

Articles by John Funk

John Funk

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An Eternal Inheritance

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An Eternal Inheritance

John Funk

You have inherited a fortune! Yes, I mean you! If you belong to Christ, you have indeed inherited great wealth. Let us see what the Bible has to say about your inheritance.

It is ours: Ephesians 1:11 tells us that we have obtained it. "In whom (Christ) also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." We certainly must be heirs, therefore, this inheritance is ours.

It is ours in Christ: This inheritance is ours through the Lord Jesus, and through Him alone. "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. 8:17). It is in Him that we have obtained the inheritance.

As He is, so are we: God has appointed Christ the heir of all things. "His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds" (Heb. 1:2). Each believer is a joint-heir with Him; therefore, a joint-heir of all things. Can you take this in? It is marvellous!

It is eternal: A will in order to become effective must be kept until the death of the testator. Through the death of Christ we receive the promise of an eternal inheritance. This is perfectly true in the light of such passages as

Hebrews 9:15. "And for this cause He is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

We already have the down payment: The pledge of this inheritance is the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul makes this unmistakably plain. "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of Promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory" (Eph. 1:13-14).

The Apostle Peter gives a detailed description of the Christian's inheritance; "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1:3-5).

Do you really appreciate this inheritance that is actually yours? Let us notice some of its characteristics.

It is incorruptible: Everything on earth has been defiled. Even the heavens are unclean in His sight. Sin has blighted all; but the inheritance we have in and through the Lord Jesus is both incorruptible and undefiled. It is incorruptible in its quality and undefiled in its purity.

It will never fade away: As stated earlier, it is an eternal inheritance. All the splendour of the nations and of

prominent individuals will fade away, but not the glory of this inheritance; it remains forever.

You have a reservation in glory: This inheritance is reserved for you. There is no need to worry lest your portion disappear before you arrive. That has happened many a time on earth. Money does seem to take to itself wings and to fly away.

You are being guarded for the inheritance: Not only is it being reserved for you, but, wonder of wonders, you are being reserved and kept by the power of God for it. There cannot possibly be a miscarriage in this arrangement.

How may you enjoy it now? Suppose you had inherited a large palace and estate and title in Britain. Would you fit into the circumstance; would you enjoy both the circumstance and the legacy? Most of us would feel out of our element. For our eternal inheritance we are made suitable; "...thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1:12). How exceedingly wonderful! Not only do we have this eternal inheritance in Christ; not only is it reserved for us and we preserved for it, but we are even made fit to enjoy it. What grace! We who were alienated and enemies, we who were under the power of darkness, now are made meet (suitable) to be joint participants of this divine inheritance. "You, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled In the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight" (Col. 1:21-22).

We are like the old coloured lady who, when asked if she might feel out of place in the glory and purity of Heaven, replied, "Oh, no, I'll be all dressed up in Jesus."

Now a question: Exactly what is this inheritance? What all is included in it? These questions are asked to provoke thought. Try and do a little digging for yourself. 1 Corinthians tells us, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." Rely upon this spiritual illumination and by it search out these riches in Christ. If you find out what is included in this inheritance, why not write the Editor of Food for the Flock, and share your discovery with the rest of us? You might be amazed at what you find if you really dig for hidden treasure.

Called

Called

John Funk

In the opening verses of the Epistle to the Romans, Paul three times uses the term “called.” First of all, he refers to himself as being called to be an apostle. An apostle is generally considered to be a “sent-one.” Paul was sent as an apostle to the Gentiles. However, each one of us who has been saved by His grace is sent into the world with the gospel of Christ.

Then he refers to those who are called of Jesus Christ. Sometimes the Queen calls for a command performance. How much greater honour to be called by the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

As though this were not enough, in verse 7 of chapter 1, he says that the Romans were “called to be saints.” What a high and holy calling this is!

Often, we hear the expression, “Well, I’m no saint.” If you are a born-again believer, you are a saint.

This is one of the terms which applies to all believers. Saints, disciples, believers, Christians, brethren, children of God — these are all applicable to those who have taken Christ as Saviour. We need take no other name.

In some quarters, to become a saint could take up to 500 years with the process of canonization being started long after the person dies. In the biblical sense, the moment a person accepts Christ, he is born of the Holy

Spirit and becomes a saint. The Holy Spirit indwells his body and he becomes the temple of the Holy Ghost.

A former heathen was asked once what to him was the greatest truth in the Bible. He replied that to him the greatest truth was that our bodies should be the temple or shrine of the Holy Ghost.

When we are tempted to sin, let us always remember that we are “called” to be saints.

Christ Supreme

Christ Supreme

John Funk

John Funk, CA., is a business consultant at St.Catherines, Ontario. He is Secretary to the Board of Food for the Flock Inc. We are sure that our readers enjoy his short pithy articles; this present one will be no exception.

“His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High.”

—Hebrews 1:2, 3.

The Epistle to the Hebrews gives us the present location of our Lord Jesus Christ and tells us what He is doing at this time. It sets forth the incomparable Christ! There is none in Heaven or earth like Him. He is the centre and circumference of Scripture. He is the heart of the Bible, the soul of the Scriptures.

Thirteen times Christ is said to be better than — the Old Testament prophets, the angels, the priests, the tabernacle, in fact anything in the old economy. He is absolutely unique! He is the last and final Word of God to mankind.

More glorious Scriptures concerning Christ you will find nowhere in the Bible. In seven strokes or statements the

Holy Spirit sets forth the wonders of the incomparable Christ.

“Whom He Hath Appointed Heir of All Things”

God has left everything to Christ. We are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. If a husband and wife have a joint bank account it is not fifty-fifty, but each one has access to the whole. We have everything jointly with Christ. It is all ours; but conversely everything we have is Christ's. A godly businessman, looking at his business going up in flames, said, “Lord, your business has just burnt down.” All Christ has is ours, but everything we have is also His.

