that he will have to give an account of himself to God.

Labor to arouse the conscience; and pray God the Holy Spirit to work by you until the heart becomes tender and the mind perceives the need of the great salvation. Children need to learn the doctrine of the cross that they may find immediate salvation. Believe that God will save your children. *Do not be content to sow principles in their minds which may possibly develop in later years; but be working for immediate conversion.*

Expect fruit in your children while they are children. Pray for them that they may not run into the world and fall into the evils of outward sin, and then come back with broken bones to the Good Shepherd. Seek from the Lord that your children may by God's rich grace be kept from the paths of the destroyer and grow up in the fold of Christ, first as lambs of His flock and then as sheep of His hand.

One thing I am sure of is that if

we teach the children the doctrine of the atonement in the most unmistakable terms, we shall be doing ourselves good. I sometimes hope that God will revive His Church and restore her to her ancient faith by a gracious work among children. If He would bring into our churches a large influx of young people, how it would tend to liven the sluggish blood of the inactive and sleepy! Child Christians tend to keep the house alive. Oh, for more of them!

If the Lord will but help us to teach the children we shall be teaching ourselves. *There is no way of learning like teaching, and you do not know a thing until you can teach it to another. More so, you do not thoroughly know any truth until you*

can put it before a child so that he can see it. In trying to make a little child understand the doctrine of the atonement you will get clearer views of it yourself. Therefore I commend the holy exercise to you. What a mercy it will be if our children are thoroughly grounded in the doctrine of redemption by Christ! If they are warned against the false gospels of this evil age and if they are taught to rest on the eternal rock of Christ's finished work, we may hope to have a generation following us which will maintain the faith and will be better than their fathers. **GT**

Adapted from the sermon
*"The Blood of Sprinkling and
the Children."*

Atonement – Exodus ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

The Old Testament sacrifices never removed man's sin; it was "impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" (Heb. 10:4). The Israelite's offering implied confession of sin and recognized its due penalty as death; and God passed over his sin in anticipation of Christ's sacrifice which did, finally, put away those sins "previously committed" [in Old Testament times] (Heb. 9:15,26).

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ **Propitiation – Romans**

The lid of the ark (mercy seat) was sprinkled with atoning blood on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:14), representing that the righteous sentence of the law had been executed, changing a place of judgment into a place of mercy (Heb. 9:11-15). Propitiation is not placating a vengeful God, but it is satisfying the righteousness of a holy God, thereby making it possible for Him to show mercy righteously.

—C. I. Scofield

– continued from outside back cover

4. How Can I Ask Jesus To Come Into My Heart?

Jesus says, “Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone [man, woman, boy or girl] hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and dine [eat] with him, and he with Me” (Rev. 3:20).

Who is knocking? _____

Why is He knocking? _____

If you want to ask Jesus to come into your heart, you can pray something like this:

“Lord Jesus, I have done many bad things. Thank you, Jesus, for dying for my sins. Please forgive my sins. Please come into my heart. Please make my heart clean with your blood.”

5. I Might Still Sin. What Can I Do About The Bad Things I Do?

The Bible tells us, “If we confess our sins, He [Jesus] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn. 1:9).

Using what this verse says, fill in these blanks:

If I _____ my sins, Jesus will _____ my sins and _____ my heart.

6. How Can I Know That I Have Eternal Life?

Put your name in the blanks of John 3:16.

For God so loved _____ that He gave His only begotten Son, that if _____ believes in Him _____ shall not perish but have everlasting life.

When do you have everlasting life? _____

I hope you have put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, asking Him to come into your heart. I hope you will live wanting to make Him happy. A little chorus says: “Read your Bible, Pray every day, And you’ll grow, grow, grow.” **GT**

If you have given your life to the Lord Jesus Christ, Grace & Truth would like to send you some literature to help you grow in Him. Please write to us asking for the “New Believer’s Packet.”

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SIX QUESTIONS

by Victor Coffman



1. What Is Sin?

The Bible says, *“All have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23 KJV).*

Circle your sins:

Lying

Hating

Disobeying

Cheating

Swearing

Bad Thoughts

Stealing

Fighting

Jealousy

What are other sins that you have done?

_____, _____, _____

2. What Did Jesus Do About My Sins?

The Bible says, *“Christ died for our sins” (1 Cor. 15:3).*

Put your name in this verse and read it aloud:

Christ died for _____’s sins.

Are you sorry for your sins? YES No (Circle one)

3. How Can Jesus Make My Heart Clean?

God says, *“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 Jn. 1:7 NKJV).*

Fill in the blanks with the same word (hint: the word is in the verse you just read):

Jesus makes my heart clean with His _____.

A soldier pushed a spear in Jesus’ side and _____ came out (Jn. 19:34).

Do you want Jesus to make your heart clean?

YES No (Circle one)

– continued on inside back cover

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