

The **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

*Pleading for a complete return to Christianity
as it was in the beginning*

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WAR! WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR?

In my not very extensive music collection I have a CD of Rock Classics and one of the tracks is by Edwin Starr and is simply entitled 'War'. The track contains some of the evocation of war with an opening drum roll and some rhythmic foot stamping. The lyrics regularly repeat the question, 'War, what is it good for?' and the answer equally regularly comes back as 'Absolutely nothing.'

As part of my 'induction' into the editorship of this magazine, John Kneller has kindly let me have access to some of the very early editions of the SS and, as the magazine was first produced in 1935, it is hardly surprising that the 'War' question featured heavily in those early years. Even in the early 1950's after the end of the Second World War the question was still high on the agenda as yet more international conflict seemed likely. I've never had an avid interest in history and I should probably know more than I do (I'm told that one of the benefits of studying history is to help us not repeat mistakes, something for which I can find little evidence). However I was provoked by reading some of the articles to look up the casualty statistics on the two major world conflicts of the last century and horrifying they are. Ten million people died as a result of World War One and an estimated 61 million people worldwide as a result of World War Two. Countless millions of others were injured and maimed and had lives and emotions shredded. One of those rare occasions indeed when the bald statistics don't need any further explanation or embellishment. Many of you reading this will have vivid memories of the second of those conflicts and may have been personally touched by tragedy as behind those stark global numbers are millions upon millions of personal tragedies and heartbreaks.

Not very long ago we experienced all the hype of the dawn of the New Millennium as if magically this was going to create some great change in the attitudes of nations and individuals. It hasn't. Conflict has transcended the so-called Millennium without drawing breath and goes on unabated, sometimes in the headlines, other times without it being very much in our public consciousness, but happening nonetheless. It is reported that over the last 2 or 3 years war in the Democratic Republic of Congo has killed an estimated 3 million people, led to thousands of women being raped and consequently created an epidemic of Aids cases. The First World War was referred to as

'the war to end all wars' but the fact that the history of mankind is littered with conflict is in itself a condemnation of the view that war solves problems. Could anything be more depressing and destructive than the seemingly endless cycle of murder and reprisals that characterises the Arab/Israeli conflict? You really will need the innocence of childhood over the next few weeks to sing 'O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie; above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by,' as yet again the tanks and guns wage destruction over the town in which our Saviour was born.

Despite the weight of history the political leaderships of the United States and United Kingdom have persuaded the international community, as represented by the United Nations Security Council, to pass a resolution which virtually makes war with Iraq certain unless the UN's weapons inspection team can carry out its duties to locate and destroy Iraq's 'weapons of mass destruction'. If war does ensue it is just possible that with war conducted mainly from the air the Iraqi's will capitulate quickly and quietly, there will be no civilian casualties, 'regime change' will be effected by a smooth transfer of power to a democratically elected government and everyone will live happily ever after. In our dreams! The far greater likelihood is that political instability will reign, anti-Western sentiment increase and a prime rallying point established for organisations who are bent on carrying out acts of terrorism. If it is anything war is a short-term fix that rarely, if ever, solves the underlying cause of the problem. Perhaps a reasonable analogy is the parent who 'loses it' with a child and resorts to screaming and bawling at the child. It's just possible that the child will temporarily stop being naughty but it is hardly likely to produce an emotionally stable child and a parent/child relationship built on respect and understanding. War! What is it good for?

IF WAR IS THE QUESTION, WHAT IS THE ANSWER?

In a sense that's the easy bit. We can all agree that war isn't the answer. Never has been, never will be. And yet it seems to be endemic amongst nations (and individuals). But what then is the answer? In truth Christianity doesn't have an answer except in Jesus and until He is extensively acknowledged as Lord our answer won't work. One of the primary duties of government (any government) is to provide security for the citizens of its country. If a tyrant, who has not hesitated to use chemical weapons to kill thousands of his own citizens, does indeed have weapons of 'mass destruction' and is prepared to use them, surely it could be reasonably argued that the international community has a duty to stop him. It's at this point that we should probably all be grateful that we are well removed from the levers of power. But there are dilemmas for the Christian. I'm relieved that the weapons inspectors have been allowed back into Iraq and that, at least for the time being, the immediate threat of war has been averted. But that return has only been achieved by the overt **threat** of military action. Am I hypocritical to welcome the inspections when they have only been achieved by threats of war? Again if weapons of mass destruction are held (by any nation) and were to be used to horrific effect how would I justify my belief that an intervention by war is wrong to the relatives of those who die as a result. And I physically shiver at the

decision that would have been visited upon the President of the United States if it had been known that the planes flying into New York that September morning were deliberately targeted at thousands of innocent people going about their daily routine.