“By Whom also He Made the Worlds”

The universe is hand-made — custom-built by the Son of God. “All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:3). “The world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not” (John 1:10). We cannot make too much of Him. Indeed we can say, How great Thou art!

“Who Being the Brightness of His Glory”

Christ is the scintillating brilliance of the glory of God; not only brightness (which could be reflected glory) but effulgence (the outshining of glory). If we want to see the glory of God, we must look to the Lord Jesus Christ.

“The Express Image of His Person”

Christ was not godlike — not god-dish — but God in flesh. Our apprehension of this makes the difference between Heaven and Hell. Christ is the image of the invisible God. The Father and the Holy Spirit are

invisible. All we will ever see of God is the Lord Jesus Christ. If you want to see God, look at the Lord Jesus. For thirty-three years God Almighty was here upon earth, manifest in the flesh.

“Upholding All Things by the Word of His Power”

He maintains everything He makes. He keeps everything together. He sees that everything is functional. He controls the world-wide thermostat. If the sun were a few degrees hotter, we would all be scorched to death; if a few degrees colder, we would freeze to death. When we think of the immensity of space and the countless heavenly bodies moving so fast and yet missing each other, we can only marvel at His greatness. Surely, with such a God, we do not have to worry about the needs of our little lives.

“When He Had by Himself Purged Our Sins”

This is more personal than the others. This touches us. We were not around when the world was created — but it was our sins He purged. He did the work Himself — personally — without assistance — He did it alone — by Himself. He purged our sins — you cannot improve on that. In the Old Testament we are separated from our sins as far as the east is from the west, they are behind God’s back, they are blotted out and cast into the depths of the sea — but never purged. Not only is the blot erased, the page is gone, the whole ledger of sin is taken away. God not only forgives, but He forgets — praise His name! Our sins have been obliterated!

“Sat Down on the Right Hand of the Majesty on High”

The work is all finished — He is now at the right hand of power. We are saved by His death on the cross but now much more we shall be saved by His life (at the right hand of God). Christ looks after our affairs up there — the Holy Spirit looks after our affairs here— how can we lose? He is our great High Priest and our advocate with the Father. The accuser of the brethren accuses us day and night (and we send him lots of ammunition). Most of his accusations are true. Thank God for the unfinished work of Christ at God’s right hand!

Christian Giving

Christian Giving

John Funk

“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7).

We give because we love. Love always gives! God loved ... God gave! He gave the best He had. He gave the Lord Jesus Christ!

Because the Lord Jesus first loved us and gave Himself for us, now we love Him and give ourselves and all we have to Him. If we have any other motive in our giving, we are missing the mark!

“Were the whole realm of nature mine,

That were an offering far too small.

Love so amazing, so divine,

Demands my heart, my life, my all.”

We give because the love of Christ constrains us! (2 Cor. 5:14).

To Whom Do We Give?

We give first to the Lord, then to His servants, His saints and His service. We may give a gift directly to a preacher of the gospel, or to a needy Christian, or put it into the assembly offering for Sunday School work, but first that gift should be given to God. Thus it becomes “a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God” (Phil. 4:18).

The churches of Macedonia gave liberally out of the abundance of joy and their deep poverty, "but first gave their own selves to the Lord" (2 Cor. 8:5).

It appears that in the early Church most of the Christians' gifts were directed to the poor, the widows, and fellowship to those who devoted most or all of their time to the Lord's work (Acts 6 & 1 Cor. 9).

Everything we have we hold as stewards and we should be as careful with the Lord's money as we are with our own. Today in our country with all its social benefits such as pensions, unemployment insurance and other government aid, the assembly offering for the needy is not so prevalent as it was; nevertheless, there are still cases of need and these should be sought out and looked after.

There should be a definite setting of places where the Christian can use his gifts such as new assembly meeting places, radio work, tract work, Sunday School work, Christian camps, etc. These are often very costly projects and almost any amount of money can be put into them. In all this, however, the servants of the Lord, the pioneer workers, the missionaries abroad should not be neglected. These have gone forth for His Name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles (3 John 7), never making an appeal on their own behalf to the saints. In a day when frequent appeals for funds come through the mails, over the air, yes, and even over the telephone, the Christian should be most judicious in spending the Lord's money. He should be careful to see that it is being used to build up that which is scriptural and for God's glory.

Often the well-publicized, sensational preachers are amply looked after and those plodding on in a difficult field are neglected. This is something that every Christian should be deeply exercised about, because it is one of the main reasons why so little pioneer work is being done today.

How Do We Give?

We should give cheerfully, not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:7). If we give bountifully God will bless us bountifully. He will open the windows of heaven and pour us out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it (Mal. 3:10).

Conversely, if we give sparingly we will reap sparingly. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty" (Prov. 11:24).

There should be a definite setting aside of funds for the Lord as God has prospered us (1 Cor. 16:2). It is most important that these funds be kept separate and apart from that which is retained for our own use and that of our dependants. It is nowhere specified in the New Testament what percentage of his income a Christian should give to the Lord. Certainly we should not give less than ten percent which was the amount required of those under the law. The Christian who gives but ten percent of his income to the Lord does not do as well as the Israelite who also gave a tithe, but over and above this gave gifts and freewill offerings.

Probably very few of us give as much proportionately (remember how the Lord commended the widow for her mite) as the 73 year old Scandinavian lady we read about recently who lives alone on a little prairie farm.

She is clubfooted and during some seasons of winter must crawl about on her knees to feed the cattle.

“How much did you give to missions this past year?” someone asked her. She replied, “Seven head of cattle and all my crop.”

