

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

Vol. 71 No. 3

MARCH, 2004

*"Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us looking
unto Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith"*

BE INSPIRED...

...by the providential care of our loving God.

**The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want;
He makes me to lie down in green pastures
He leads me beside still waters;
He restores my soul.**

He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake,

**Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I fear no evil;**

**For Thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.**

**Thou preparest a table before in the presence of my enemies;
Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life;
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.**

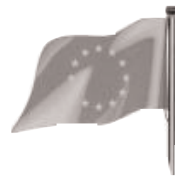
**During the last few weeks a number of 'stalwarts' of the faith in
the UK have died – Brothers Bill Mair, Ralph Limb, Gilbert Bullock,
Albert Winstanley. During their lives for Christ, they all
demonstrated their abiding faith in God's love and care.
To God be the glory.**

**Contents: 1-Be Inspired; 2-Away From Home; 3-Open House; 4-Word Study; 6-Question Box;
8-Editorial; 10-Monogenetic Messiah; 13-Tribute to Ralph Limb; 15-Wigan Fellowship; 15-News & Info.**



AWAY FROM HOME

(Lynnette Milam, Michigan, USA)



As an American travelling and visiting Europe I have learned a great deal of things that will aid me in my future.

As a Christian, I have learned even more vital lessons.

During my time here I have realized one of the most important lessons of my life- Relationships are a gift from God. Just as I am visiting in a land that is not my home, as Christians we are all doing the exact same thing - this world is not our home. In order to make it through, we all need relationships.

When I fly back to the United States in March I will have been in England/Europe for 6 months. I am having a wonderful time and could not have asked for a better experience. The main reason I was not ready to go back home after my first two weeks away is the friendships that have been cultivated since I have been here. For as long as I can remember I have always wanted to travel. I would like to visit every continent before my life ends. However, if I were given the chance to travel the world for free, but given the ultimatum that I could not bring anyone along with me nor build any relationships while on my journey, I don't think I would take the offer. Living my dream alone would not be satisfying.

While growing up I was always told that as Christians we have family all over the world. I never realized just how true this was until I experienced it for myself. Nearly three years ago I came to England with a group from Harding University. We worked with three different congregations and met many Christians. I cannot express how wonderful everyone was. We were treated like family and welcomed with tremendous warmth. I knew when I left that I would always have a "family tie" in England. When I found out that I would be able to return to this country I immediately wanted to see the people that I met on my previous trip. My experience here would not have been as fulfilling if it had not been for these loving friends. Christians really do have family all over the world, and I was blessed to experience this first hand.

Another thing I have realized is that I could live anywhere in the world if I had my loved ones with me. When I first left for University 6 ? years ago I was determined to return back to my home state after I graduated. I attended Harding University, a Christian University in Arkansas, over 900 miles away from my hometown. I had known others who attended Harding from Michigan, but I cannot recall one who returned once they graduated. Everyone seemed to get married (a big trend at Christian Universities!) or move off to a job location. Well, I wasn't about to follow the same pattern. "My home was in Michigan and that is where it would stay". Almost 7 years later I still want to return to Michigan, but I have learned that it is possible to live happily elsewhere as well. Things will have changed when I go home to live on a permanent basis. People change and friends move away. In reality, it was not Michigan that I loved so much it was my relationships. If all of my family and friends moved off to different places, I would not have any reason to make Michigan my home again. I would want to be where my relationships were. Those relationships are what keep us happy while on earth.

This world truly is not our home. We are here to prepare ourselves for Heaven, but God does not wish for us to be here and live unhappy lives. He offers friendships and relationships as ways to make it through this land easier. They are gifts. Without the relationships that I have made in England I would not have chosen to stay so long, I would have been homesick a long time ago. I am blessed to have so many friends; whether I am in Europe or in the States I know that I can find happiness because of the gifts God has blessed me with.

*One last thing - others **need** to know they are a blessing. Prior to now I was under the impression that those most dear to me knew how much I cared for them. Regardless of their awareness of my love for them, I needed to tell them myself. I urge you to do the same!*



What do you think?

In January's edition we posed a number of questions about whether God exercises direct control over our lives and sets us 'tests'.