Maybe as Christians we just shouldn't even give consideration to these issues and take the stance that they are simply not our problem, continue to preach the Gospel and maintain a simple but implacable opposition to war in all its forms. Many readers may take the view that there really isn't a question to be resolved at all. Aggression in all its manifestations is wrong and pacifism is the only acceptable position for a Christian to take. That all of the issues that surround war are a consequence of the world that, for a time, we have to live in but of which, in Christ, we have stepped outside.

THE EVERLASTING LIGHT

Of one thing I have become certain as I have prepared this article. The New Testament gives more direct teaching to Christians about

1. the spiritual conflict in which all Christians are engaged and;
2. the way in which Christians should conduct their personal relationships to avoid conflict and strife

than it does about physical acts of war. I don't know all the answers (I'm not sure that I know any) to the resolution of international conflict. But I can know from the New Testament what God expects from His people. He expects us to fight the spiritual war unremittingly, not giving an inch to Satan. Paul reminded the church at Ephesus that the Christian **"is not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."** Eph. 6:12. And when he exhorted Timothy he told him to **"aim at righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness."** Timothy was to **"Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of eternal life..."** 1 Tim. 6:12.

God expects us, so far as it lies within us, to live peaceably and without contention with each other (**Romans 12:18**), honouring and serving one another in love and loving our neighbours. (Gal 5:13,14) He expects us to have no sense of vainglory or pride in our dealings with our brothers and sisters in Christ or our acquaintances outside of the Christian family (**Phil 2:3**). We are taught to put envy, lust and evil desire out of our lives because out of these flow many of the problems that beset human relationships. (**James 4:1,2**)

It is hypocritical in the extreme to adopt a principled and firm stance on the question of war on an international scale and yet despise our brother or sister in Christ. Let us not be found condemning our political leaders for acts of aggression whilst we cause strife and discord amongst our brethren.

What will we say then to those who would challenge our view of war and conflict? Well the world isn't as we would want it to be and, until everyone puts on Christ, we don't have an answer to the complexities of international relations. But tell them this. That when mankind, God's highest form of creation, created in the image of God, was disobedient to God; when we hurt him terribly and created enmity between us and Him,

God did not go to war against us or seek to destroy us. Rather God, in Christ, Himself gave Himself up to death and became the covering for the sin of the world and in love destroyed, not us, but the dividing wall of hostility (which mankind had erected)... so making peace... thereby bringing the hostility to an end. So there is hope. Yet in thy dark streets shineth, the Everlasting Light, the hopes and fears of all the years are met... in Jesus. **“For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called “Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”**

EDITOR

GODS PERFECT HARMONY

(A E Winstanley, Ulverston)

THE LORD'S PRAYER

In John 17: 20-23 Jesus prayed to His Father with his desire that all believers might be “one” even as He and the Father are “one”. Those verses read, **“I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou has sent me. The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me.”**

THE NATURE OF THIS HARMONY

It is not an imposed conformity. Behind the formulation of religious creeds is the misguided belief that this will promote harmony. The reasoning seems to be that if a comprehensive statement of faith is prepared and conformity to it is required, then unity is bound to ensue. The result of this is that the Bible is replaced as the God-given standard of faith.

God's perfect harmony is consequent on a new spiritual relationship. Men generally seek to impose unity from the outside, whereas God produces unity by working from the inside. Jesus heartfelt desire was the men should be “one, even as we are one.” The Father and the Son are “one” in the family relationship that exists in the Godhead.

Unity among believers is consequent upon the new birth. John 1:12,13 records an astounding right to those who receive Jesus. Believers have the right to become children of God. **“But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”** This rebirth brings them into the kingdom, the Church, the family of God. (John 3:3-5)

Those born anew are at one with deity. When Jesus spoke to his disciples as he prepared them for his return to heaven. He promised to come to them (John 14:18) and told them, “In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.” (John 14:20).

“You in me” – those who are born anew are “in Christ” (Gal 3:28). Note that the Christian has put on Christ. In relationship to God, the Christian is clothed with Christ, garbed with His righteousness. (Phil 2:9).