This dear soul, who gives almost all her old age pension cheques for mission work, wrote to a missionary as follows: “Sometimes I shed tears, because I have so little to give and see the need so great. I wish I could have thousands, so I would be able to help more. But when I have given all I have, then I can only weep and pray that God must give others who have more than I the same vision of the need as I have. Many Christians are able to do much more if they only would. My Saviour has done so much for me that I never will be able to do for Him what He deserves. But how glad I would be if He one day could say to me like He did say about one lover in Bible days: ‘She hath done what she could.’”

Guidance

Guidance

John Funk

In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths.” —Proverbs 3:6 Many schools today have guidance counsellors. If the guidance given is wrong, disastrous results may ensue. As Christians, we too have a Guidance Counsellor, the Holy Spirit. “He will guide you into all truth.” John 16:13.

Every true Christian wishes to be guided by God. We sing, “Guide us, O Thou Jehovah.” Surely this is the desire of every Christian reading this article. It should be of particular interest to the young Christian whose life’s direction and work may as yet not be clear.

The question is this — Is it possible to know that God is leading me? It is a very difficult matter and even some of God’s most respected servants have not always been sure of the way. However, as they look back, they can see that God did actually lead them, even if they were not fully aware of it at the time. Most of the trouble in guidance lies with ourselves. Often we want God merely to confirm the path we have already chosen. We want His acquiescence on that which we have already decided. God may allow this in His permissive will, but this is not His best for us. God has a perfect way for each one of us. Our prayer should be “Teach me Thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path.” “Not my will, but Thine be done.” Like Paul, we should say: “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?”

There are certain conditions which must be met before God will guide us. First of all, we must be amenable to His leading. "The meek will He guide in judgment" (Psa. 25:9). Then we must realize our own lack and depend on God's wisdom. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God." How many times the writer has claimed this promise. Finally, we must be prepared to exercise both faith and obedience. "If any man do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." There is a principle laid down here, namely that we will get no guidance if we have made up our mind to go our own way. These words were found in the flyleaf of an earnest Christian's Bible: "My soul is not my own, for it belongs to Jesus Christ who purchased it with His own precious blood. To withhold it from Him would be theft, for He paid the full price on Calvary. Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee." With such an attitude we can expect God's guidance.

This brings us to a fuller consideration of the matter. It is not only knowing which way to go; what decision to make at any particular point in our lives; but it should be a leading along the line of God's will, a leading into the knowledge of His perfect will. God has promised both in the Old Testament and in the New, that He will guide and direct in our lives.

To know God's guidance is one of the great comforts of the Christian life— one which the unbeliever cannot possibly know. This does not mean that there will be no difficulties in our lives, but there will be a life of blessing and fruitfulness. Paul was clearly told by the Lord that he was to testify of Christ both in Jerusalem and in Rome. He was convinced that this was God's will for him, yet consider the troubles on the way —riots,

shipwreck, imprisonment. Through it all, Paul was happy in the centre of His will.

Someone has said that this is “the age of the shrug.” We refuse to get excited about anything, no matter how serious the times. People just don’t want to be bothered, it is too much trouble to be concerned. It is an age of indifference and complacency. However, we cannot afford to shrug off God’s will for us.

So then, how can we, in our everyday lives, know the will of God and His guidance for the way? How may we discern His will? First of all, do not use tricks, such as opening your Bible at random and hope that you will perceive God’s will in this fashion. Even the devil can use God’s word. One man tried this and opened at the words, “Judas went out and hanged himself.” He said: “I didn’t do too good that time. I’ll try again.” This time he opened up at “Go and do thou likewise.” We can discover God’s will for us in the Holy Scriptures, but only by prayerful, careful reading and studying of His Word. Secondly, we can call upon God who dwells within us by His Holy Spirit. All the fullness of His Power and Wisdom is available to us through the indwelling Spirit of God who will lead us as we engage in prayer and are guided by His Word. Lastly, circumstances combined with the Word of God and Spirit of God will often mould and move us in a certain direction. When these three coincide — the Word of God, the Spirit of God, with the inner conviction that this is the will of God, combined with circumstances — then go forward, don’t wait. You will recall, the Israelites were told to go forward and fight the foe. They knew God’s will, but held back. Then, at a later time, they said they would go to battle, but

God said, “Don’t go now.” It was too late. They went anyway, and were defeated.

God does not always show us all His will immediately. Often He wishes to exercise us. As we go forward in faith, He opens up the way for us. Do not be discouraged if God does not immediately reveal all His will to you. However, as He does open up His will and you are sure of it, don’t hold back — go forward as He leads.

If God leads us day by day, He will also lead in our public meetings. If we are not amenable to God’s will and leading throughout the week, do you suppose that He will lead us for an hour on Sunday morning?

When led by God’s Spirit, it is not necessarily by a great supernatural leading, but by a quiet direction from God. Often guidance comes in a very natural and easy way by asking Him to guide us and direct our thoughts and by committing our will to Him. Many are stumbled looking for a strange, supernatural experience in the matter of guidance, much as many of us looked for a strange feeling when we wanted to be saved. All we had to do was to take God at His Word, and it’s much the same as far as guidance is concerned.

Often the Lord leads in mysterious ways. These are apparently contrary to common sense. There is an earthly wisdom and a heavenly wisdom. Abraham went out, not knowing whither he went. It appeared foolish, yet he went out in faith. What a blessing he was to Israel and the whole world! Noah was considered a fool, but his action in building the ark and in obeying God saved the human race from extinction.

What are some of the results of being led by the Lord? Firstly, He will guide us into all truth. It is not merely

knowing what a Scripture means, but rather into the experience and enjoyment of it. Secondly, there will be a feeling of well-being, knowing that we are in His will. Finally, the blessing of the Lord will be upon our lives. This will not necessarily be without difficulties.

