

SIX SEARCHING QUESTIONS**THE PLEASANT VIEW PLUMB LINE****1. What Are We?**

We are beings endowed with a moral conscience, therefore responsible for our conduct. Animals have no moral conscience, hence are not responsible for their conduct. Our consciences should be educated in conformity to the teaching of God's word. Conscience is a matter of education. Conscience by itself does not attest to the right or wrong of a thing. Paul never violated his conscience, but he committed some terrible sins (Acts 23:1). We should strive for a good conscience, and in all things be willing to live honestly (Hebrews 13:18). *"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God"* (Romans 14:12). We are responsible to God for our actions.

**2. Whence Came We?**

Much as been said about the origin of the species. There is just one satisfactory explanation. We came **from God**. Hear it: *"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul"* (Genesis 2:7). *"In him we live, and move, and have our being"* (Acts 17:28).

**3. Whither Are We Bound?**

The body is destined to return to **the earth**, and the spirit shall return unto **the God who gave it**. *"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it"* (Ecclesiastes 12:7). God made our bodies of the dust of the ground. The body goes back to the dust of the ground. God breathed into our bodies the breath of life. At death, the spirit returns unto God who gave it.

We are all bound for **the judgment bar of God**. This is a serious, solemn though. *"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"* (Hebrews 9:27). *"For we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ"* (Romans 14:10). *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."*

We are bound for **eternity**. Jesus said: *"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal"* (Matthew 25:46). We are on our way to judgment and eternity.

**4. What is Our Duty?**

Our duty is to **hear God**. At the transfiguration, God spoke from heaven saying: *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him"* (Matthew 17:5). There was a time when folks were to hear Moses and the prophets, but that time has passed away. God speaks to us by his Son. *"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son"* (Hebrews 1:1-2). *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* (Romans 10:17).

Our duty is to **believe the Gospel**. Jesus said: *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"* (Mark 16:16). Virtue does not lie in simply hearing, but in believing the truth when it is heard.

Our duty is to **obey the Gospel**. Jesus became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey (Hebrews 5:8-9). God will not save us and God cannot save us unless we obey. *"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous"* (John 5:3). The Bible ends with a blessing pronounced on the obedient: *"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city"* (Revelation 22:14).

"...then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel..." (Amos 7:8)

**SPEAK NOT EVIL**

Text: \_\_\_\_\_

I. Speak Words with \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

II. Speak Words with \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

III. Speak Words with \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

**REASONS TO REJOICE**

Text: \_\_\_\_\_

I. Rejoice Because \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

II. Rejoice Because \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

III. Rejoice Because \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

IV. Rejoice Because \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

V. Rejoice Because \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

**5. What is Our Danger?**

There are two great dangers confronting all. One of these is that we will **neglect the great salvation**. *“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will”* (Hebrews 2:1-4). How shall we escape if we neglect? There is no escape. However, *“the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”* (II Peter 3:9). If we perish eternally, it will not be because God willed it so. He wills just the opposite of that, but he cannot save us against our stubborn wills.

We are in danger of **losing our souls**. The devil would have us to believe that we are in no great danger, but such is a lie. Jesus raised this warning: *“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”* (Matthew 16:25-26). Jesus would not talk about losing our soul if we were not in very great danger of doing that very thing.

**6. What is Our Destiny?**

There are two destinies before us. One is **heaven** and the other is **hell**. The writer of this article and each reader thereof are facing one of these destinies. Which will it be? May God grant that we may realize that we are beings endowed with a moral conscience; and, therefore, responsible for our conduct. May we appreciate our high and holy origin. May we think of the solemn, serious fact that it will not be long until these perishing bodies will go back to the earth and the spirit will return unto God who gave it. May we hear, believe, and obey the truth, and thus be made free from our old sins. May we keep right on hearing, believing, and obeying. By doing this we are not neglecting the great salvation, and neither shall we lose our souls. May heaven be the happy lot of each one of us in the sweet afterwhile.

-Fred E. Dennis

**THE BOOK OF CHRISTIAN JOY**

The church in Philippi was the direct result of the Macedonian call. In Acts 16:9-10, Paul was in Troas in the midst of his second missionary journey, *“and a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.”* Immediately, then, after leaving Troas they traveled into Macedonia and stayed to work several days in the city of Philippi, which was described as being the chief city of that part of Macedonia (Acts 9:12). In Philippi, Paul and his companions were met with great success. Shortly after arriving they met and converted a woman named Lydia, and after meeting with some difficulty had opportunity to teach and convert a jailor and his household in the same city. Paul obviously became quite attached with the Philippian church over the period of his ministry. The tone of this book alone would prove a deep love felt for the brethren there, but also in the fact that the Philippians were such strong supporters of Paul both emotionally and financially (Philippians 1:5). This book, then, served not as a letter of reproof as with others Paul had to write, but it served as an epistle of encouragement and affection.

Many times because the extent of sin in the world demands such an amount of negative teaching and preaching, Christians forget to remind themselves of the joys of New Testament Christianity. While negatives at times have to be dealt with, Christianity is very much a positive religion. There is joy associated with it because of our relationship with God, our blessings, our associations, our opportunities, and our service. If ever this joy be forgotten or neglected, no doubt the appeal of Christianity might wane in the minds of some. Philippians, though, is a constant reminder of the joy experienced because of Christianity. Notice Paul’s joyful recollection of these brethren with whom he had such a marvelous relationship:

*“Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. For God is my record, how greatly long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ”* (Philippians 1:1-8).

Paul had a great depth of love toward these brethren that he knew was reciprocated back toward him, and he took joy in this great relationship made possible by the bonds of Christian unity. Such a relationship cannot be enjoyed anywhere but in Christ, for all relationships enjoyed in Christ shall be eternal.

It is in Philippians 4:4 that Paul identifies the hallmark of the epistle. His explicit declaration is, *“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.”* True joy is found in the Lord, but to what specific areas of Christianity does Paul say joy is possible?

In Philippians 1, Paul rejoiced in his evangelism of Christ. *“According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.”* (Philippians 1:20).

In Philippians 2, Paul rejoiced in his service to Christ. *“Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain”* (Philippians 2:14-16).

In Philippians 3, Paul rejoiced in his sufferings for Christ. *“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ”* (Philippians 3:8).

And in Philippians 4, Paul rejoiced in his peace in Christ. *“Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 4:6-7).

The book of Philippians is a fresh reminder of the joy all Christians have in Christ. We should take stock in that joy, for it will motivate us in our journey through life, looking forward to heaven as our eternal destination.

-Andy Brewer