“And I in you” – those born anew become a residence for deity. John 14: 16-18 tells of another (another of the same kind) Counsellor. He promises the disciples that “He dwells with you, and will be in you.” To dwell means “to take up permanent residence.” Therefore His abiding presence should be evident in the transformation of the character of the Christian. (see 2 Cor 2:17,18)

One who becomes a Christian is immediately in full fellowship with God. Christians gloriously become “sharers of the divine nature.” (2 Peter 1:4). All who thus become one with God become one with each other (1 Cor 12:12,13). Anyone, anywhere who has been reborn, of water and the Spirit, into the family of God, and remains in fellowship with Him, is my brother or sister. And Jesus is our elder brother.

WHAT IS PERFECT UNITY

I have already quoted John 17:23 which speaks of the process whereby those already “one” with God and one another “become perfectly one.” Literally they become “**perfected into one**” a phrase which is used of that which is complete, full-grown, mature. (cf 2 Tim 2:17). JB Phillips renders John 17:23 like this “**that they may grow into one.**” This refers to the spiritual growth into Christlikeness of every member of God’s family. This is the prime objective of the Church’s teaching ministry. In Paul’s letter to the Church in Ephesus he said that they were “**to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, even Christ.**” This must be our aim and the first purpose of all teaching ministry is to equip all members for service, and to help all to grow spiritually into Christlikeness.

CAUSES OF DISHARMONY

Unfortunately disharmony can arise and is something that must be guarded against. More often than not it is attitude that originates and perpetuates discord.

Knowledge divorced from love. Knowledge that is not wedded to love is a harmful thing. “Knowledge” puffs up, but love builds up.” In verses 11 & 12 of the same chapter Paul puts the matter of knowledge without love very starkly speaking of “**the brother for whom Christ died... you sin against Christ.**” Growth into Christlikeness should make us more loving, helpful and considerate of all our brethren.

A sectarian spirit. Our spiritual allegiances must never be to men – however great and good – but to Jesus. Our growth into His likeness demands continual submission to

His Word in everything. (1 Cor 1:11-13)

A false sense of values. The more we grow in Christlikeness, the more we appreciate that every human being is of supreme value to God. (1 Cor 1:26-31)

Spiritual immaturity among the children of God. In Eph 4:13 children is literally “babes”. Often congregations have been torn asunder because too many members chose to remain spiritual babes – easy prey for false teachers. The unity of the body of Christ is most secure where the Church’s teaching ministry ever aims at full-grown manhood for every member.

God’s Perfect Harmony is both a present reality and an eternal promise. It is a gift from God that every Christian should cherish and nurture as we grow to become more like Jesus the Christ.

THE BIBLE (Part 11)

Since the publication of the *Authorised Version*, there have been many translations of the Bible in English - too many for some people's liking!

The Revised Version of the New Testament was first published in 1881; the Old Testament, in 1885. Two companies were formed, one each for the Old and New Testaments. A novel development was the inclusion of scholars, representative of the major Christian denominations, except the Roman Catholics, who declined the invitation to participate.

The New Testament in Modern Speech is by Richard Francis Weymouth (1822-1902). He was a Fellow of University College, London and formerly headmaster of Mill Hill School, London. He was a Baptist layman. The translation dates to 1903.

The New Testament - A New Translation was the work of the Rev. Professor James Moffatt. The New Testament was first published in 1913 and the Old Testament in 1924. Moffatt was a Scottish Biblical scholar who lived 1870-1944.

The New Testament *The Bible - An American Translation* was first published in 1939. The translators of the Old Testament were Alex. R. Gordon, Theophile J. Meek, J.M. Powis Smith and Leroy Waterman. The New Testament was completed by E.J. Goodspeed (1871-1962) of the University of Chicago.

The Revised Standard Version dates to 1946 (New Testament) and 1952 (Old Testament). This version is an authorised revision of the American Standard Version, published in 1901, which was a revision of the King James Version. The revision was the work of thirty-two scholars (one Jewish) drawn from the faculties of twenty universities and theological seminaries in America.

The New English Bible first appeared in 1961 (New Testament). The Old Testament was first published in 1970. It was translated under a joint committee, which represented the major Protestant churches of the British Isles. Three panels sat - one for the Old Testament, one for the New Testament and a third for the Apocrypha. A fourth panel was appointed of trusted literary advisors. The chosen scholars were from various British universities.

The Good News Bible (the British usage edition) was first published in 1976. The

translation was undertaken by the American Bible Society.

The New International Version dates to 1979 and is the most popular translation of the Bible since the Authorised Version. The translators consisted of over one hundred scholars, who worked directly from the best available Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts. The participants were from many denominations. The Church of Christ was included.

