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Editorial

Living in the year 2100

The headline on the poster in the college hallway read: “Will you be living in the year 2100?” It invited suggestions for items to be placed in a college time capsule to be opened in January, 2100. Students were encouraged to make these recommendations because, “due to advances in medical science” they *might* expect to still be living at the planned opening of the capsule in 100 years!

How subtly does Satan seek to lull souls into thinking that life stretches endlessly before them! Thus blinded, man little realizes or cares that his history, begun 6,000 years ago, started with God’s invitation to eat of the tree of life and live forever (Gen 2:16, 17). Instead, having willingly disobeyed God, he brought ruin and death into that beautiful and pristine scene of innocence (Rom 5:12).

The reality is that few if any of these students living today, will still be alive *in this world* in January, 2100. Of course, they will consciously exist somewhere—either alive in the presence of Christ (2 Cor 5:8) or in hopeless eternal separation from the God of light and love Who created them (Mat 7:23).

Let’s consider 3 distinct parts to this question, doing so in light of the truth of the Word of God.

“Will you be *living*...?”

Living and dying. The Word of God *is* the very truth which Pilate could not discover when he asked the Lord Jesus “what is truth”? (John 18:38) It plainly

states that “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23), that “death has passed upon all men” (Rom 5:12), and that “the wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23). Divine truth reveals that *death* is the final end of every soul. (apart from the sovereign grace of God—Eph 2:5, 8, Rom 5:17). The life of every *unsaved person* who read that poster—yea, in the world—ends in *death*.

Further, Satan seeks to hide the Divine truth that all are “dead” (no life before God), even while they live. Be he in the best of health and vigor, unregenerate man is “dead in trespasses and sin” (Eph 2:1) and is pictured morally in the man of Luke 10 who was left “half dead” by those who had robbed him. This is the true moral condition of all mankind—physically alive yet morally dead before God.

God warned the first man and woman “In the day that thou eatest thereof. . . dying thou shalt surely die” (Gen 2 JND). From the moment an infant—born with Adam’s fallen nature—takes its first breath, it begins to die. And were it to live 100 years or more, the *truth* still remains—its life is marked by *dying*.

Eternal torment. In Luke 16:23 another solemn truth about life and death is recorded. Here we read of a man who though having ceased *living* in this world, *still exists*. But what a tragic existence he experiences! “I am tormented in this flame...” are the awful words spoken from his own parched lips. Oh dear reader! If you have never accepted Jesus Christ as your Saviour, consider what it means to leave this world that way. You will still consciously exist—in

January, 2100—and forever— in a hopeless eternity of torment and weeping, separated from the God Who loved and created you. (Matt 8:12)

Eternal life. Yet, illuminating this somber, grim side of Divine truth is wonderful, glorious hope—summed up in Romans 6:23; “The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”. 1 John 5:1 gives the assurance of this life—“that ye may *know* that ye have eternal life”. We are also given to *know* that when done *living* in this world, believers go to “be with Christ which is far better” (Phil 1:23).

Eternal life is infinitely more than the endless life in innocence that Adam had before he sinned. The Good Shepherd came that we “might have life and that [we] might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). What an *abundant gift* is the life of Christ Who is *eternal life*. (Joh 11:25, 14:6, 17:3) It can’t be lost for He promises “I give unto them eternal life and they shall *never* perish” (John 10:28), and “. . . because I live, *ye shall live also*.” (John 14:19)

“Will you be living *in the year*...”?

What “future” really means. The enemy ever suggests that this life holds the promise of a future—that there is always time *for living*. Satan falsely speaks in the language of *years* while God speaks in the language of *now*. The truth makes no promise of the future (as to this life)—whether in days or years. There is a sober question in James 4:14; “For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.” Man is also

warned that “*now* is the accepted time, behold *now* is the day of salvation” (2 Cor 6:2). The lie of promised *years* and *future* for the unbeliever is solemnly unmasked by God’s rebuke in Luke 12:20; “thou fool, *this night* shall thy soul be required of thee”.

The believer’s future. For Christians, *days*, *months*, or *years* must be understood in reference to the promised return of the Lord Jesus—first for His bride the church (1 Thess 4), and then to appear in this world (Acts 1:11). His words “Surely I come quickly”, give Divine answer to the world’s scoffing spirit which asks “where is the promise of his coming”. We can become tainted by this spirit of unbelief so that the expectation of the Lord’s imminent return fades, and we begin to act morally as the wicked servant of Luke 12:45.

