



TOWARD THE MARK

***“I PRESS TOWARD THE MARK FOR THE PRIZE
OF THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS.”
PHILIPPIANS 3:14***

*A MAGAZINE FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS
OF ALL AGES*

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TOWARD THE MARK

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

January 2024

Dear Reader,

“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong” (1 Corinthians 16:13)

In 1 Corinthians 7:29 it says, “But this I say, brethren, **the time is short.**” An even more remarkable statement is found in Revelation 10:5-6: “And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by Him that liveth forever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should **be time no longer.**”

It is in time that the eternal God creates and prepares a people to be with Himself. For the present time God expresses another desire and purpose in Isaiah 57:15: “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”

This puts a tremendous premium upon contrition and humility. Do we now value this enough to seek to be of a contrite and humble spirit, and do we desire the presence of the Lord our God dwelling with us? Soon time for us will run out, and we shall be in eternity. Will it be in this year of 2024?

In 1 Peter 4, the term “Christian” is used, and Peter exhorts the believer “that he no longer should live **the rest of his time** in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God” (v. 2). The next verse speaks of “time past.” **So there is time—past, present, and future. Let us redeem the time (Ephesians 5:16; Colossians 4:5).**

In Mark 13, our Lord teaches about **an unknown length of time of service during the Master’s absence.** The disciples are commanded to watch, for they know not the hour. Here the conduct of the disciples is especially before the eyes of the Lord. Concerning that great day and the hour of its arrival, the angels, and even the Son as a man, know not. The Lord Jesus must sit at the right hand of God until His enemies are made His footstool, and the time of His rising up is not revealed. **In the meanwhile, the servants are left to live for and to serve their Master during His absence.**

What a great privilege this is!

Four times at the end of Mark 13 the word “watch” is used. Not knowing the hour but expecting His return will keep us alert. The word spoken to His disciples ends with this, “What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.” So, as we step out into a New Year, may we be Watching and Praying! May you live for Him in 2024!

Praying that the Lord uses this issue of *Toward the Mark* to help you grow and be established as you read it. Thank you for your e-mails and notes of encouragement. Please keep praying for the Lord’s blessing on *Toward the Mark*.

Yours in our soon-coming Lord,

Emil S. Nashed

Please send your questions and comments to:

Toward The Mark

c/o Wayne Christian Assembly

60 Smith Lane, Wayne, NJ 07470-5354

Attention: Emil S. Nashed

www.towardthemark.org

MILK

"The truth shall make you free"

THE TWO GREAT PHASES OF THE CROSS

I would dwell for a little on the cross of Christ in its two grand, fundamental phases, or in other words, the cross as a basis of:

Our peace and our worship, our discipleship, and our testimony. In another word, relationship with God, and our relationship with the world.

If as a convicted sinner I look at the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, I behold in it the everlasting foundation of my peace. **I see my "sin" put away, as to the root or principle thereof, and I see my "sins" borne.** I see God to be, in very deed, "for me," and that, moreover, in the very condition in which my convicted conscience tells me I am. **The cross unfolds God as the sinner's friend. It reveals Him in that most wondrous character as the Righteous Justifier of the most ungodly sinner.** Creation never could do this. Providence never could do this. Therein I may see God's power, His majesty, and His wisdom; but what if all these things should be ranged against me? Looked at in themselves, abstractly, they would be so, for I am a sinner: and power, majesty, and wisdom could not put away my sins, nor justify God in receiving me.

The introduction of the Cross, however, changes the aspect of things entirely. There I find God dealing with sin in such a manner as to glorify Himself infinitely.

There I see the magnificent display and perfect harmony of all the divine attributes. I see love, and such love as captivates and assures my heart, and weans it, in proportion as I realize it, from every other object. **I see wisdom,** and such wisdom as baffles devils and astonishes angels. **I see power,** and such power as bears down all opposition. **I see holiness,** and such holiness as repulses sin to the very furthest point of the moral universe and gives the most intense expression of God's abhorrence thereof that could possibly be given. **I see grace,** and such grace as sets the sinner in the very presence of God—yea, puts him into

His bosom. **Where could I see all these things but in the cross?** Nowhere else. Look where you please, and you cannot find aught that so blessedly combines those two great points, namely, “Glory to God in the highest,” and “on earth peace.”