From Isabel Webster, Wigan

I know there are instances in the Bible when God deliberately put situations in place to test His children and though there were glorious successes there were also many failures, the ramifications of which are seen throughout history.

Sometimes He withdrew Himself from their presence as in the case of Hezekiah "... in order to test him and see what was really in his heart."

Today I see this from the 2 points of view as a teacher and a parent...

I believe that how we respond to the different situations in life is OUR test... Yes, God prescribed the syllabus, He set the exam but he gave us the crib sheet; He gave us an ongoing personal assessment; He gave us a personal tutor who sits by our side throughout and He tells us in 1 Cor. 10:13 that He isn't going to test us above our abilities.

How we respond to life's challenges, major changes, seemingly unconquerable problems and impossible people, unanswered prayers, undeserved criticisms, senseless tragedies - how we respond at those times when we can't feel God's presence, those are the times when we experience the greatest development of our characters and learn most about our strengths and our weaknesses. Those are the greatest periods of growth.

As a parent I don't deliberately set tests for my children but over the years I have stood by and watched or allowed situations to arise which have tested their faith, their love, their patience, their kindness etc. I didn't set the tests but at the same time I haven't wanted them to fail. The joy that has come from seeing their lives and characters develop through these times is immeasurable. Sometimes God seems so BIG, we forget to grasp hold of the fact that He is our loving Father. How must He feel as He sees how we deal with the vagaries of our lives and grow through them? How must He feel when we go to Him in prayer and say " Hold my hand Father... this is too hard...? " As with any good parent or teacher, He actively wants us to lean on His wisdom, guidance and strength.

Life is about choices... God gave us the freedom. How we choose to respond is our ultimate test.

(Isabel's was the only response received to the question posed. I can only say that for an opinionated bunch, there seems to be some reluctance to put pen to paper!! Look out for another 'What do you think' shortly - Editor)

Word Study PRIDE

(Ian S Davidson, Motherwell)

Pride is frequently condemned in the Scriptures. For example, we read: **"The wicked in his pride persecutes the poor: let them be taken in the devices they have imagined."** (Psalm 10:2); **"Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust, and respects not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies."** (Psalm 40:4); **"When pride comes, then comes shame; but with the lowly is wisdom."** (Proverbs 11:2); **"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."** (Proverbs 16:18); **"A high look, and a proud heart, and the ploughing of the wicked, is sin."** (Proverbs 21:4); **"He who is of a proud heart stirs up strife: but he who puts his trust in the Lord shall be made fat."** (Proverbs 28:25); **"God resists the proud, but gives grace unto the humble."** (James 4:6b; 1 Peter 5:5b); **"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."** (I John 2:16); etc.

HAUGHTINESS CONDEMNED

In the Bible, those guilty of pride include: Pharaoh, Naaman, Uzziah, Haman, Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. The Moabites, the Assyrians, the Philistines, the Israelites, and many others, are condemned for their haughty and proud spirit. The Hebrew word for 'pride' is *ga'on* and the Greek word is *huperephania*. The Greek adjective is *huperephanos*. This Greek word is derived from *huper*, 'above' and *phainesthai*, 'to show oneself'. It speaks of the man who looks down on everyone else in an arrogant and self-conceited manner. We have all met such people. They are everywhere. They despise not only their fellow men, but also God Himself. Where does this pride come from? As one writer says: "It can come from pride in birth, from pride in wealth, from pride in knowledge, from aristocratic pride, from intellectual pride, from spiritual pride." Truly, pride is of the spirit of the age; humility is of the Spirit of Christ. I, for example, have met quite a number of wealthy people through my banking career. Some of the wealthiest people were some of the nicest people I ever encountered. However, there were others who gave me a very difficult time. They had to be heard or seen on demand. Nothing was more important than their 'request'. After all, the world revolved around them and, without them, the world would be a far poorer place. They never liked to hear 'no' for an answer and would be the first to complain to Head Office if they did not get what they wanted. They treated everyone with disdain and, dare I say, the wives were sometimes worse than the husbands. I believe that God sometimes gives riches to people as a test. Tragically, many fail it. Being rich, in itself, is not a sin, but being haughtily proud in wealth is.