No prophetic event remains to be fulfilled before Christ’s promised return. Let us regulate every thought of the future—*years* or *days*—by a daily living in the spirit of the *patience of Jesus Christ* (2 Pet 1:6), awaiting His shout. (1 Thess 4:13-18)

“Will you be living in the year 2100?”

We don’t know. Believers are not to try and anticipate or determine the date of the Lord’s return for the church or His appearing in this world. It is not ours to “know the times and seasons which the Father hath put in His own power.” (Acts 1:7)

But presently occurring “famines, pestilences and earthquakes” (Mat 24:7), “wars and rumors of wars” (Mk 13:7), “the love of many waxing cold” (Mat

24:12), “the earth...corrupt before God...and filled with violence” (Gen 6:11), all provide stark evidence that the Lord’s return (the rapture) and subsequent appearing (Col 3:4) is at hand. 6,000 years of man’s sad history has passed and we stand at the beginning of the seventh millennium — the *seventh day*. (2 Pet 3:8). It ought to be exceedingly precious and comforting for believers longing for Christ’s return to remember that “God rested on the seventh day” (Gen 2:2). As we enter the *seventh day* of man’s history on this earth, can the promised coming of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ be far off?

We do know. January, 2100 will come. When it does, the world will be experiencing one of three things: (1) God’s grace still offering salvation to the lost, (2) seven years of the most solemn, frightful judgements this world has ever known, or (3) a thousand years of blessed peace, rest and joy. Personally, it seems very probable—in view of the present dark conditions of the world—that January, 2100 will be part of the thousand years of the glorious millennial reign of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But whatever the condition of the world in 2100, Christians living now are awaiting—not the unveiling of a time capsule in January, 2100—but the glorious rapture (1 Thess 4:13-18). It will take place in the “twinkling of an eye”, and “we shall be changed”. Then “this corruptible shall have put on incorruptibility, and . . . immortality. . .” and “death shall be swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor 15:52-54). “Amen, even so come Lord Jesus.” (Rev 22:20) *Ed.*

The Godhead

Every activity of the Godhead is always in Trinity. The first time the name of God is mentioned in the Bible the Hebrew word used is God- the plural. In Hebrew language there is singular, dual, and plural.

The Hebrew word for God in the *plural* is **Elohim**. This is the word used in Gen. 1:1. The Hebrew word for God in the *dual* is **Elohim**. It is never used in the Scripture. The Hebrew word for God in the singular is **Eloah**. The first time this is used is in Deuteronomy 32:15-17 where He is contrasted with idols.

The order in Scripture is always; God the Father in purpose; the Son, the One who carries out the purposes of God the Father, and the Holy Spirit, the power by which they are fulfilled. This truth runs all through the Word of God.

In *creation* it was the purpose of God the Father that creation would be the sphere for the display of all His counsels. (Eph 1:9, 10) The Son is the One by whom all is created and upheld. (John 1:1-4, Col. 1:16, Heb. 1:1-3) The Holy Spirit is the power in creation. (Job 26:13, Psa 104:30)

In *redemption* God the Father purposed in love, the blessing of man. (John 3:16) "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor 5:19) Christ in obedience of love accomplished the work of redemption. (Heb 10:7-10) He (Christ) "through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God." (Heb 9:14)

In *resurrection* God the Father raised Christ from the dead. (Acts 3:15) Christ, the Son, raised Himself

from the dead. (John 10:18) The Holy Spirit raised
Christ from the dead. (Rom 8:11, 1 Pet. 3:18)

H. E. Hayboe

Learning Christ

Now we have to learn Christ. Has Christ had such a place in your hearts today that the things which spring from Christ sprung from you? Have you understood that Christ has brought you to Himself? Now especially it is important that Christians should be *Christians*. What He was before God in perfection reproduced itself before men to please His Father. Are you thus learning Christ day by day?

When I look at Christ, I see God manifested in a man in this world, the expression and pattern of what God delights in. I am not before God on the ground of what I have done, or what I am, but on the ground of Christ. There is for us this continually learning Christ.