How precious, therefore, is the cross in this its first phase as the basis of the sinner’s peace, the basis of his worship, and the basis of his eternal relationship with the God who is there so blessedly and gloriously revealed! How precious to God, as furnishing Him with a righteous ground on which to go in the full display of all His matchless perfections and in His most gracious dealings with the sinner! So precious is it to God that as a recent writer has well remarked, “All that He has said—all that He has done, from the beginning, indicates that it was ever uppermost in His heart.” And no wonder! His dear and well-beloved Son was to hang there, between heaven and earth, the object of all the shame and suffering that men and devils could heap upon Him, because He loved to do His Father’s will and redeem the children of His grace. It will be the grand center of attraction as the fullest expression of His love throughout eternity.

Then, as the basis of our practical discipleship and testimony, the cross demands our most profound consideration. In this aspect of it, I need hardly say, it is as perfect as in the former. **The same cross which connects me with God has separated me from the world.** A dead man is evidently done with the world; and hence, the believer having died in Christ is done with the world; and having risen with Christ is connected with God in the power of a new life.

Being thus inseparably linked with Christ, the believer participates in His acceptance with God and in His rejection by the world. The two things go together. The former makes him a worshipper and a citizen in heaven, the latter makes him a witness and a stranger on earth. That brings him inside the veil; this puts him outside the camp. The one is as much a fact as the other. If the cross has come between me and my sins, it has just as really come between me and the world. In the former case, it puts me into the place of peace with God; in the latter, it puts me into the place of hostility with the world, i.e., in a moral point of view; though, in another sense, it

makes me the patient, humble witness of that precious, unfathomable, eternal grace, which is set forth in the cross.

Now the believer should clearly understand and rightly distinguish between both the above phases of the cross of Christ. He should not profess to enjoy the one, while he refuses to enter into the other. If he enters into the atonement which the cross has accomplished, he should also realize the rejection which it necessarily involves. The former flows out of the part which God had in the cross; the latter, out of the part that man had therein. **It is our happy privilege, not only to be done with our sins, but to be done with the world also.** All this is involved in the doctrines of the cross. Well, therefore, might the apostle say, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” Paul looked upon the world as a thing which ought to be nailed to the cross; and the world, in having crucified Christ, had crucified all who belonged to Him. Hence there is a double crucifixion as regards the believer and the world; and were this fully entered into, it would prove the utter impossibility of our mingling the two. **Beloved reader, let us deeply, honestly, and prayerfully ponder these things; and may the Holy Spirit give us the ability to enter into the full practical power of both the phases of the cross of Christ.**

C. H. M.

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES!

1. Who was Obed’s nurse?
2. Which prophet indicated the place where the Lord Jesus should be born?
3. Who told Joseph what he should name the son that Mary was going to deliver?

MEAT

"Sanctify them by the truth"

THERE IS A NEW CREATION

The work of God in creation is brought before us in different parts of the Holy Scriptures, each mention bringing out some peculiar feature for our instruction. Genesis gives its account of creation and of God's preparation of the earth for man's habitation, with charming divine simplicity for the instruction, edification, and delight of every child of God; its powerful statements of fact silencing for the believer the infidel voices that would leave us in darkness as to God and His works and that would engage us with the speculations and theories that originate in the puny mind of the creature. Proverbs 8 speaks of One, presented to us as Wisdom, who surveys the building up of that which was to be man's dwelling place, where He, the blessed Son of God, would be found as Man to carry out the will of God for the blessing of those who would be His companions on earth, and then in heaven for eternity.