His will is always best in our lives. All that seems most wrong is most right if it be His sweet will.

He will guide you! He shall direct your paths!

How We Got Our Bible

How We Got Our Bible

John Funk

John Funk, an active Business Consultant in St. Catharines, Ontario, conducts a Young Believers* Bible Class in his home assembly. He has graciously offered to share some of the studies of his class with the readers of Food for the Flock. These studies evidence considerable Biblical and historical research; moreover, they are informative as well as interesting.—Ed.

Our whole Christian faith is founded upon the Bible, the Word of God, and upon what it reveals to us in regard to God and man, Heaven and Earth, and Time and Eternity; consequently, we should be deeply interested in just how we got our English Bible.

This subject may be divided into at least three topics as follows: The Origin of the Bible, The Canon of Scripture, Some Translations of the Holy Scriptures.

The Origin Of The Bible

The Bible is a revelation of God to man. There are certain things that we can understand and know from nature. For example, we can know that there is a God, and we can understand somewhat of His character, but there are some things we could not know other than by a revelation from God.

God has graciously given us such a revelation; moreover, He has produced it in written form for us. The writers of the different books of the Bible were divinely inspired by

the Holy Spirit in order that they be able to write that revelation of the will of God.

Mankind has possessed this divine revelation in written form for only about 3,500 years; previous to that time there was no Bible, no Sacred Writings. In earlier times, God made His will known verbally to individuals, that is, He spoke directly to them; for example, He talked with Adam, with Job, and with many others. We know, therefore, that from the earliest times, even without the Scriptures, man possessed the knowledge of God and of His laws. This primitive knowledge has never died out, so that even in the remotest parts of the earth, men worship a Supreme Being and offer sacrifices to Him.

Before the Bible came into existence, God had two witnesses; namely, nature and man's conscience. When the time came for God to give a written revelation, the Jews were chosen by Him to be the depositaries or custodians of His written Word.

About 1500 B.C., a written revelation consisting of the first five books of our present Bible was given to Moses. In these books, he covered the previous 2,500 years. The remainder of the Holy Scriptures was given to many different persons over a period of about 1,600 years, that is, from about 1500 B.C. to about 97 A.D. when the Apostle John wrote his Gospel in Asia Minor. Altogether about forty persons, from all stations of life, and almost all of them Jews, were engaged in the writing of the Bible.

We frequently refer to our Bible in three different ways. We call it "The Bible" from the Greek word, "biblia" which means "The Books." We also call it "The Scriptures" from the Latin word that means "The

Writings." We, likewise, speak of it as "The Word of God" to mark this Book out as being entirely separate from the books of men.

The Canon Of Scriptures

When we speak of the Canon of Scripture, we are making reference to that list of recognized books which are accepted as those books which have both the external and internal evidence of being divinely inspired, those books which are now bound together in the Old and New Testaments to form The Bible.

We ought to say, that so far as is known, there are no original manuscripts now in existence. This statement is true of both the Old Testament and the New Testament. However, reliable copies have been made, and are, therefore, used in their stead. Even in this we see the wisdom of God, for man is so foolish, he no doubt would worship the original manuscripts rather than the God Who gave them, even as he does many relics such as the supposed bones of St. Peter.

However, there is no need for alarm just because we do not possess the original manuscripts of the books of our Bible. There are in existence today, many thousands of Hebrew and Greek manuscripts copied by Jewish scribes from earlier manuscripts. These are sometimes spoken of as being original manuscripts; a large number of these may be found now in the great libraries of Europe, and a few of them are in the possession of individuals. Dr. Gaster alone had about 800 manuscripts, and it is estimated that there are about 4,000 copies of the New Testament manuscripts in existence.

Much of the material included in this article has been gleaned and summarized from the book “The Scriptures of Truth” by Mr. Sidney Collett, published by S. W. Partridge and Co. Ltd., London, England. Those interested in studying the subject further are urged to obtain a copy of this book¹. Let me now quote from pages 14 and 18:

“In making copies of Hebrew manuscripts which are the precious heritage of the Church today, the Jewish scribes exercised the greatest possible care, even to the point of superstition — counting, not only the words but every letter, noting how many times each particular letter occurred, and destroying at once the sheet on which a mistake was detected, in their anxiety to avoid the introduction of the least error into the Sacred Writings, which they prized so highly and held in such reverent awe. Moreover, each new copy had to be made from an approved manuscript written with a special kind of ink, upon sheets made from the skins of a “clean” animal. The writers also had to pronounce aloud each word before writing it, and on no account was a single word to be written from memory. They were reverently to wipe their pen before writing “Jehovah,” lest that holy name should be tainted even in the writing. The new copy was then carefully examined with the original almost immediately; and it is said that if only one incorrect letter were discovered the whole copy was rejected.”

“Having, however, in the good providence of God, so many ancient manuscripts to consult, the reader will understand that a copyist’s mistake in one is, as a rule, easily detected by the correct reading of the same passage in many of the other documents. So that it may

be safely said, with the possession of these thousands of manuscripts, although they are only copies, we are practically able to arrive at the exact words of the Scriptures, as they originally came from God through His prophets and apostles. And, in addition to all this, there are so many accurate and voluminous quotations from the Scriptures in the writings of the early fathers, dating from the second to the fifth centuries, that it has been actually proved that, from these writings alone, without any other assistance, the whole of the New Testament could be reproduced! So carefully has our Heavenly Father guarded the Book He has given to the children of men."