Other translations include those by John Broadus, Henry Alford, William F. Beck, Gerrit Verkuyl, W. J. Conybeare, Ronald Knox, George N. Lamsa, Helen Bartlett Montgomery, Olaf M. Norlie, J. B. Phillips, C. H. Rieu, E. V. Rieu, J. B. Rotherham (Church of Christ), Kenneth N. Taylor, Charles B. Williams, William Barclay, H. J. Schonfield, A. S. Way, Gerald Warre Cornish, Dr J. W. C. Wand, J. N. Darby, Robert Young, Thomas Newberry, Farrar Fenton, etc,

FINAL THOUGHTS

The Bible is the best-selling book in the world, but probably the least understood. The book is a library in itself. It should be read and studied by all for it is God's revelation to fallen mankind. It reveals truth. It can, therefore, be trusted. It deals with facts and is, at all times, historically accurate. The Bible, being of God, has a depth that no other book has. We could live to the grand old age of Methuselah (969 years) and still not mine all the riches it contains.

I have seriously studied the Bible now for over thirty-five years and it has been a wonderful adventure. There is still so much to learn from the great book. There is no substitute for reading through it, marking passages where appropriate, and reverting to them again and again for enlightenment and spiritual growth. I guess it is all down to a disciplined approach to the Scriptures. I have had many mentors and they have all shown me what can be achieved from hours of dedicated study and application. Someone once said: "If you put your life into the Bible, the the Bible will put life into you."

To Jesus, the Scriptures were the final court of appeal. He referred constantly to the word of God. For example, when He was tempted in the wilderness by Satan, He responded by quoting the Scriptures (Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4: 1-13). Satan, of course, hates God's revelation. He is out to discredit it, disparage it and displace it. Hitherto, he has never managed to destroy the good book, but his futile attempts continue. The foundational book of the Bible is the book of Genesis and I see today a special effort by Satan to demolish the creation account and elevate the theory of evolution as truth. Darwinism is never out of the media. It is a philosophy that is endlessly promoted by scientists, sociologists, politicians etc. The whole thrust of the Bible is creation. Any honest reader can see that. I am glad that there is a minority of scientists in our world, who are either critical of the theory of evolution or who reject it entirely. Their writings deserve a better press and greater exposure. All Christians should encourage their gallant efforts at this critical time.

I grew up in a home in which the Bible was revered. Both my parents had a deep faith in God's word. They taught me read it, study it and live it. They, and many others,

were a wonderful example to me. My father was the Sunday School superintendent at Motherwell and I was taught by him for over twenty years. His lessons were always clear, plain and simple. They led me to Jesus. Following my baptism, I was soon preaching the word. In fact, the first public address I ever gave was at my Secondary school. I have been preaching ever since. But early on I had to do something very important: I had to prove to myself that the Bible was God's word. I spent years on the subject. I read widely and travelled to London to undertake special studies in the British Museum. The research then has enabled me to write this series of eleven articles. I wish to quote here the words of my late friend and brother W. Carl Ketcherside. I endorse his words entirely. "The Bible is my map on the journey of life, my bread for daily sustenance of my spirit, the staff upon which I lean, and my counsellor in times of doubt. I have proven in the laboratory of my own heart its supreme worth and its power to transform. I rejoice in its every word and every line and I thank the Giver of Life for the hope conveyed to me in its pages".

I have been writing on the Scriptures since 1983. I once shared the task with the late brother R. B. Scott, one of the finest men I have ever met anywhere. I used to study the Bible with him in Kentish Town, London. He taught me a lot too. We corresponded regularly on the Scripture Readings and I found his insights helpful, edifying and challenging. He loved the word and he loved the Lord of the word. He was a man of compassion, meekness and humility. It has been a privilege to try and follow in his footsteps. My prayer is that our writings over the years have helped many to study the Bible for themselves and share it with others. There is no better book to go and buy and there is no better book to go by.

(Concluded)

IAN S. DAVIDSON,
Motherwell.

BIBLE NICKNAMES

Our Bible has been the result of many translations. Some translations, due to printer error have earned appropriate nicknames.

In 1568, because Jeremiah 8:22 was translated "is there no tryacle in Gilead" (instead of balm) the Bishop's Bible was nicknamed "The Treacle Bible". In 1717 a translation included the heading to Luke 20 as '**Parable of the Vinegar**' instead of 'Vineyard'. The printer was a John Baskett and contained so many errors that the edition was ridiculed as a 'basketful of errors'.