Creation—The Work of the Son of God

When the creation is attributed to One Person of the Godhead, it is attributed to the Son. Men have taken the occasion of the Son's coming into Manhood to dishonor Him, but God has taken care to honor the Son; and this is one means used, the revelation that it was the Son of God who brought the creation into existence. Three times over in the New Testament we have this blessed fact brought to our notice. In John 1 there is the statement: "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." Paul, in Colossians 1, observes, "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth...all things were created by Him, and for Him." If John surveys the vast extent of creation, Paul in Colossians is specially occupied with the spheres of ordered rule and government that owe their existence to the Son of the Father's love, "whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers." When the writer to the Hebrews speaks of God creating, he says it was by the Son: "By whom also He made the worlds"; and it is the physical universe that is before the mind of the Spirit of God in this Scripture. The purpose of

the creation, according to Ephesians 3:9–10, is to display now to the great intelligences of heaven, in the church, His all-varied wisdom. Revelation 4:11 shows that all things have been created for the pleasure of God.

The Need of a New Creation

That God should speak in His word of a “new creation” surely signifies His displeasure with the existing creation. Scripture abundantly confirms this, for all that was connected with Adam has been ruined in his fall. This is taught in Romans 8, where it is written, “For the creature has been made subject to vanity, not of its will, the creature itself also shall be set free from the bondage of corruption...the whole creation groans together and travails in pain together until now.” The natural man can never heal the ills of the creation; all his plans and activities will never take away the groan of the creature, but Christ will hush the groan when, at His coming, the sons of God are manifested with Him.

The Ruin of the Old Creation

From Adam there has sprung a race of men, connected with him in the conditions brought about by his fall; all are sinners by nature and practice. Cain, Adam’s firstborn manifested the awful wickedness that lay in the fallen nature of man when he slew his brother and spoke offensively to God when faced with his crime. The disobedience, first found in Adam and Eve, the hatred, insolence, and violence displayed by Cain integrated with the corruption produced by man’s ruined nature soon made the world so vile and wicked that God had to cleanse it with an overwhelming flood.

The Passing of the Old World and the Beginning of a New

The Apostle Peter tells us in his First Epistle that God “spared not the old world,” and in his Second Epistle distinguishes between “the world that then was,” and “the heavens and earth which are now.” From out of the waters of the flood there emerged a new world with Noah as its head. Alas! poor Noah’s lack of self-control quickly evinced the weakness of man and his incapacity to govern what God had put under his hand. Although God had given man a new world, it was still morally of the old creation, for although the earth had been cleansed, there was no change in the fallen nature of man. Every succeeding generation,

and every fresh development of God's dealings with men, only proving that man in sin is incorrigible and that the old creation was irretrievably ruined. Headship was debased by Noah, priesthood was defiled by the sons of Aaron, judgment was perverted by the sons of Samuel, and royalty was dishonored by the sons of David, by the kings of Israel, and by the great Gentile monarchs. Man's evil rose to its height in the rejection and crucifixion of God's Son; the cross exposing the enormity of man's guilt and sealing forever the judgment of man's world.

God Working—Amidst the Ruins of the Old Creation

When the Jews persecuted the Lord Jesus for healing the impotent man on the Sabbath day, He answered them, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5:17). From the time that God's rest was broken by the entry of sin into the world, He began to work afresh to bring in a new creation that sin could not defile or ruin. In harmony with His Father's activities, the Son of God came into the world to labor in grace, working for the establishment of a realm where God could rest in His love and where there would be nothing of evil to grieve Him at His heart. Revealing the Father in a life of unwearied toil, He gathered around Him those whom the Father had given Him out of this world, and by His great redemptive work the Son of God laid the basis for the introduction of the world that lay in the Father's counsels, where His new creation glory could be displayed in those who once were sinners far from God.

God Working—Preparing Vessels for Glory

According to the riches of God's grace, His glory will be displayed in vessels of mercy (Romans 9:23)—those who are formed and fitted by divine power for His own presence, made meet to be the companions of His own dear Son. Even now, in passing through this world, the saints of God possess in their earthen vessels a wonderful heavenly treasure: "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"; but soon what God has wrought within them shall be enshrined in a "house not made with hands eternal in the heavens." God has already wrought in the saints with their glorious destiny in view, and this divine working has already brought them in their spirits into the new creation, where "all things are of God." Amidst the ruins of the old creation, God is working in new creation, forming and fashioning the vessels that will display His glory and the exceeding riches of His

grace in the coming ages. Regarding the pillars of the temple on which God's testimony was inscribed and other vessels and instruments of service, we read, "In the plain of the Jordan did the king cast them, in the clay-ground between Succoth and Zeredathah" (2 Chronicles 4).