In our Bible there are sixty-six books, thirty-nine in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New Testament. Some versions also include in the binding the "Apocrypha," the fourteen "hidden" or "secret" books. Although these books are still included in some Bibles, they were never acknowledged to be inspired or to form part of the Canon of Scripture. These books are, however, always found in Roman Catholic Bibles. Some of these books contain good history e.g. the Maccabees, but for the most part by the very reading of them, it is obvious that they are merely the books of men.

* * *

He placed me in a little cage,
Away from gardens fair;
But I must sing the sweetest songs
Because He placed me there;
Not beat my wings against the cage
If it's my Maker's will,

But raise my voice to Heaven's gate

And sing the louder still.

1 This may be done through The Christian Book Room,
853 Bloor St. W., Toronto, Canada.

How We Got Our Bible --Part 2

How We Got Our Bible

Part Two

John Funk

NOTE: The first article on this subject appeared in the September issue.

The Canon Of Scripture Recognized

I quote again from page 57 of "The Scripture of Truth."

"How, then, did the Inspired Writings come to be recognized as the Scriptures of God, and to hold, as they do today, an absolutely unique place among all the other writings on the face of the earth?

"Some of the books, especially the Pentateuch — i.e., the first five books of Moses (Genesis to Deuteronomy) — were from the first regarded by the Jews as the very utterances of Jehovah, their divine origin and authorship having never at any time been questioned. Indeed, these books of Moses hold to this day a higher place in the minds of Jews than any other part of Scripture; so much so, that every Jewish synagogue throughout the world has at least two or three copies of the Pentateuch, although in many cases they do not possess any other parts of the Old Testament. The Samaritans actually reject everything but the Pentateuch.

"With some of the other books, however, it was different — that is, their true character was not at once discerned. All, however, in course of time were ultimately recognized as having come from God; and, although they have been collected and arranged in their

present form by human hands, their selection from amongst all other literature was not left to the caprice of any man or body of men, whether Church or council. Indeed, this was the fatal mistake made at the Council of Trent, A. D. 1545-63, which, by the way, was practically a Roman Catholic Council, being presided over and controlled by the Pope — when they decided that the fourteen uninspired books of the Apocrypha should be included in the Canon of Scripture. But any child can see that that decision cannot really alter the true character of those uninspired books, which were written nearly two thousand years previously, any more than spurious metal can be converted into gold by being hall-marked! As Luther truly said, ‘The Church cannot give more force or authority to a book than it has in itself. A council cannot make that to be Scripture which in its own nature is not Scripture.’

“How, then, was this all-important matter settled? It was decided by the internal testimony and intrinsic value of the writings themselves — just as the true character of a tree, though questioned, and even vehemently denied, for a time in the dead months of winter, will, nevertheless, soon be established beyond all doubt — not on the authority of some expert gardener or association of gardeners, but by its own unanswerable evidence in the flower and fruit it bears.

“So with the books which form the Canon of Scripture. It seems to have been the custom for the inspired writers to deliver their writings to the priests to be placed by the side of the Law for safe keeping (Deut. 31:9). Josephus tells us that this practice was always followed, copies being made for personal use by kings and others (Deut. 17:18). But when first these sacred utterances

were made and put in writing, they were in some cases only recognized as the 'Word of the Lord' by 'the poor of the flock' (Zech. 11:11), while by others they were often indignantly repudiated, and the writers themselves were imprisoned and slain (Jer. 36:5, 23, 24).

"But sooner or later the tree was known by its fruit; and those very writings which were at first rejected, became in course of time honoured and revered; until every part of the true Word of God, which is declared to be 'living and powerful' (Heb. 4:12), asserted its own authority. Though written by man, it came to be recognized as the voice of God; and has ever since been regarded as such — in the case of the Old Testament by the Jews, and in the case of the Old and New by the whole Christian Church.

"And the very fact that those other books have been allowed to pass so completely away, is sufficient proof in itself that they never were intended to be included in the Canon of Sacred Scriptures; for had they ever formed a part of the true Word of the Lord, they must, in their very nature, have remained to this day, since it is written, 'The Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever ... The Word of the Lord endureth for ever' (1 Peter 1:23-25).

"But instead of abiding for ever, what has happened to them? They served their little day and generation, and then, like their authors, fell on sleep and saw corruption. The fire that is to try every man's work, of what sort it is (1 Cor. 3:13), has in a sense tried all those writing; and what has been the result? In comparison with the Scriptures they have proved but dross, and hence, like all other dross, they have perished; while those books

which form the Canon of Scripture — tried by the same process — have proved themselves to be as silver, tried in a furnace, and hence they have not perished, but are ‘purified seven times’ (Psa. 12:6).

“As Dr. George Salmon, in his introduction to the New Testament, says, ‘The Scriptures, by their own weight...crushed all rivals out of existence.’

“So the removing, as it were, of those lost books is perfectly natural— ‘as of things that are made, that those things (like the Scriptures of God) which cannot be shaken should remain’ (Heb. 12:27).

“And we can almost imagine we hear the Scriptures saying of those lost books, as John, writing by the Spirit, said of certain professors whose spurious character had been discovered: ‘They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us’ (1 John 2:19).”

Some Translations Of The Scriptures

The Old Testament was written originally, except for three small sections which were written in Chaldean, in the Hebrew language. The whole of the New Testament was written originally in Greek.

The Septuagint Version: About 277 B.C. (a little over 100 years after the close of the Old Testament Canon) a Greek translation of the Old Testament Scriptures was made. This was said to have been the work of 70 scholars at Alexandria and hence its title. This Greek translation, which was faulty in many respects, was apparently ignored entirely by our Lord when here on

earth. However, the translation was the basis of many future translations.

The Vulgate Version: In the second century A.D., a Latin translation was made of the whole Bible. This was translated from the Septuagint version of the Old Testament and the original Greek of the New. It was called the “Vulgate or Common or Public” version. This was the first Bible to be taken to England.