Printers at the turn of the eighteenth century appeared to be overly pre-occupied with the criminal mind and gave us '**The Murderer's Bible.**' This was because in 1795, Mark 7:27 was printed "Let the children first be killed" (instead of filled), and in 1801, Jude verse 16 printed "These are Morderers" (and not 'murmurers'), together with the text of Numbers 35:18 "The murderer shall surely be put together" (instead of to death).

In 1560 the skill of Adam and Eve as bespoke tailors was enshrined in '**The**

Breecher Bible' due to Genesis 3:7 being printed as "The eyes of them bothe were opened... and they sewed figge leaves together and made themselves breeches" (instead of aprons).

Other nicknames have included '**The Brain Pan or Skull Bible**' of 1572; '**The Bug Bible**' of 1535; '**The Camels Bible**' of 1823 together with '**The Judas Bible**' of 1611 and '**The Printers Bible**' of 1702. Not to be outdone in printing carelessness, one printer in 1632 came up with an edition which earned the title '**The Wicked Bible**' or '**The Adulterous**' or '**Unrighteous Bible.**' This was because the word 'not' is omitted from the Seventh Commandment, thus reading "Thou shalt commit adultery".

Many other errors have been made through the years. Most of these are obviously accidentally humourous in their content and easy to identify. As lovers and students of the 'Word of God' remain vigilant as you "rightly divide the word of truth." I make this plea because some of our modern 'translations' purportedly from the original tongues, contain the one-sided theology of those exhibiting bias and prejudice.

Selected

Aspects of Living

(I am fortunate to have quite a store of material that my father wrote in the later years of his life. Much of this is original and has never been printed and, though I may be biased, I think it is well worth printing. The article below is taken from a series of 'essays' that he wrote entitled Aspects of Living. Editor)

WALKING WITH GOD

(Alf Marsden, deceased)

WALKING WITH FRIENDS

I spotted them as I looked through my window. Two old friends walking side by side. They were just entering the wooded area behind my home. I watched as they started along the path through the wood. They were chatting animatedly with each other.

As they disappeared from my sight, I fell to thinking about the things they may be saying to each other. Were they reliving the days of youth, when all the world was before them, stretching into a future which as yet was undisclosed? Were they perhaps thinking of the days when the world seemed to have gone mad? When it was legal to kill other people, because your country said it was? Or were they, with the accumulated wisdom of bygone days trying to come to terms with a technological age which was passing them by at an ever increasing speed? I don't know, and perhaps it is idle to speculate. One thing however I do know; they were walking together, sharing the things that come from the inner human spirit. If this sort of soul-mingling happiness can flow

from two human beings in friendship, what should it be like to walk with God?

WALKING WITH CHRIST

There were two who walked with the risen Christ on the Emmaus road. Their recalled experience was, “Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?” Had they had enough of the company of this stranger? Oh, no. “Abide with us: for it is toward evening and the day is far spent.” They no doubt wanted to hear more soul-warming words from His lips. He went in with them and made Himself known to them in the breaking of bread; He then vanished from their sight. The Scripture doesn’t record any words that they might have spoken to each other as they as they hurried back to Jerusalem, but their thoughts must have been filled with the wonder of it all. “We have walked, and talked, with the Lord.” Dear, brother, sister, you will no doubt have said, as I have, *‘Would that I could have walked with Him and listened to the words that fell from His gracious lips.’* Ah!, but we have those God-given words that he spoke while here upon the earth. Take it from the place were you usually keep it. Keep it at your right hand and read it often; I’m referring to the Bible of course. It is the word of life and as you read it there will leap from its pages words of sacrificial love, dignity, grace, truth so that you too will feel your heart burn within you as you read of the glory and majesty of your Heavenly Father. You see, we don’t have to meet Him in the flesh; He is always with us in the Word, and His abiding presence is most evident through the in-dwelling Holy Spirit.

WALKING WITH GOD

If we walk ‘with’ God, then we follow wherever He may lead. It is said that Noah walked with God. In a wicked and adulterous world he chose to do the things God wanted him to do. When God had decided to cleanse the world, He told Noah to build an ark of great dimensions. This ark, said God, should be built on dry land. Do we question God? Noah didn’t and so according to God’s instructions he began to build the huge vessel. The people passed by, and when they saw Noah building a vessel with no water in sight, they laughed him to scorn. “Foolish man” they said. But they had forgotten – if they ever knew – what Paul also became aware of some thousands of years later. **“The foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”** Noah ‘walked with God’ because he believed that himself.