God Working—Preparing Vessels of Testimony

God's new creation work has not only the coming day in view, it is for the present manifestation of His grace, even as it is written in Ephesians 2, "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Good works can never be produced by man in the flesh, but those in whom God has wrought in Christ have divinely given ability, through grace, to work for the glory and pleasure of God. As created "in Christ" we partake of Christ's character and are thus enabled to manifest His features of grace and beauty. How this magnifies the triumph of God! Satan doubtless thought that he had secured complete victory when men, as his willing instruments, crucified the Son of God; but God raised Christ from the dead and took Him to heaven and wrought in men, producing new creation vessels in which He manifests the same beautiful features that had been manifested in their perfection and fulness in Jesus here below.

The New Relationships

The subject of new creation in 2 Corinthians 5 is introduced with the words, "Wherefore, henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more. Therefore, if any man be in Christ (there is) new creation." According to the flesh, the Lord Jesus was of the seed of David, and although He will yet reign as Son of David, the relationships on that line were laid down for ever when He died. On the cross, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold thy son," and to John, "Behold thy mother." This was the closing up of the relationships that belonged to the Lord Jesus in flesh and blood. This was further emphasized when, in resurrection, He said to Mary Magdalene, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." These words not only tell us that the old relationships are gone but also reveal that Christ's disciples are brought into a new association with Him and into new relationships with the Father. In

John 15 the Lord Jesus had spoken to the disciples of the favored place of intimacy that was theirs as His friends, but not until He had entered into the new conditions of life in resurrection could He call them His brethren.

“Old Things Are Passed Away; Behold All Things Are Become New”

The things that have been defiled and corrupted by men in the old creation have no place in the new creation, for nothing in the new can ever be spoiled. Everything in this new realm is entirely new; it is not a fresh start with the things that were ruined by sin, but everything is new in nature and character, and all springs from God. Nothing of man’s conception or devising has a place in this new order of divine creation; all is spiritual and heavenly. The life and relationships are not after the flesh; the affections are pure and holy; the joys, blessings, riches, and glories belong to heaven. Springing from the new creation are thoughts and feelings that delight in God and all that are His, and the disposition of the renewed mind and the desires of the heart are towards things that the natural man has never known. Not a single principle of man’s world is to be found in the new creation, nothing of his philosophy or culture, none of the embellishments that adorn his city, nor any of the attractions that hold the hearts of men.

Reconciliation and New Creation

To bring us into the present enjoyment of new creation, God has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ. God has come near to man in the incarnation, but this could never effect reconciliation; the cross was absolutely necessary if man was to be brought near to God. Through the death of His Son, God has brought us near to Him, shedding abroad His love in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given to us, and in this way completely displacing the enmity that once was there. As being God’s workmanship, and as having been brought into right relationships with Him, in His grace, we are free to explore the wonders connected with the new creation that center in His beloved Son. With all saints, we are privileged to survey the vast extent of the riches of the Father’s glory—its “breadth, and length, and depth, and height”; knowing that “through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” Jew and Gentile believers have together been reconciled to God in one body, a

vessel in which God now displays His all-varied wisdom and in which He will display His glory before the universe for eternity.

A Man in Christ

In 2nd Corinthians Paul records the experiences of “a man in Christ” (12:2). Earlier he had written, “If any man be in Christ (there is) new creation” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Now he views himself abstractly as a man in heaven, to the Paradise of God, where there is everything to delight the heart of the new man. There, where all is new creation, the man in Christ heard things that he could not speak on earth. These are the things that belong to the scene where we shall be at home, where our loved ones in Christ, who have been called home, are with Christ; but our present flesh and blood condition hinders our knowing the full blessedness of all that God has given to us along with Christ, for here we only “see through a glass darkly.” There is much that we can know now, the things that have been freely given to us of God, things which “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man...but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit” (1 Corinthians 2:9–10). We know the joys of the new relationships and taste the blessedness of divine affections; delighting in all that has been unfolded of the purposes of God, but apart from the full knowledge of these things, there are the things in the Paradise of God that cannot be known until we are at home there.