Other Translations: In 1250 A.D. the Bible was divided for the first time into chapters and 300 years later into verses. In the fourteenth century, John Wycliffe was the first to translate the whole Bible into the English language. William Tyndale in 1525 was the first to publish the English New Testament in print. He wisely used the word “love” in 1 Cor. 13, rather than the word “charity”. Tyndale, for his testimony to Christ, was eventually strangled and then burned at the stake by the Roman Catholic authorities.

The Great Bible: In 1539, “The Great Bible” was issued. It was given this title because of its size. It was also called “The Chained Bible” because it used to be chained to the desks of churches for safe keeping. It was also called “The Treacle Bible” because Jer. 8:22 was rendered, “Is there no treacle in Gilead?”

The Geneva Bible: In 1560, “The Geneva Bible” appeared, so called because it had been prepared by the Reformers in Geneva where they had fled from the persecution of Queen Mary.

This version was translated directly from the original Hebrew and Greek, and is also known as “The Breeches Bible” because Gen. 3:7 is rendered, “They sewed fig leaves together and made themselves breeches.

This was the first Bible in which italics were used to indicate words which are not in the original. It was also the first whole Bible which was divided into verses; and it was the first to omit the apocryphal books since their introduction into the Septuagint about the fourth century.

The Douay Bible: In 1582 the Roman Catholics issued their Douay version of the New Testament and in 1610 the whole Douay-Rhemish Bible was issued, so called because the Old Testament was translated at Douay, and the New Testament at Rheims. These translations were made from the Latin Vulgate, and contain some gross errors, which cannot possibly be supported by the original Hebrew or Greek.

The Authorized Version: Under the patronage of King James I., "Fifty-four translators, including High-church men, Puritans, and the best scholars in the land, undertook the task, sitting in sections at Westminster, Oxford, and Cambridge. They had the Hebrew and Greek originals to refer to, besides many other ancient documents of great value. Indeed, never before had such an amount of careful labour been expended on the English Bible.

"In 1611, after about five years of close study, what we call the Authorized Version was published. In this version, the marginal references from one passage to another, so useful to Bible students, were adopted."

The beautiful and stately language of the Authorized Version has so endeared itself to English-speaking people all over the world, that it has remained the Bible of the people for over three centuries.

Since the Authorized Version, there have been the Revised Version, the American Revised Version and several other good and useful versions. However, it is unlikely that any of these versions will ever fully replace the beloved “Authorized Version”.

When Queen Victoria was asked concerning the greatness of Britain, she held up her Bible and said, “This Book is the secret of Britain’s greatness.” How true this is today—where the Bible holds sway — there is intelligence, prosperity, and power! Where the Bible is kept out, where it is not read nor revered, there is poverty, illiteracy, and darkness.

Indeed, the inspired Word of God is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path.

Not Fear but Power

FFF 11:3 (Mar 1965)

Not Fear but Power

John Funk

Love And A Sound Mind

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” —2 Timothy 1:7 By nature Timothy was timid and fearful. Such a person is naturally afraid to speak to people and testify. That is why the great Apostle wrote thus to his son in the faith.

These words, written centuries ago, can change your whole outlook on life. Do you enter each day with a zest for life — with a joyful optimism and expectancy, or do you spend your days — morose, moody and dejected? Most Christians are living far beneath their capabilities. We take the words of Christ so earnestly, “Without Me, ye can do nothing,” and we stop there, forgetting the words of the Apostle “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

Of all the people in the world, the Christian should be the most assured, confident and optimistic — full of faith, hope and holy joy and power. Do we, however, have such a joyous outlook on life? Alas, in many instances we are filled with fear, doubt, dread, discouragement and disappointment. Is this God’s will and mind for us? Assuredly not! Hebrews 12:12 tells us to lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees.

Into every life there comes grief, disappointment, trouble, pain, disillusionment. We can be chastened by these things and we can learn and profit by them. But, are we to be overwhelmed by them? God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power. If the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? If He is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? We should forget the past and its failures, but expect to learn from it. Let us look to the future, so full of hope and fulfilment. Don't look back! Look forward like the Apostle — forgetting those things that are behind, he reached forth unto those things that are before. His is the philosophy of life we need. We should be filled with a zest for living, with optimism and expectancy.

We must have a goal, an ambition in life. One has said that if we aim at nothing, we are sure to hit it.

Perhaps Paul's greatest gift was his persistence. He was imprisoned, beaten, persecuted, suffered shipwreck — troubles within and without. What was his attitude? Did he give up in despair, say that all was lost? Did he become morose and moody? Was he introspective, brooding and feeling sorry for himself? (This is the quickest way to become sick physically, morally and mentally.) No, he was a man of courage, of joyful persistence. Had he given up, Christianity might never have spread from the Middle East. He had a goal, a vision, a purpose; he had moral stamina and he succeeded.

When Tommy Douglas of Canada lost a recent election, a reporter put a microphone in his face and asked him if he was now prepared to give up. His reply was, "I bleed

a little, I weep a little, and then I get up and fight again." This is the spirit needed by more Christians.

To a large extent we have power over our own attitudes in life. God has given us the power we need, so that with assurance and purpose of heart we might take hold of it. According to Ephesians 1, the very power which God used when He raised Christ from the dead "is to us-ward." Do we believe it? If so, of what are we not capable? Throughout the world exploits are being done by people just like ourselves. Why are they not being done by you and me?

In the next twenty-five years, if the Lord tarries, there will be opportunities such as have never existed before — in every phase and sphere of life including Christian work. Are we awake and alert? Do we care to grasp them? We need to be radiant, positive, forward-thinking, confident that the Lord can and will use us.