According to the knowledge of [Christ] I have got, there should be nothing in my life contrary to that knowledge. One does not expect a babe to be a man. When one sees a babe delighting in its mother, and obedient, it is just as delightful in its way, as to see a man.

The Christian, having his eye on Christ, knows no standard but Christ in glory. We are "to be conformed to the imaged of his Son".

Excerpted, "Thoughts on Philipians", J. N. Darby

Our Heavenly Calling

Hindrances to Our practical enjoyment

The hindrances to our walking practically in the good of our heavenly calling are simple, yet the lessons to be learned often take a lifetime. As someone has commented, “Truth is simple; it is we who are complicated”. So the truth of the heavenly calling of the Church is simple, yet we make it complicated and difficult.

Failure to be occupied with Christ in glory

Possibly the greatest hindrance to our walking according to our heavenly calling is our lack of seeing that Christ, who is our life, is there in heaven. If He is our life, and He is there, then our hearts will be drawn out to Him. To the extent that this is so we will have our affections taken up there to Him, and as the hymn says, “The things of earth will grow strangely dim”. We cannot take up our heavenly calling simply as a doctrine, for in so doing we shall dissociate Christ from it, and affection for Him will be lost.

It was this that took place in Ephesus, so that the Spirit of God through the apostle John charges them with having left their first love (Revelation 2:4). Outwardly no doubt all was in order, but God saw in the heart the spring of departure from Christ that eventually led to all the evil that followed. Doctrines that are separated from Christ tend to wither the vitality of the soul, and the higher the truth taught, the more sorrowful will be the results when it is

pressed legally. Then hearts become discouraged and look for rest in self and the world rather than in the only place it can be found, in Christ.

May God give us, not to be occupied with our love to Christ, but rather to dwell on how much He loves us! As another has said, "A thoroughly freed soul would walk as Christ walked. He would earnestly seek the good of man, he would use this world as not abusing it, thank God for all His creatures, for food and sky, and have his heart with Christ where Christ is".

Failure to be practically done with "self"

Linked to this is another reason for our failure as to our heavenly calling, namely, that self has not been thoroughly dealt with. Of course none of us would say that we had so thoroughly dealt with self so as never to have to do with it again, for we will never be rid of our sinful nature until taken home to be with Christ. But we must be willing to be broken as vessels, to have our hearts searched by the eye of Christ, that all that is not of Himself might be discovered and taken away. True

Christianity makes everything of Christ and nothing of self, yet how often we want something of ourselves along with Christ! We subtly persuade ourselves that there is something good in us, even if it takes the form of pride in what we know. Then we are in danger of boasting of our knowledge- "knowledge puffeth up"-and perhaps of looking down on other believers. All of this must be laid open before God, that His eye may search our hearts, and that we

may have Christ before us instead of self. In having Christ before us we will be kept happy, yet humble as we see how little we are like Him.

Again, some may ask how this is to be accomplished. We must recognize that only God can work it in us, but if our desire is to have it, God will do it. As a brother said more than one hundred years ago, "If you see any beauty in Christ, and say, 'I desire to have that', God will work it in you." If we want to know more of Christ and all His beauty, and practically to know more of our heavenly calling, God will work it in us. But we must be willing let Him break us, to be "delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh" (2 Corinthians 4:11).

Failure to walk practically separate from the world.

Still a third hindrance to our walking according to our heavenly calling is worldliness. This again is very subtle, for we are IN the world, and thus must interact with it to some extent. To attempt practically to go out of the world is not God's way, as we have already seen. No, we are saved out of this world, but sent back into it to be living witnesses of the grace that has saved us.

The danger is that we take on the character of the world. It has been well said that the moment I do anything to meet the eye of the world, worldliness begins. It may not be actual sin, but rather a way of thinking and living that is natural rather than spiritual, worldly rather than heavenly, and thus I lose my testimony to a lost world. The world system

began with Cain, who went out from the presence of the Lord, built a city, and then proceeded to surround himself with everything that might minister to his happiness, but leaving God out. The world system he began is with us today, and we are not to be OF the world. Yet how often believers are in a measure separate from this world, but continue to love “the things that are in the world” (1 John 1:15). While these things may not be wrong in themselves, they become a weight, and hinder the believer from running the race that is set before him.

