

MORE  
SNIPPETS  
FROM THE BOOKS OF  
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Providence is the unceasing activity of God working in the affairs of his people. He upholds guides and governs all events and circumstances. It is not the stars, nor chance, nor luck, nor fatalism, but the providence of the God who loves us and has saved us, that governs our lives. Therefore in times of difficulty there can be no greater comfort for the Christian than to be reminded of divine providence.

There is a tendency in most of us always to see difficulties as something terrible and not, as they sometimes are, as opportunities to discover new depths of God's love and provisions. There are basic spiritual lessons that we can never learn when things are going well. We need the problems and difficulties to teach us what real trust in the Lord is. They take our trust out of the realm of theory and into the hurly-burly of reality. There, all the impurities and deficiencies are burnt out and we are left with nothing but to look to God. It may not be a pleasant experience, but it can be and ought to be a spiritually enriching one.

The death of Jesus, both with regard to its manner and its purpose, was set and determined by God Himself. It wasn't a last minute adjustment to a plan that was going wrong. It always was the plan as the many references and allusions to the cross in the Old Testament make very clear. To the Christian, this is a thrilling truth because it puts our salvation at the heart of God's will and purpose for this world. When Jesus died it was an act of substitution and propitiation – he died instead of me, and in his death he paid the price for my sin.

Psalm 23 has a special place in the heart of every Christian unrivalled by almost every other portion of Scripture. The depth and beauty of each statement finds either a longing or an echoing response in the believer's heart. The Psalm is one of the most remarkable passages of Scripture because it seems suitable for almost any occasion. Set to music it can be sung with equal suitability at a wedding or a funeral. There **is** such a breadth to it that it can be applied to most experiences of life. Here we see life in all its fullness.

When a person becomes a Christian he, or she, comes into a living and personal relationship with God. He is now a child of God and a member of the household of faith. The implications of this for that person's life are many and varied. But it does not mean that he never has any more problems or difficulties. Far from it. The experiences of God's people in Scripture show this. David speaks for us all when he wrote, 'A righteous man may have many problems' (Ps. 34:19).

The path to heaven begins when a person is born again. Before this we are all dead in sin. We are incapable of making a spiritual response to either God or the gospel. This explains why the sinner cannot 'see' or 'enter' the kingdom of God (vv. 3 and 5). He is as incapable of moving towards heaven as a corpse is of climbing out its grave. A force from outside is necessary.

*We must stop doing things in the vague hope that they may please God* and do them in the sure knowledge that God will be pleased. This means learning from Scripture what God expects from us.

In Ephesians 5: 10 Paul urges the Christians to 'find out what pleases the Lord', and this is in the context of what it means to live a Christ-centred, God-honouring life. God's pleasure should be our top priority.

Are we prepared to get involved and do something about the godlessness of today? The church has too many spectators who come only to watch and do nothing. This is sometimes caused by indifference, sometimes by bad leadership, which frustrates vision and effort. Whatever the reason, it is not good enough. We all need to get involved by earnest prayer and bold witness and hard.