We cannot always walk on the sunny side of the street. However, we should not allow ourselves to get discouraged. It is possible to rise above the discouragements that would constantly beset us.

Some time ago the writer was travelling to Montreal from Toronto by plane. The day was dark and cloudy; mists and rain depressed the spirits. However, when the plane rose above the clouds, the rain and dark mists were quickly forgotten in the bright sunshine. We can rise above our disappointments and discouragements into the light of the Lord's presence.

May we take the words of this text literally and enter into a new, optimistic, expectant outlook throughout 1965!

Raising Children For Christ

Raising Children For Christ

John Funk, C.A.

We are pleased to have another article by the Secretary of Food for the Flock Inc., John Funk, C.A. The counsel that he gives is a good complement to other articles we have published dealing with the problems of youth.

The most important obligation and privilege Christian parents have is to raise their children for Christ. By all means give them the best education available and try to inculcate some culture and refinement. These are, however, secondary. What advantage in having educated, cultured, refined children whose lives are wasted as far as Christ is concerned and who may be eventually lost?

Raising children is not an exact science, as all parents know. The writer and his wife have five children, ranging in age from 11 to 20. They are all saved and going on for the Lord. Parents who are in this happy situation can say with John the Apostle, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." We are reminded of the man who before he had children had five theories about raising them. Now he has five children and no theories. No two children are alike, nor are any two sets of circumstances exactly the same. There are therefore no "pat" answers for every situation. Good common sense and spiritual discernment are required to cope with the problems of children in this extremely complex age in which we live.

My careful observation of Christian families, during twenty-five years in the assemblies, has confirmed that where both father and mother are enjoying the Lord and are whole-heartedly involved in the assembly, their children almost invariably go on for the Lord. If the entire lives of the parents are centred not only around Christ, but also around the assembly, the children who do not go on for Christ are the exception rather than the rule. Notice that this requires both parents. One of the chief reasons so many full-time servants of the Lord have serious problems with their families is the absence of the father from the home for protracted periods. I submit that it was never God's intention nor does His Word support our present practice where the majority of full-time workers are continually away from their wives and families. Doubtless some are called to an itinerant ministry, but I question if this is the Lord's mind for the great majority of His servants. I believe this to be one of the major problems in our assemblies today.

Another observation is that almost invariably parents who are extremely legalistic and severe and those who continually nurse grudges and resentments have children who do not go on for the Lord.

A few random pointers for parents —

Communicate: Sarah Wesley had 19 children. From one o'clock to two o'clock each afternoon she spent in prayer and yet she had time to communicate with her children. I try every day to have at least some brief communication with each of my children. Don't try to force conversation on your children—but be available when they are ready to talk. Mrs. Wallace Logan encouraged my wife when my wife told her about our

twins being saved at an early age and that we sometimes wondered about them being so young. Mrs. Logan said, "Never doubt a child, but encourage him with a little word here and there as opportunity presents itself."

Take Time: To allocate your time among all your responsibilities is one of the most important matters in your life. Each child should have part of your day. Do things together. I have found that you can love up your daughters, but that you sometimes have to wrestle with your sons to show them affection.

Be an Example: To your children be an example of what you want them to be and do. It is much easier for them to do what you do than it is for them to do what you say.

Dominance of the Father: In every truly happy home the father is dominant (not domineering). In the final analysis the father will be held responsible for the home. He must formulate policy and see that it is carried out. He should not be vacillating, but forthright, yet understanding. The wife, of course, contributes greatly with the love and warmth that only a mother possesses.

Establish Ground Rules: Within this framework let children make their own decisions. One of my children was class representative and felt she should be present at a social dance in one of the homes. She asked my opinion and I told her to make her own decision. She went — and on her return said, "Dad, I felt like a fish out of water." It cured her. She had learned she was not of this world.

Discipline: Every home must have an order and routine. In this busy day it is sometimes hard to maintain. As indicated earlier, the father should lay the ground rules

and the mother should help to implement them. Children feel secure where definite authority is exercised. This authority or discipline should be consistent. My own experience has been that once basic guide lines have been laid down, a rather liberal or easy discipline works best, particularly in our present age.

Take an Interest: In the things your children do. To you they may seem very trivial, but to them they are important. Children love parents who are “with it.” My older son likes hunting. My younger son likes tennis and golf. I don’t particularly care for any of these — but suddenly I am a hunter, golfer and tennis player.

Assembly: It is most important that the children find a good part of their social life in the assembly with others their own age. A happy assembly, free from legalism and strife, together with a joyous Christian home, are wonderful places to bring up children for Christ. The children should attend the assembly meetings. I was recently dismayed with a Christian couple who allowed their children to go to the assembly meetings “when they felt like it and weren’t too tired.”

Family Worship: These periods should be reasonably brief but regular. We found the best time for our family was immediately after the evening meal, the one time when we were all invariably present.

Encourage Private Devotions: As they come to age encourage daily Bible reading, daily prayer, witnessing and living for Christ.

The above is not at all exhaustive. The same principles can be applied to Sunday School children or other children’s and young people’s works.

Finally a word of encouragement to those parents whose children have grown up and are not saved. God is able to do everything (see Job 42:2). He is not willing that any should perish. They can still be saved. Claim them for God every day and live Christ before them. Often grandchildren will be allowed to come to the assembly Sunday School. Claim them for Christ and they could draw their parents to Him.

At the end may we all be able to say, "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me ..."

The Best Investment Ever Made

The Best Investment Ever Made

John Funk, C.A.

Notes of an Address

President of Canadian Corporation Brokers Company
Limited At the first Men's Fellowship Supper in
Hamilton, Ontario, Monday, January 10, 1966
Investments can be in money, in time, in a cause, in
many things.