Again, what is the answer to this tendency? How can we walk through this world, witnessing to it, using it, yet not becoming part of it? I believe scripture would show us that a risen Christ in glory is the answer to it all. When we remember that this world has rejected our Savior, and that He has no place at all in it, then we too will not want to be part of it. We will realize that the same world that cast the Lord Jesus out of it (and would do so again if given the opportunity) is the world through which we pass. We will want to “walk, even as He walked” (1 John 2:6). There will be the fullest love to the lost, and the earnestness of that love in bringing the gospel before them.

There will be the using of every chance to do good to others, knowing that while the world cannot see my heart, they can see good works, and thus see Christ in me. But I will be bearing the character and deportment of one who belongs to heaven, whose future and treasure is all up there. It is this that will excite the hatred of the world. The

world loves a Christian who exhibits all the graces that the life of Christ has given him, but hates the witness to Christ as the Source of it all, and the witness that the world is under judgment. But the Lord Jesus could say, “Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). We too can overcome the world, for “Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world” (1 John 5:4).

In our next (and concluding) article we will look at some practical problems in our lives, and how our heavenly calling should affect them. *Bill Prost*

A “staff” or a “broken reed”

This past weekend, my wife and I took one of our granddaughters home. One of the pleasures of that assignment was the opportunity to swim in the lake, near the spot where my father had years ago built a tent platform cottage and where our family had spent many happy vacations.

But age takes its toll and we found that getting out of the water is more difficult these days. I found an ideal staff to help us with that task—both of us using the it to steady us on the rocky lake bottom.

As I thought about that staff, it reminded me of a comment by one of the 19th century writers with regard to Hebrews 11:21 “*By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, . . . worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.*”

It was, he said, the highest point of Jacob’s life. No longer scheming, nor leaning on his own intelli-

gence, but rather worshipping while leaning.

I brought that staff home with me to remind me of the lesson that Jacob took all his life to learn. How often we *lean* on that broken reed that pierces our hand instead of “learning to lean” as the hymn reminds us—on Him Who never fails. *R. K. Gorgas*

“Ten Thousand”

“And the women answered [one another] as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.” (1Sa 18:7)

The “then thousands” slain here by David, in figure suggest to our hearts the *mighty power* and *victory* that our blessed Lord Jesus has displayed over the enemy.

“But the people answered, Thou shalt not go forth: for if we flee away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die, will they care for us: but now [thou art] worth ten thousand of us: therefore now it is better that thou succour us out of the city.” (2Sa 18:3)

Here, the people refusing to allow their beloved king to go forth to battle against the enemy because David was worth “ten thousand” of them, gives us a beautiful picture of the priceless *value* that Christ has to the redeemed soul.

“My beloved [is] white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand” (So 5:10)

The “chiefest among ten thousand” suggests the *beauty* and *loveliness* of the Lord Jesus—far above above any other object—to the soul that loves Him.

“And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;” (Re 5:11)

Here we have the unlimited, eternal praise that He who is victorious, infinitely precious, and lovely beyond description will receive for all eternity from redeemed hearts. No longer is it *ten thousands*, but rather a number is used by the Spirit to convey to our hearts that which is *infinite and eternal*.

Ed.

His Power

“If there is disappointment because God does not use us more than He does, may it not be that we are thinking more of *our faithfulness* than of *our guilt* as to the evils we have separated from? If we look at our present low condition and murmur in our tents, shall we not be likely soon to question our position? If Satan can unsettle, he will. There are some who talk much about the want of power in the gathering, having a standard of their own as to what power is, forgetting that God’s *presence* is *power*, whether it be to break down or build up”

Bible Treasury, August 1867

“Give this Man place”

“When thou art bidden of any [man] to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place;...” (Luke 14:8)

Few events hold greater promise of happiness than a wedding. What a touching picture of the joy of the Lord’s heart, when those of His own gather in His presence to remember Him. (1 Cor 11:23-26)

Jesus has extended the invitation to His own—*“With desire I have desired to eat with you...”* (Luke 22:15) and He has promised to be with His own—*“Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them.”* (Matt 18:20). What a precious privilege to be where He has “placed Himself at table” (Luke 22, JND trans)!