The New Man—His Creation

When the Lord Jesus was on earth His whole course gave pleasure to the heart of His God and Father. There was the unique salutation, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight,” because of who Jesus was as the darling of His Father’s heart. This place as the beloved Son of the Father was the eternal relationship of Jesus in which none could have part; yet the life He manifested has been communicated in grace to us, and we have been brought into sonship with Him, for this relationship belongs to Him not only as a divine Person, but also as Man. Though as Man, the Son of God was “in all things...made like unto His brethren,” yet He was a Man of a different order, “the second Man, out of heaven.” It was God’s purpose to have a race of men all like the Man out of heaven, and in the “new man” this race is made manifest. Because of the Law, the Jew and Gentile were different men, different in their relations with God, different in outlook, religious

ceremony, and habits of life; these differences being maintained in the commandments and ordinances of the Law. But neither Jew nor Gentile could give God pleasure, so that it was His purpose to have an entirely new kind of man before Him having the features of Christ. This new man has been created after God in righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:24), and in him there is nothing of “Greek, Jew, circumcision, uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman, but Christ is everything, and in all” (Colossians 3:11). Not only are the distinctions between these different kinds of men not found in the new man, but not one of their distinctive features is in him: All his features come from Christ, and Christ is the life of all partaking in this new created man.

The New Man—His Testimony

After disclosing in Ephesians 4 that the new man is created after God, there is the exhortation to the saints: “Wherefore putting away lying, speak truth every man with his neighbor.” From this, and the verses which follow, we learn that the features of the new man are to be manifested in all our dealings with our neighbors. Then follow exhortations for the saints in regard to their conduct in the family and business circles, for in them also the beautiful traits of the new man are to be evinced. Finally, in the conflict, arrayed with the panoply of God, the distinctive characteristics of the new man, we are to stand here for God’s will in the evil day. In all these spheres in which God has set us for Himself, we are to present in testimony that the features of the new man are the traits of Christ.

The Display of the New Creation

God’s purpose in quickening the saints and setting them in Christ in the heavenly places is in order “that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.” This is the display of grace in glory; and for this God is erecting a temple, a shrine, in which His holy nature and character shall shine forth in those He has united to Christ. The church in this vessel of glory, seen in Ephesians 2:21 as “a holy temple in the Lord,” and in Revelation 21 as “The bride, the Lamb’s wife...the holy city...having the glory of God.” While the men of the present age are loudly proclaiming their plans for the introduction of a golden age, which their endeavors can never secure, and the professing Church, with Christ

shut outside its door, is boasting of its progress and great achievements, God is silently building His heavenly structure of those that have been secured for Him through the death of His Son. This remarkable building is the very crown of God's workmanship, and long after every human edifice has perished forever, this glorious church, conceived in divine wisdom and formed in God's power, will subsist in the eternal display of His love and glory in new creation.

The Rule of the New Creation

After discoursing in his epistle to the Galatians on the dangers for the Christian of the principle of law and of how that all that God has given to us is by faith and in His sovereign grace, Paul writes, "For in Christ Jesus, neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but new creation. And as many as walk by this rule, peace upon them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." Israel boasted in the law with its ritual and ceremony, but these things, which were for man in the flesh, were exposed as valueless in the light of the new creation. That old order, which supposed there was ability in man to obtain divine blessing, has been closed in the cross of Christ; and an entirely new order has been revealed by the Holy Spirit in connection with Christ risen and glorified at God's right hand in heaven. Those who walk by the rule of law, which the Galatians were endeavoring to do, can never find peace; but for those who walk by the rule of the new creation, who do not rely upon their own efforts, but on the sovereign mercy and grace of God, peace is theirs. May we therefore live by the faith of the Son of God, seeking the things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, and thus be blessed as walking by the rule of new creation.