The Bible says: "A Man's life does not consist in the
abundance of the things he possesses." I want to
consider a spiritual investment — an investment in
salvation.

In an investment you look for a number of things. First
and foremost, you look for safety or security. If you buy
Government bonds, you know that the Government
stands behind them. You feel that your investment is
secure. If you buy 10,000 shares of Moon Mining at 10
cents a share, you are not so sure. There is a good
chance you've bought an interest in moose pasture.
When we come to the salvation of our souls, we can be
certain. Christ said, "My Sheep hear My voice, and I
know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them
eternal life; and they shall never perish."

They say death and taxes are the only sure things.
However, salvation can be certain in this life and in the
hereafter. "Life is brief and death is sure; sin is the
curse, but Christ the cure."

The next thing you look for in an investment is the yield. What does it earn? It may be 4 per cent on a saving account or 6 per cent on bonds or trust certificates; perhaps higher on certain other investments. Recently, in talking to a business man, he indicated that he was a partner in a certain concern and he actually received an 8 per cent cash return on his investment in one year. Salvation gives a good return. The results of the flesh and of the spirit are set out in Galatians, Chapter 5.

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelling, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”

Salvation gives a good yield, both in spiritual and material matters. It pays to be a Christian even in everyday things. The Christian has the best of both worlds. The Lord will prosper those who honour Him. Another thing about investments is the price. You may know of a tremendous investment which meets all your qualifications, yet it is so high-priced that you cannot afford it. In connection with salvation it is priced right — it’s free — it’s without money and without price. It’s

something for nothing. “The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord.”

It doesn't cost a penny to be saved. It is free as far as we are concerned, but it cost God His only Son. Christ had to endure the agonies of Calvary before our sins could be atoned for. Before we could have this free salvation, He must pay the greatest price in this greatest of all transactions.

This investment doesn't depreciate, suffers no depletion and is never obsolete. If you invest in a stone quarry, it will eventually run out of stone. If you invest in an office building, it will depreciate. If you buy a certain machine, in time it will become obsolete. But the inheritance we receive as a result of our salvation is not subject to any of these forces. It is described in I Peter, chapter 1, “An inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” You will notice that this inheritance is reserved for us and we are kept for it.

In investing, a person often looks for diversification. They say, “don't put all your eggs in one basket.” The Christian life is one of diversity. It is the most interesting life there is. Do you feel a need for a new life; are you fed up and bored with the old one? You can have a new start in life. The Bible says: “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.” It is possible to start anew, with the past forgiven and with a bright future.

With this diversity there is, however, permanence. In the world today values change. What is in style today, is out

of style tomorrow. A few years ago laundromats were all the rage. Today many people wish they had never heard about them. However, salvation is permanent: it never changes. “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever.” His salvation never changes, it’s forever.

Growth is one of the features of this investment. As we grow in the things of the Lord, we become stronger. The Lord guides us in the way we must go. It is not necessary to conform to the world even in our business. As a Christian it is not needful to compromise. We can prosper in business and yet live the Christian life. “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus, the Lord, so walk ye in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith.”

Finally, there is a convertible feature here. You have heard of convertible bonds or debentures. There are bonds that provide for safety and income now and later can be converted to the benefit of common stock. This is like salvation. It provides for us here and now with safety and security and then, at a later date, we will be changed. At the coming of Christ, these bodies of our humiliation will be changed so that they will be like His glorious body (the marks of Calvary apart). We shall see Him and be like Him.

So when you think of this investment, remember concerning salvation.

1. It is safe and secure.
2. It provides a good yield.
3. It’s priced right — it’s free.
4. It doesn’t depreciate, deplete or become obsolete.
5. It provides for diversification.

6. It is permanent.
7. There is growth involved.
8. Finally, it is convertible.

You say, “that sounds good to me: how do I get it?” In a sense it’s not getting “it.” It’s getting a Person —Christ. When you receive Him, you receive salvation.

The writer, at the age of 19, received Christ as his Saviour. For almost twenty-five years he has proven the reality of this salvation. Often, if a product is tried for five or ten years, this is considered sufficient test. Many have enjoyed salvation much longer than twenty-five years.

Will you make an investment in salvation now? Receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour and you will have eternal life.

Things That Cannot be Shaken

Things That Cannot be Shaken

John Funk

We live in a day when the Christian faith is under fire. Never before in history has the attack been quite so fierce or the enemy's devices so subtle and devastating, for not only is the truth of revelation assailed from without the churches, but it is assailed even more tragically from within. There are those who profess the Name of Christ who nevertheless undermine the structure of belief and would, if they could, demolish the entire edifice. The faith once delivered to the saints is being tested to the foundations. As the Bishop of Woolwich claims in his most recent book, "The basic truth of Christianity itself is at issue" and "even God is at hazard."

Not unnaturally there are those who, like Eli of old, tremble for the ark of God. They wonder whether the Church can survive the mortal storm. It seems like an unprotected island in a swirling sea of secularism, liable to be submerged. But we have only to look again at the reassurances of the Word to regain our Christian confidence. God will not allow His people to be swamped. Not even the gates of Hades itself can prevail against the true Church of Christ, founded on the rock of His own Person. We can take courage amidst all the confusion of our time, since if God is for us, nothing and nobody can be effectively against us. We are witnessing the disintegration of "those things that are shaken" in these turbulent days, so that "those things which cannot be shaken may remain" (Hebrews 12:27).

As believers, we are persuaded that the gospel is God's answer in this as in any age. Despite the lowering clouds of doubt and criticism, it is our task to declare God's Word without pulling any punches. If ever there was need for a quite uncompromising message from the Church surely it is today. Nothing less than the fulness of Christ can match this desperate hour. He abides, "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8).