This passage in Luke suggests a vital moral principle regarding the *spirit* in which we remember Him. We are to come to this feast *rightly valuing* the One around whom we gather. Thoughts of self—our faithfulness, our gifts, our abilities, our attainments—have no place in His glorious presence. If occupied with *self*, are we not in principle, *sitting down* in the *highest room*? If *self* is the chief object of our thoughts, we morally take a place of prominence above the Lord Jesus.

But Jesus alone has title to the *highest room*. God reminds our hearts that we are in the presence of a *greater than Solomon* (Mat 12:42) —an infinitely *more honorable man* than he sits at this feast.

How often must the Spirit prod our self centered

hearts with those words—“Give this man place...”. Jesus is presently seated at the right hand of the Father crowned with glory and honor (Heb 2:9). He who will be displayed as “King of kings and Lord of lords” is “the Son of His love”. He is the Creator; the spotless Lamb of God upon Whom heaven opened with the words “*thou art my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased*”. (Mk 1:11)

What a privilege and delight it is to the worshiping heart to “give this Man place”! May we unsparingly judge anything that would intrude into that place of prominence of which He alone is worthy.

We are instructed to “examine ourselves” (1 Cor 11:28) before we come collectively into His blessed presence. In doing so, grace will be given to take the very lowest place—the place morally suited to us. Then we will offer to this *most Honorable Man*—One to whom *all place* is to be given—“*the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.*” (Heb 13:15)

*“Jesus thou alone art worthy
Ceaseless praises to receive;
For thy love and grace and goodness
Rise o’er all our hearts conceive.”*

*With adoring hearts we render
honor to Thy precious name,
Overflowing with Thy mercies,
Far and wide Thy worth proclaim.” (LF #82)
adapted from ministry*

Practical Reflections

Acts 3:24–4:15

24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

When the priesthood failed in Eli (1 Sam 4:18), the people no longer had a way to *be brought* into the presence of God. He graciously raises up prophets who will *bring Him* through His Word to them.

God's prophets speak the *same* truth for He *and* His truth never changes. (Mal 3:6) That truth centers upon His beloved Son. (John 14:6) May we *hold* the truth of God taught us by "faithful men" (2 Tim 2:2), *speak* "the truth in love" (Eph 4:15), *teach* "the same thing" (1 Cor 1:10) and *receive* the truth sent for our present need. (1 Thess. 2:13)

25 Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

They were the descendents (the seed of Abraham) of those who preached the coming Messiah. It was with their fathers that God had made His covenant. Yet they were guilty of casting out and murdering the One in whom all these promises were to be fully realized. Without faith, *position* and *knowledge* are helpless to produce blessing. Being raised in a Christian home and being brought to the bosom of the assembly—great blessings indeed—do not automatically impart reality before God.

26 Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

The Lord Jesus as Messiah had come, sent from God to the people in order to turn them from their sin and disobedience. And they were the more responsible, for He had come *first* to them. With *Privilege* comes solemn *responsibility*.

4:1 And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,

Satan uses the religious leaders of that privileged nation in order to stifle Divine truth. The nation had drifted far from God, for its leaders openly taught evil doctrine concerning the resurrection (Mark 12:18, Acts 23:8). It is so today—Christianity which ought to have been a beacon of pure truth, has become the dwelling place of every foul and wicked Christ dishonoring doctrine (Matt 13:32, Rev 18:2).

2 Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

“Being grieved” at the truth! The awful result of giving up what once they possessed, they chose a *Liar* rather than the *Truth*. Thus the truth of life from death through resurrection—hope and joy to believers—is a source of *grief* to them. How blind a dead, faithless religion makes man (Matt 15:14)! They willingly chose a hopeless grave, rather than bow before Jesus—the Prince of Life!

3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.

It was morally “eventide” in the hearts of these servants of Satan. Earlier, the enemy had sought to turn aside God’s blessing, by using men to “mock” (Acts 2:13). Now the enemy seeks to “shut up” the testimony by physical, rather than verbal, means. Joseph—a blessing in prison just as much as when in Potiphar’s house or Pharaoh’s court, (Gen 39, 40)—gives wonderful encouragement today when the enemy is so busy hindering the truth of God.

4 Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.