The beautiful 23rd Psalm says, **“Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.”** For some reason those words always remind me of that mad but glorious Charge of the Light Brigade. It is a grim and inhospitable valley, which all of us will have to travel one day. There have been many who have travelled that dark and forbidding place and have returned again to the plains, so to speak. But whatever the situation the Christian can rest assured that he does not walk alone. The Lord whom we love and adore has walked that very valley Himself. He knows the way. He has done it

all himself and as he travels with us He takes us by the hand and says, *'Don't be afraid: I've walked this way before. I'll provide the travelling light until we emerge into that bright and eternal day.'* There is one famous football club in the north of England whose theme song is 'You'll never walk alone'. Their supporters sing it passionately. Would that the same sort of passion be evident amongst Christians in our walk with God and His Christ.

I'LL WALK WITH GOD

I have a video tape of the musical 'The Student Prince'. The actor who plays the Prince mimes the words of the songs, but the voice is that of Mario Lanza. One of the songs in that musical is entitled 'I'll walk with God'. This is sung by the young Prince after the death of his grandfather had left him King. I suppose the philosophy of the song indicates the need for guidance and understanding in the task that lay ahead. But God is like that you know. Sometimes our closest friends fail to understand those secret fears with which we are at times afflicted; perhaps those moments of despair. We can then very quickly come to the conclusion that no one understands us, and so we develop the idea that no one cares enough even to try to understand. It is then that the Christian hears that still, small voice saying, *"Come, walk with me; tell me all your hopes and fears. Let's work it out together. I understand."* It's strange how often we rely on so-called friends who let us down, and ignore God who has promised that he will never leave us or forsake us.

Sometimes we lose a dear friend with whom we have often walked and talked. Loneliness hits us as we miss the strength of the relationship we once had. No doubt the disciples felt like that at the impending departure of the Saviour. However, He told them that they would not remain comfortless; the Holy Spirit would come to them. This, in effect was the promise of the abiding presence of God. Christians also have this same promise. **"There is therefore, now, no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."** If we 'walk after the Spirit' then we walk with God. **"And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."** Read again Romans chapter 8!

If we walk with God there is not the slightest doubt where our journey will end. Furthermore our souls will be enriched and comforted as we walk. William Cowper wrote,

O for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame;
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb.

Walking with God is not only a privilege, but it is also peace, safety and eventually our ultimate salvation.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Jan. 5	Numbers 6:1-21	Acts 18: 19 to 19:10
Jan. 12	2 Samuel 12: 1-14	Acts 19: 11-22
Jan. 19	1 Kings 12: 21-33	Acts 19: 23-41
Jan. 26	Psalms 119: 137-152	Acts 20: 1-16

EPHESUS

Ancient Ephesus is still visited by thousands of tourists. Today it is in Turkey, but in Paul's day it was the major city of the Roman province of Asia. The city probably dates to the 12th century BC and had a chequered history to 133 BC when it formed part of the kingdom of Pergamum. It grew to become a commercial, political and religious centre; indeed, one of the greatest seaports in the world with a population of one third of a million. The Ephesians had a reputation of being fickle, superstitious and immoral. The city, of course, housed one of the seven wonders of the ancient world - the temple of Diana or Artemis. It was huge - 425 feet long, 220 feet wide and 60 feet high. It had 127 pillars, 36 of which were overlaid with gold and diamonds. The temple was famous for its wealth; its charms and spells; its weird, ecstatic and hysterical worship; its slaves, priests and priestesses; and its status as an asylum for criminals. It was destroyed by the Goths in 263 AD. There is virtually nothing of it left.

There was probably a large Jewish colony in Ephesus. Paul, as ever, visited a synagogue to preach Jesus. He then left for Palestine, but was to return via South Galatia. In the meantime, we are introduced to a great man from Alexandria in Egypt - Apollos. Aquila and

Priscilla "expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (18:26b) because he knew only the baptism of John. Apollos was later to become an important figure in the Pauline circle.

When Paul returned to Ephesus, he found twelve men who, like Apollos, had knowledge of Christianity that was somewhat defective. Consequently, Paul clarified matters for them with the result that "they were baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus" (19:5). Here is proof, I believe, that all those who had subjected themselves to John's baptism had also to subject themselves to the baptism authorised by Jesus. "We never read of any person being exempted from Christian immersion because of his having been immersed by John" (Alexander Campbell). There are at least nine designs for Christian baptism. One of them is the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

Paul now laboured for a period of two years in Ephesus (19:10). His ministry "was marked by mighty works of Divine power, particularly healing and exorcism" (Bruce). The effects of the preaching of the gospel were powerful. Even the practitioners of magic "brought their books together and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver" (19). It is also wonderful to read: "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed" (20).

