

# Milk & Honey

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*Spiritual Food and Encouragement for Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ*

## Seeking Things Above

Carl Knott

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.” (Col. 3:1-2) One of the adversary’s more subtle tactics is distraction. If he can distract and divert the Christian’s attention, affections and energy from things above to things below, from the eternal to the temporal, he has won a victory. As the prince of this world, he offers a complete array of interests, causes and activities that can occupy a believer’s mind, heart and time. Perhaps William MacDonald’s definition of the world will help us to think more clearly. “The world is an organized system or society, developed and headed by Satan, dedicated to the purpose of keeping mankind happy without God.” Politics, entertainment, social works, philosophy, religion, society life and civic clubs are just a few examples of earth-bound distractions from heaven’s interests.

Scripture exhorts us to maintain a heavenly focus, and avoid that which is merely earthly, worldly or earthbound. Psalm 17 mentions the “men of the world, which have their portion in this life” and in the context they are the adversaries of the godly. Christians, in contrast, are not “of the world” and do not have their portion “in this life,” although it appears that many have settled down comfortably in the world and have little more than passing interest in heavenly things. These show interest in the heavenly only by attending a weekly meeting, and often, only in the morning. Sparse attendance at Sunday evening and the midweek prayer meeting are a sad commentary on where our interests lie.

Our Lord taught us not to lay up treasures on earth, but rather, in heaven (Matt. 6:19-21), and earthly treasures are a sure distraction from heavenly things, for “where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (v. 21) Anthony Norris Groves observed that what we give to the Lord is safe in heaven and cannot be lost. When we lay up our treasures in heaven and not on earth, it helps our interests and affections to be heavenly. It’s sad when our affections are in a bank account, stock market or safety deposit box.

1 John 2:15-17 clearly warns us not to love the world or the things in the world. There is nothing in the world for

the believer, and the sooner he learns that, the healthier his spiritual life will be. God sums up the world thus: “...all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father.” If it isn’t of the Father, think about who is behind it. The adversary who seeks to distract, divert and weaken.

James 4:4 warns us that “the friendship of the world is enmity with God.” That makes it a black and white choice. Never forget that the world crucified our Lord, and today constantly takes His Name in vain. Believers have no use for the applause or approval of worldlings.

2 Timothy 2:4 warns of the distraction of being entangled “with the affairs of this life” and thus being unable to please the one who has chosen us. Being too busy to study the Word, to witness, to gather with believers, to serve or fellowship indicates a problem.

2 Timothy 2:22 advises us to be careful who our friends and companions are, for worldly associations can distract, corrupt and weaken us. We are to follow “righteousness, faith, charity and peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” Unwillingness to accept divine counsel about our friendships indicates that our affections are in the wrong place.

Happy are they whose hearts and interests are “where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God...with Christ in God... Christ, who is our life...with him in glory.” (Col. 3:1-4) If we carefully read the passage we see the choice is ours. We are told, “set your affections” and “seek.” It is not a matter of whims or feelings, but our responsibility to choose the heavenly over the earthly, the eternal over the temporal. The earth and its works will be burned up (2 Pet. 3:10). But God’s Word is forever. The saved will be “forever with the Lord.” One day in glory with Christ we will realize the poverty and vanity of all the world has to offer. Let us eliminate the distractions, and deliberately choose with eternity’s values in view. C. T. Studd wrote, “Only one life, ‘twill soon be past, only what’s done for Christ will last.”\*

## Quotes

One thing you can give and still keep is your word. Anon.  
God thinks most of the man who thinks himself least.

John Blanchard

People who always bend backwards to please everybody soon  
weaken their spine. Anon.

# The Substitute

Keith R. Keyser

On March 23, Arnaud Beltrame, a forty-four year old officer with an elite tactical police unit, gave his life that someone else might live. He intentionally exchanged places with a terrorist's hostage, knowing that such a decision could cost his life. He was mortally injured by the murderous thug and succumbed to his wounds the next day. His sacrificial bravery reminds one of the Lord Jesus Christ's words: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13) Indeed, courageous deeds like this inevitably remind one of the greatest self-sacrifice in history: when the Lamb of God voluntarily substituted Himself for the sins of the world. (John 1:29)

## Hazardous Duty

Prior to His incarnation, the Son of God eternally existed in the glory of heaven, absolutely immune to suffering. No creature could harm Him. As the almighty God and Creator of the universe, no one could contradict Him in heaven, or even dared to cast aspersions on Him. Seraphim proclaimed His indescribable holiness, and angels lived to carry out His will. He was entirely invulnerable to attack and impervious to the sufferings of this fallen world.