The apostles are put in hold, unable to preach the truth in full liberty—but the Spirit of God is not restrained. The company of believers keeps growing. We needn’t give up preaching and spreading the truth of God. The *power* (the Spirit) is the same, and the *Word* is the same — and He *promises* the truth will not return to Him void. (Isa 55:11)

5, 6 And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, and Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander; and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

The whole responsible leadership of the Jews is represented here and they take sides against Jehovah and His Christ. It is not the Gentiles, but the very leaders of the Jewish nation who were responsible

before God, that gather together against the truth. Professing Christianity is fast moving to this same gross darkness and unbelief (Matt 6:23).

7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?

They couldn't deny the miracle, but having "denied the Holy One and Just" (Acts 3:43), they are blinded as to the power that worked this healing. The actions of our lives ought to cause those around to ask "by what power" we are enabled to walk in peace through this dark world. (1 Peter 3:15)

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

The solemn message—directed to those most responsible for the death of the Messiah—must be given by one under the control of the Spirit of God. Believers are to be filled with the Spirit of God (Eph 5:18). Only then can a truly effective, fruitful testimony for Christ be rendered in this world.

9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

"If we be examined". Christians will always be scrutinized by the world. May the world only find "good deeds" to examine in our lives, rather than things which dishonor the Lord. (1 Pet 3:17)

10 *Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, [even] by him doth this man stand here before you whole.*

What an indictment!—The despised Name of Jesus and their horrible guilt concerning Him, and God’s complete satisfaction gloriously shown in His resurrection. And before their very eyes, the healed cripple gave proof to the truth they denied.

11 *This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner:*

Building a happy life that glorifies God must start with this *Stone*—Jesus Christ—rejected in the world, yet *chosen of God and precious*. (1 Pet. 2:4) They wanted their place and nation (John 11:48), but rejected God’s *foundation* for getting that blessing.

12 *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

The blessed Name of Jesus, so hated of the Jews, is the only hope for them—and the world. The urgency of Peter’s message is found in the words, “*must be saved*”—not “*can be saved*”. Salvation is not a *choice* left to man’s will, it is a *must*, and solemn eternal issues rest on obeying the gospel.

13 *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned*

and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

It was not so much the words that Peter and John spoke, but the *manner* of their bold testimony that surprised these learned religious antagonists. (Prov 28:1). They *saw* more with their eyes, than they *heard* with their ears. What they saw caused them to marvel, knowing the apostles—*unlettered* and *uninstructed* men (JND)—had been *with Jesus*. Here again we see the Spirit press the importance of our *actions* over our *words*.

14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

The healed cripple didn't talk, he didn't walk, he didn't leap—he stood. For him it was now a time of *standing with* those who proclaimed the truth. What a powerful *silent testimony* to Peter's words he gave! We need *wisdom* and *grace*, to act thus . . . “and having done all, to stand” (Eph 6:13).

15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,

No room for Divine truth in this group! Their deliberations were among themselves—God in whom they boasted was left out. The subject was how to stifle the truth they could not deny, even as they had tried to stifle the truth of His glorious resurrection. (Matt 28:12, 13) *Ed.*

Feed the Flock

“Coals of Fire”

Tom was drafted into the armed services during WW II. His profane language and unruly ways soon earned him an unenviable reputation in the barracks as a Godless bully. Some weeks after Tom’s induction, another soldier was added to his company. But this young man was as quiet, circumspect and sober, as the Tom was vulgar and disorderly.

It soon became evident to all in the company, that the new recruit was a Christian. While he said little, each night before going to bed, he knelt down beside his cot and prayed. There were the customary hoots and catcalls and jests. But Tom wasn’t satisfied with that. In his hatred of the soldier’s Christianity—especially of his evening prayers—he vowed to carry his verbal tormenting even further.

The next evening when the Christian was again on his knees praying, Tom quickly removed one of his boots, and taking careful aim, threw it with a curse at the kneeling soldier. The boot landed with a solid thud, against his side, causing the Christian to wince and catch his breath. But without even lifting his head, he continued to pray.

Further enraged, Tom removed his other boot and hurled it with as much force as he could muster. The boot struck the Christian a terrible blow on the side of his face. He shuddered and gasped in pain as blood trickled down his cheek. But again without opening his eyes, he remained on his knees.