Wm. C. Reid

EXERCISE

"Exercise thyself unto piety"

DEVOTEDNESS

Devotedness is a much deeper and, at the same time, a much simpler thing than many suppose. Most think that if they are earnestly engaged in the Lord's work, and looking to Him for guidance and blessings this is being devoted; but it is much more. **It is having Christ Himself as the delight and resource of my heart and the bent of my mind towards Him.** The highest service we can render the Lord is to serve His heart, and that is a service to which few devote themselves. Occupation with Christ, with a view to becoming more intimately acquainted with His character; studying Him, that we may learn what pleases Him, is very rare indeed. **Many can be found who are occupied for Christ, like Martha; few who are occupied with Him, like Mary.**

When we have reached this, we have reached the foundation stone of true devotedness. This is the Gilgal where the serving one returns to encamp and whence he issues like the sun to run his course and like a giant refreshed with new wine. **It is because the saints know so little of this Gilgal in the Lord's presence that there is so much unsanctified activity and really profitless work. If there is zeal and ability without a knowledge of God's mind where and when to use it, how can there but be a turning to take counsel from nature; and how can we expect that the results flowing from such a source will be otherwise than profitless?**

J. N. Darby

ANSWERS TO SCRIPTURE SEARCH

1. Noemi (Ruth 4:16)
2. Micah (Micah 5:2)
3. An angel of the Lord (Matthew 1:20–23)

REST

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

FROM A MISSIONARY IN BOLIVIA

A Prisoner of the Lord

It was the missionary's custom to preach the Gospel every Lord's Day from 3 to 4 p.m. on the steps of the Liberty Statue in the main square of Potosi. Occasionally a colonel stopped to listen and then passed on. One day the colonel called him aside to warn him of coming violence on the part of the police if he did not desist from preaching in the square. (The cathedral was near the Liberty Statue, and the vicar was not very pleased with his preaching the gospel there.) He thanked the colonel for his concern as to his safety; however, because the constitution in Bolivia prescribed liberty of worship, he felt he would rather suffer persecution than give up the privilege of making known the story of our Lord Jesus and His love for the lost.

Sure enough! The next Lord's Day the persecution began. The missionary had just finished preaching the gospel when a police officer appeared. Drawing his sword, he ordered the missionary to "March!" Upon questioning the officer as to where he was being taken and why he was arrested without a judicial order, the reply was a harsher order to "March immediately!" He was taken to the police station and roughly shoved into the inner prison by one of the guards. It was a cold, bleak, and dirty room with just a small hole in the wall through which some light filtered—no bed and no food.

He remarked later that he would never forget the experience. When the huge steel doors closed behind him, he fell on his knees and prayed, "Lord Jesus, I am not a prisoner of the State but a prisoner of Thine. Thou alone canst free Thy servant from this dungeon. Thou didst deliver Peter—Thou canst deliver me." Well, the Lord lives! Praise His Name! "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning" (Lamentations 3:22,23). On the next day he was brought up from his cell to the office of the chief of police. Imagine his delight to find the colonel waiting there for him. Evidently, he had missed his friend; also, the missionary's wife had told him that her husband had not come home all night. He quickly went to the police station and ordered them to bring his friend out of prison immediately. He asked him what he was doing there. The missionary answered quietly, "Sir, I am a prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ for preaching His precious Word."

Quickly turning to the chief of police the colonel asked, “Why is this man arrested? What has he done?”

All the chief could say was, “He is a perverter of the peace of this city, and the vicar said he should be expelled to Uruguay. Besides, he is a troublemaker and opposed to the government of this country.”

Taking the matter over the head of the chief of police, the colonel said to the young missionary, “You go straight home to your wife, and I shall look after you.” This he faithfully did. He ordered a soldier to go home with him to guard him and to be present at the meetings in order to report to the colonel any danger that he might think the missionary to be in. The missionary expressed his profound gratitude to the Commander of the Southern Army for his faithful care of him. He hurried home to his dear wife who was waiting patiently and watching anxiously at the window, where she had watched for him ever since he had gone out two days before. Weeping on his shoulder she said, “Honey, I am so afraid that your enemy (the vicar) will yet do some harm to you.”