Paul was then caught up in a riot in the city. Behind it were Demetrius, a silversmith, and other workmen, all of whom were involved in the production of silver shrines for Diana. They hated the fact that their livelihoods were now being jeopardised by Paul. They stirred

up the people with the words: "...the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited, and the goddess herself, who is worshipped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty" (27 N.I.V.). Soon, a demonstration was staged in the open-air theatre of the city, which accommodated 25,000 people. Poor Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's fellow travellers, were dragged into the place. Wisely, the Ephesian Christians, together with the Asiarchs, kept Paul out. The cry went up for two hours "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

The "town clerk" or the secretary of the city was a worried man. News of a riot would trouble the provincial administration and they would hold him responsible. He, therefore, strove to calm the assembly and allay their fears. He succeeded. He must have been a relieved man, along with all the Christians, when the multitude dispersed.

THE PAULINE CIRCLE

We read in this portion of Scriptures (20:1-6) of Sopater of Beroea; Aristarchus and Secundus of Thessalonica; Gaius of Derbe; Timothy of Lystra; and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia. Other important companions of Paul were Ananias, Barnabas, Silas, Luke, Priscilla and Aquila, Apollos, Titus, Onesimus, Mark, Epaphras, Andronicus, Junia, Philemon, Archippus, Epaphroditus, Clement, Euodia, Syntyche, Urbanus, Jesus Justus, Demas (who later deserted him), Tertius, Erastus, Phoebe, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Mary and Onesiphorus. There were many others unnamed. A book could be written about all these people. In fact, one has already

been published by *The Paternoster Press*. The author is F. F. Bruce.

No Christian can make it on his own in this world. He needs the fellowship of other saints. This is the reason God has established congregations everywhere. The word "congregation" comes from the Latin *con* (together with) and *grex* (a flock). The apostle Paul achieved much in his ministry with the help of all his co-workers. I love to read about them and study them because, without them, the picture would be far different. In fact, I think without them there would be no picture at all. Paul knew the worth of them. So does God.

THE JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

On his way to Jerusalem, Paul visited, among other places, Troas and Miletus. Troas was the site of ancient Troy and Miletus was the most southerly of the great Ionian cities on the west coast of Asia Minor. There was a meeting in Troas. We read: "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight" (20:7). How often should Christians commemorate the Lord's supper? On the basis of this verse - every Sunday. Alexander Campbell has written: "From the manner in which this meeting of the disciples at Troas is mentioned by the historian, two things are very obvious: 1st That it was an established custom or rule for the disciples to meet on the first day of the week. 2nd That the primary object of their meeting was to break the loaf". He went on to say: "If they met every first day, they broke the loaf every first day; and they

did not break the loaf every first day, they did not meet every first day. But we argue from the style of Luke, or from his manner of narrating the fact, that they did both".

Paul took the opportunity to preach to the congregation on this occasion. The Greek word for "preach" is *diaegomai*. W. E. Vine has commented: "This the R. V. corrects to 'discoursed', lit., 'dialogued', i.e. not by way of a sermon, but by a discourse of a more conversational character". Actually, the early saints were never involved in delivering sermons. The word sermon does not appear in the Bible. Origen has been called "the father of the sermon" and he was not born until c.185 AD. I believe that when the saints gather on the first day of the week to break bread then a brother should be given the opportunity to teach and/or exhort the Church. This has been the practice in my home congregation since it was established in 1900. Personally, I have delivered many an address in Motherwell, but I have never at any time regarded myself as a sermoniser. I agree with the comment: "There is some evidence that the people in our day have been preached to death instead of taught how to live".

How long should a lesson last? Those who believe in a New Testament pattern should follow the example of Paul and teach until midnight. But would they get away with it? I think not - not unless the service starts at 10.30pm! Poor Eutychus dozed off "and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead" (9b). But Paul restored him to life. What a way to end a talk!

IAN S. DAVIDSON,
Motherwell.

TEST YOUR BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE

1. He was a Tishbite.
2. Who said of God, "Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain you?"
3. This book is called after a Moabitess.
4. She was the wife of a soldier, but David took her for himself.
5. This was Asaph's instrument.
6. Whose bones were buried in Shechem?
7. Who was the priest's servant, whose ear Jesus healed?
8. Name the successor of Judas Iscariot
9. Paul found him in Corinth.
10. Why did Paul shave his head in Cenchrea?