Yet the Son chose to become human. Before the world's foundation He was marked out as a voluntary sacrificial lamb. (1 Peter 1:20) Philippians 2:6-7 describes what He did in the incarnation: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." John 1:14 puts it like this: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (NKJV; boldface mine.) The Lord of glory clothed Himself in mortal garb, and lived the life of a real man. Yet He was different in one key respect: He was absolutely sinless.

## A Hero For All Mankind

At the incarnation, Christ did not cease being God, He merely added impeccably holy humanity to Himself. Unlike other people, He was always obedient to God the Father, even when such loyalty led Him to give His life at the cross. (Phil. 2:7) He became humanity's kinsmen-redeemer: the one who assumed and paid our debts and restored our lost inheritance. As He said: "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10; see also Eph. 1:15-23) Toplady beautifully exulted in this perfect deliverer, writing:

"Complete atonement Thou hast made,  
And to the utmost Thou hast paid  
Whate'er Thy people owed;  
How then can wrath on me take place,  
If sheltered in Thy righteousness,  
And sprinkled with Thy blood?"

## The Last Adam's Triumph

Paul rejoiced in Christ's death and resurrection in these words: "... The Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Gal. 2:20) Elsewhere the Bible declares: "... Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." (1 Corinthians 15:3-4) At the cross, He fully paid the penalty for sin, and satisfied all the claims of holy justice. Spurgeon eloquently expounded it this way:

"As by man came death, by man also must come the resurrection from the dead, and Jesus Christ was undoubtedly man of the substance of his mother. He was fit to be our substitute because he was a pure man. He had no offence in him; neither Satan, nor the more searching eye of God could find any evil in him; he was under no obligation to the law except as he put himself under the law; he owed nothing to the great moral Governor until he voluntarily became a subject of his moral government on our behalf. Hence, being without obligation himself, having no debts of his own, he was fit to take upon himself our liabilities; and as he was under no obligations for himself, he was a fitting one to become under obligations for us. Moreover, he did all this voluntarily, and his fitness much lies here. If a substitute should be dragged to death for us unwillingly, if such could be the case, an injustice would be perpetrated in the very act, but Jesus Christ taking up his cross, and going forth willingly to suffer for us, proved his fitness to redeem us. Once more, his being God as well as man, gave him the strength to suffer, gave him the power to stoop. If he had not been so lofty as to be fellow with the eternal God, he would not have stooped so low as to redeem us . . ."

## The Ultimate First Responder

First responders - police officers, firefighters, EMT's, paramedics, and such like professionals - are trained to run towards danger. They regularly put themselves in harm's way in order to protect and serve the public. Lt. Col. Beltrame was one more shining example of courage under fire and selfless service on behalf of endangered people. But Christ came farther and sacrificed more than any human hero, so that He might achieve a greater rescue: the eternal deliverance of all who trust Him as their Lord and Savior. (Gal. 1:4) From eternity past, He determined to die on Calvary and rise again three days later. After forty days he ascended to heaven and entered into the glory which He richly deserved. (Heb. 1:3; 1 Pet. 3:22) Ten days after that He poured out the Holy Spirit

## Continued from Page 2 - *The Substitute*

and created the church (Acts 2.) One day the Lord Jesus will return to complete His work: “the redemption of the body.” (Rom. 8:14-23) The Lamb who was once slain in sacrifice will eventually carry out His work as judge. (John 5:22-30; Rev. 6:15-17) His death was no tragedy; instead it was the centerpiece of His eternal victory over evil. \*

### The Hymns Have Remained With Me

C.H. Spurgeon, Autobiography

My dear grandfather was very fond of Dr. Watts’s hymns, and my grandmother, wishing to get me to learn them, promised me a penny for each one that I should say to her perfectly. I found it an easy and pleasant method of earning money, and learned them so fast that grandmother said she must reduce the price to a halfpenny each, and afterwards to a farthing, if she did not mean to be quite ruined by her extravagance. There is no telling how low the amount per hymn might have sunk, but grandfather said that he was getting overrun with rats, and offered me a shilling a dozen for all I could kill. I found, at the time, that the occupation of rat-catching paid me better than learning hymns, but I know which employment has been the more permanently profitable to me. No matter on what topic I am preaching, I can even now, in the middle of any sermon, quote some verse of a hymn in harmony with the subject; the hymns have remained with me, while those old rats for years have passed away, and the shillings I earned by killing them have been spent long ago. \*

The *standing* of the Christian is to be found in Christ;  
The *object* of the Christian is to know Christ;  
The *hope* of the Christian is to be like Christ.