Tired of the assault for that evening, Tom went to

sleep. At reveille next morning he hopped out of bed. Remembering his boots, he looked over at the Christian's bunk searching for where they had landed. And he found them—but not where he had hurled them the night before. Now they were neatly placed together—beautifully polished—at the end of his own bunk! It was not long after, that the love of Christ flooded Tom's dark, sinful heart, and he was brightly saved.

We who live in well favored western countries must not think that persecution for the Name of Jesus, only happens in “foreign lands”. It takes place wherever that blessed Name is honored. We face an enemy who will stop at nothing—whether corruption and violence or friendship and succor—to stamp out the Name of Christ. May we seek grace to move and act in Christ's love towards those who persecute us for His Name's sake. (Luke 6:27)

We are to expect such treatment (2Ti 3:12), and are not to wonder at the world's hatred (1 John 3:13). In 2 Sam. 16:5-14 we read of those that followed the king in his rejection. They felt the curses, stones and dust that were cast at David by the wicked Shimei. The more closely we follow the Lord Jesus in this world, the more we will feel all the insults and persecutions that the enemy casts at His blessed, peerless Person.

Let us not be *weary in well doing* (Gal 6:9, 10) for the *God of all grace* (1 Pet 5:10) invites us to flee to His presence at any moment *to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need* (Heb 4:16).

Ed.

Bible Challenger

The first letter of each of the following responses will form the word spoken to an impious heathen king revealing there had not been a saving transformation in “thine heart” which would have prevented a fatal consequence. The number in brackets indicates the number of words in each answer.

1. The words contained in a Mosaic ordinance that described the desired action in “thine heart” (God’s people) towards the poor that might be in their midst. (3)
2. The word to which “thine heart” (Anyone’s) should be applied for maturity in a relationship with God. (1)
3. The word describing that which “thine heart” may become when there is contentment. (1)
4. The word that tells the intent of “thine heart” (said of a famous king); and although the desire was not granted, it did receive a favorable commendation from the Lord. (3)
5. That which riches may well cause “thine heart” to be (2).
6. That which the fear of the Lord, as a daily exercise, will keep “thine heart” from a specific evil. (2)
7. That which we are encouraged to do so that the desires of “thine heart” may be realized. (6)

R. Erisman

“sons of God”

We find sonship so blessedly brought out in John’s Gospel. Not only has he given me eternal life, but the Father enters into all my smallest wants; the least things about me are remembered, the Father’s love and grace streaming round me.

Sonship is relationship. The *Only Begotten* came out of the divine glory, and every one who received Him became a son. If I am a son, then God is my Father and I can say, “Abba, Father”. What rest there!

All the saved will be in glory, but for the children given by the Father to the Son, it is the Father’s house. God takes all the blessing Christ won, and shares it all with us. There is a spring in the heart of God, flowing forth for us as sons, individually, for you and me, for His name’s sake. Not only the new and living way opened, but beloved in Him as sons.

Excerpted, Gleanings of G.V.Wigram

Glorifying the Lord

“When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.” (2Thess 1:10)

This refers to the time when the Lord Jesus will appear with His saints to establish His rule over this poor world. He shall be glorified in you and me—and we will be manifested in glory with Him.

That you and I will be there, is to the Lord’s glory. He is the One who saved us, carried us and then called us out of the world to be with him. No matter

what our failures may have been, our appearing with Him in will be to His glory. Our presence there will glorify Him, for it is only so because of Him—His love, His work, His patience, His grace and His power. What beautiful glories shine in Him!

It says also *He will be admired in all them that believe*. As the world looks on His saints, they will see each one as the reflection of Himself and this will be to His glory. We will be perfectly like Him in that day. And He is the one who will be admired through you and me appearing with Him.

These thoughts have encouraged me to daily seek to glorify the Lord Jesus. How good to reflect His glorious Person more each day as we wait for Him and that coming perfect manifestation of all that we are in Him. *M. Payette*

Answers to December 1999 Bible Challenger

Escape	1 Cor. 10:13
No root	Luke 8:13
Drown men in destruction	1 Tim 6:9
Unjust	2 Pet 2:9
Rise and pray	Luke 22:46
Evil	Matt. 6:13
To try them	Rev 3:10
Harden not your hearts	Heb 3:8

“Blessed is the man that **ENDURETH** temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.” (James 1:12) *R. Erisman*