COMING EVENTS

MERCHANT STREET
PETERHEAD
2002

7th & 8th December

Speaker: Robert Hughes, Kirkcaldy

2003

11th & 12th January

Speaker: David Murray, Aberdeen

8th & 9th February

Speaker: Alistair Ferrie, Dundee

1st & 2nd March

Speaker: John Mooney, Livingston

On each occasion meeting times will be:

Saturday: 7.00 pm

(followed by refreshments)

Sunday: 10.00 am Bible Class
 11.00 am Breaking of Bread
 6.00 pm Gospel Meeting

Annual Social:

12th & 13th April 2003

Saturday 12th at 3.00 pm
 and 6.00 pm

Speakers:

Joe Nisbet, Aberdeen

Graham Gorton, Manchester

These brothers will also speak on
 Sunday 13th at the times noted above.

OBITUARY

Our dear Sister in Christ, Helen 'Nellie' Wilson, passed away on 19th October 2002. Nellie was born on 31st January 1916, the first of two daughters and eight brothers. Nellie was a lovely Christian lady and dearly loved by all who knew her. She was baptised at the age of 14 and worshipped at Newtongrange until ill health latterly prevented her attending. Her thoughts were always with us and she always prayed that she would be able to meet with us again on a Sunday morning. For almost 30 years she presided at the Women's Meeting held here each Thursday and her embroidery and craft skills were well admired. She was lovingly cared for by her sister, Ina, who although not in good health herself, was devoted to her sister and nursed her at home until she had to be admitted to hospital. We ask God to comfort Ina and the rest of the family at this time.

A service was held in the meeting place at Newtongrange on Thursday, 24th October, followed by a service at the Mortonhall Crematorium. Bro.

David Ferguson conducted both services.

On Thursday, 5th November, Nellie's ashes were interred at her parent's grave at Cockpen Cemetery. Bro. Joe Currie conducted this service, which was a great comfort to our sister Ina.

M.Hunter (Secretary)

THANK-YOU

Falkirk

Bro. & Sis. Joseph Malcolm wish to thank all those who have sent letters, cards and telephone messages during Nora's recent stay in hospital. These along with your prayers have been a great source of comfort and encouragement. Good reports have been received from both the surgeon and oncologist.

Newtongrange

Ina would like to offer her sincere gratitude for all the prayers, flowers, cards, telephone calls and other expressions of comfort and love offered after the recent loss of her dear sister, Nellie.

*When torn the tie that binds us,
 To earthly friends so dear,
 And lonely thoughts still find us,
 A prey of doubt and fear;
 O let us seek communion,
 With Christ, whose love was given,
 To win us blest reunion,
 The fellowship of heaven.*

LONGEVITY

(The following small article on Longevity appeared in the 1788 edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*).

"From the different longevities of

men in the beginning of the world, after the flood, and in these ages, Mr. Derham draws an argument for the interposition of a Divine Providence.

Immediately after the creation, when the world was to be peopled by one man and one woman, the ordinary age was 900 and upward. Immediately after the flood, when there were three couples to stock the world their age was cut shorter, and none of these patriarchs but Shem arrived at 500. In the second century we find that none reached 240; in the third none but Terah that came to 200 years; the world, or at least a part of it, by that time being so well peopled, that they had built cities, and were cantoned out into distant nations. By degrees, as the number of people increased their *longevity* dwindled, till it came down at length to 70 or 80 years; and there it stood and continued to stand ever since the time of Moses. This is found a good medium, for by means hereof the world is neither overstocked, nor kept too thin; but life and death keep pretty equal pace."

The article also quotes about 32 instances (recent at that time), giving

names and dates, of persons living to age averaging 140 years or so. The oldest being a negress Louisa Truxo who lived to 175 years, and who was still alive before this article was written. Henry Jenkins, a Yorkshire man, died on 8th December, 1670 at the age of 169 years. The oldest Irishman was Col. Thomas Winslow who died on 26th August 1766, at 146 years.

FALSE doctrine, like poison, will generally be rejected when administered alone. But when blended with wholesome ingredients, it may be swallowed unperceived. Take care who fills your pulpit.

1. Jeremiah (1 Kings 17:1).
2. Solomon (1 Kings 8:27).
3. Ruth
4. Bathsheba (1 Samuel 11:26,27).
5. Gymbals (1 Chronicles 16:5).
6. Joseph's (Joshua 24:32).
7. Malchus (John 18:10).
8. Mathias (Acts 1:26).
9. Aquila (Acts 18:2).
10. Because he was under a vow (Acts 18:18).

ANSWERS

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