N.J. Hiebert

Faith that saves has one distinguishing quality; saving faith is a faith that produces obedience, it is faith that brings about a way of life. Billy Graham

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## THE WELL OF BETHLEHEM

2 Samuel 23

C.H. Mackintosh

“And David longed and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate!” Such was the breathing of David’s heart, a desire which met with a speedy and hearty response from three members of that devoted and heroic band which flocked around him in the cave of Adullam. “And the three mighty men broke through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David.” There was no command issued. No one in particular was singled out and commissioned to go. There was the simple utterance of the desire, and this it was which afforded the opportunity for genuine affection and true devotedness. Had there been a specific command given to anyone, it would merely have afforded an occasion for ready obedience, but the utterance of a desire developed that ardent attachment to the person of David which is so lovely to behold.

And mark the actings of David in this most touching scene: “Nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out to the Lord. And he said, Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this: is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? Therefore he would not drink of it.” It was a sacrifice too costly for any except Jehovah Himself. Hence David would not permit the sweet odor of it to be interrupted in its ascent to the throne of God.

How little did those three mighty men imagine that their act of loving devotedness would be recorded on the eternal page of inspiration, there to be read by millions. They never thought of this. Their hearts were set on David and they counted not their lives dear to them so that they might gratify him or refresh his spirit. Had they acted to get a name or place for themselves, it would have robbed their act of all its charm and consigned it to its merited contempt and oblivion. But no; they loved David. This was the spring of their activity. They proved that he was more precious to their hearts than life itself. They forgot all in the one absorbing object of serving David, and the odor of their sacrifice ascended to the throne of God while the record of their deed shines on the page of inspiration and shall continue to shine so long as that page endures.

**Continued on Page 4**

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## Christians and Tattoos

Stephen Hulshizer

Tattoos are certainly in style in many circles, but should they mark the Christian? Often the quick answer is “yes” since New Testament believers have been liberated and are no longer under the Old Testament law.

In Galatians the apostle Paul clearly teaches the believer is set at liberty from the law. (Gal.5:13) “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty;” but immediately adds “only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.” In short, “Liberty is not License.”

Certainly we are not under the *ceremonial law* as a way of obtaining the forgiveness of sins and a right standing with God. Neither does the law provide the ability to live a sanctified life. But one empowered by and lead by the Holy Spirit can live a life that pleases God. “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” (Gal.5:16) So we might then ask, “Should one walking in the Spirit mark the body that is the temple of the Holy Spirit?”

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” (1 Cor. 6:19) The Lord has redeemed our bodies as well as our souls, with final redemption yet future. (Rom. 8:23) We are not our own. Would we put graffiti on a public building? Of course not, it is not our building. Why then would we be free to mark our body which is not ours? “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” (2 Cor. 6:20)

The Lord wanted His people to be different from the heathen people living around them, just as He wants us to be different than the unbelieving world around us. (Rom. 12:2) I

do not see any justification for thinking that the Lord’s desires for His people then are simply brushed aside for His people today. “Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the LORD.” Many will say this is “legalism” but as the world is increasingly evil it is not *legalism* but *practical sanctification*. (Lev. 19:28)

On the practical side, how much money has been spent on tattoos which unfortunately are permanent. Many times the message is an embarrassment at a later date. In other cases the image is grotesque and certainly has a heathen look. In any case the Christian should seriously think and pray before marking his/her body which belongs to the Lord. \*

### Continued from Page 3 - *The Well of Bethlehem*

Oh! how we long for something like this in reference to the true David in this the day of His rejection. We do greatly covet a more intense and self-sacrificing devotedness as the fruit of the constraining love of Christ. It is not a question of working for rewards, for a crown or for a place, though we fully believe in the doctrine of rewards. No! the very moment we make rewards our object, we are below the mark. We believe that service rendered with the eye upon the reward would be defective. But then we believe also that every jot or tittle of true service will be rewarded in the day of Christ’s glory and that each servant will get his place in the record and his place in the kingdom according to the measure of His personal devotedness down here. This we hold to be a great practical truth and we press it as such upon the attention of the Christian reader. We must confess we long to see the standard of devotedness greatly raised among us and this can only be effected by having our hearts more entirely consecrated to Christ and His Name. O Lord, revive Thy work! \*