He comforted her by saying, “Never mind, dear, we will continue to pray for him, that the Lord may humble him and convict him of his need of the Savior.” Someone had told his wife that it was the vicar of the cathedral who had had her dear one arrested. For nearly a year they and some of the young men in the meeting prayed for the vicar, and their prayers were rewarded, as we shall see later.

Meanwhile a revolution broke out, headed by this same vicar. The president of the land was put out of power by the army and replaced by another president. For this the vicar was made a bishop and transferred from that state to another.

The Lord surely hears the prayers of His own. Two years later it was published in the newspaper that the bishop had thrown off his robes and become a “heretic.” What had really happened was that the Lord had shown him mercy and saved him from his sins! This happened through his reading the small booklet of the Gospel of John which the missionary had given out all over the city before he was arrested. At that time the vicar was supposed to have destroyed all he could gather up—all but one which he had slipped in his pocket to read later on privately. The Lord used this booklet to save his precious soul. What grace! Persecution broke out against him, and ultimately, he had to leave the country. How wonderful is the grace of God! “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free...If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:32,36).

Contributed by KG

IT WON'T SINK!

I was the captain of a smuggling boat. At dawn, we discovered a coast guard boat in the distance. The coast guard was still a long way off, and we soon saw her turning toward us. We couldn't possibly get away. We all knew what would happen if we were caught. Not only would the boat and cargo be confiscated, but we would all be sent to prison. There was dead silence while we stared at each other in dismay. The coast guard was coming up fast behind us. Suddenly I thought of a way out. Hastily we rigged a screen at the stern to hide our deck. Then I set the men in a line to hand up the cargo and pitch it overboard. We worked fast; nothing was heard but the splash of cargo dropping into the sea. The hold was emptying fast. We'd soon be finished. I saw the ship's boy was exhausted, so I sent him to see if the coast guard was very far off. In a minute he came rushing back gasping, "It won't sink! "I ran to the stern of the ship. The sun was just rising behind us, and there, in that long line of light, were the packages of cargo bobbing up and down in our wake. The first package in the line had just reached the oncoming coast guard boat. Helplessly, we stood and stared. The proof of our guilt was spread out for all to see. In our ears it rang: "It won't sink."

In prison, from time to time, I would resolve to correct my ways. But resolving is one thing; doing is another. As soon as we were free, I went back to smuggling. A few years later, I went out in a boat at night. It was New Year's Eve, and despite myself, I began to review my life.

I got on my knees and prayed that God would help me to be a better man. I made many more resolutions about what I would do and what I wouldn't, and I began to feel very good about myself. On further reflection I saw that there were a lot more things I ought to clean up. I must throw overboard everything that didn't belong. My life was to be completely changed. My resolutions were getting more serious, my heart grew lighter, and I was happy in the thought that I had become a new man. I was ready to go back to land, when suddenly the moon broke through the clouds and shone across the water to my boat. The memory of that morning when, chased by the coast guard, I had cast the cargo into the sea, came over me with overwhelming power. I heard the cry, "It won't sink!"

How blind I was! I had tried to lighten the ship by casting the cargo overboard, and there it was all floating behind me like an accusing line stretching up to the throne of God. All that I had done, said, or thought was there before God, and "it wouldn't sink!" Fool that I was, I thought I could drown all my wickedness, without a thought of the holiness of God. If I had been able from that moment on to do only what was good, it would not have changed the evil done in the past. What good was it to be forming good resolutions for the future, when the past couldn't be hidden? I was hopelessly lost. Then I remembered something. What had my mother for all my young years at home told me about Jesus, the Savior of sinners? Hadn't He died on the cross for me? And if I turned to Him now, wouldn't His precious blood wash away my many sins? Wasn't there grace and mercy even for me? All at once everything was clear. Yes, the Lord Jesus had died for me. He had borne the punishment for all my sins. If I accepted that, they would all be cast into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:19). "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 10:17) came to my mind. I was filled with joy! Entirely relieved of my burden, I turned my boat toward shore—a new man. I had gone out a lost sinner, but I was coming back redeemed by the Lord.

Be assured of this: "God require that which is past" (Ecclesiastes 3:15). "He that covers his sins shall not prosper but whoso confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13). "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

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