THE CORRUPTING EFFECT OF PRIDE

Pride always leads to arrogance and boasting. Paul, in his epistle to the saints at Rome, speaks of the corruption of the Gentiles. That corruption resulted, amongst other things, in their being proud and boastful (1:30). An ancient writer commented: "It is inevitable that those who have great possessions should become

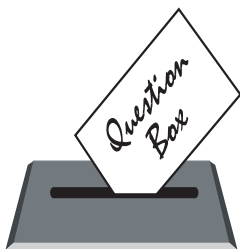
inflated with pride; then that being inflated with pride they should become boastful; then that being boastful they should become arrogant, and think that there is no one like themselves." Aristotle once wrote: "The characters which accompany wealth are plain for all to see. The wealthy are insolent and arrogant, being mentally affected by the acquisition of wealth, for they seem to think that they possess all good things; for wealth is a kind of standard of value of everything else, so that everything seems purchasable by it." In the light of these comments, I like the words of Moses E.Lard: "The truly noble are never proud."

There is an important verse to be highlighted here. It is found in I Timothy 3: 6, "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil." Paul, of course, is dealing with the qualifications of elders. To paraphrase his words: "You do not put a novice in the office because through pride he could fall into the very same condemnation that the devil fell into." Pride resulted in Satan's downfall. Albert Barnes has written: "It is here intimated that the cause of the apostasy of Satan was pride – a cause which is likely to have been the true one as any other. Who can tell but it may have been produced by some new honour which was conferred on him in heaven, and that his virtue was not found sufficient for the untried circumstances in which he was placed?" No wonder C.S. Lewis has described pride as "The Great Sin" in his book *Mere Christianity*. He writes: "The Christians are right: it is Pride which has been the chief cause of misery in every nation and every family since the world began. Other vices may sometimes bring people together: you may find good fellowship and jokes and friendliness among drunken people or unchaste people. But pride always means enmity – it *is* enmity. And not only enmity between man and man, but enmity to God". D.H.Tongue has pointed out: "The gospel message of righteousness through Christ sounds the death-knell of self righteousness in religion; that is why it was a stumbling block to the proud Jews. (Romans 9:30 – 10:4). The NT emphasis made a deep impact on early and mediaeval ethics. Augustine, Aquinas and Dante all characterised pride as the ultimate sin, while Milton and Goethe dramatised it."

HUMILITY EXALTS

Satan and Jesus stand in complete contrast. Satan spells pride; Jesus spells humility. Paul wrote: **"...and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."** (Philippians 2:8). Jesus said: **"For whosoever exalts himself shall be abased; and he who humbles himself shall be exalted."** (Luke 14:11; 18:14) What does Paul go on to say in the ninth verse of Philippians chapter 2? **"Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name."** For Jesus, the way to glory was through the cross. What humility!

A final thought. "Ancient Greek teaching was at variance with Judaism in regarding pride as a virtue and humility as despicable." (D. Tongue) Jesus changed a lot of things when He came into the world and one of the things He changed was the view of the word "humble". To the Greeks, it was the equivalent of servile, low, cringing. But Jesus accorded it supreme excellence. He said during His ministry: **"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls."** (Matthew 11: 29). Truly, pride, arrogance and boasting are of Satan and not of God. Pride is a vice; humility is a virtue. Thank you Jesus for showing us clearly which is which.



THIS MONTH'S QUESTION – CORNELIUS AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

Continuing with last month's subject, a brother has raised a question based on Acts 10: 44-47, concerning the Holy Spirit and the conversion of Cornelius. He would like to know what these Gentiles 'received' and what was their spiritual state, when the Holy Spirit 'fell on all those who heard the word'.

To reach an understanding of the events in the house of Cornelius there are several points that need to be considered.

1. We must recognize that, when the Spirit came upon them, ***Cornelius and his friends had not yet become Christians*** and were therefore ***not yet saved***, because they had not yet been told *how* to be saved! We understand this because Acts 10:44 tells us that the Holy Spirit fell on the Gentile listeners, ***'while Peter was still speaking'***.

This was made even clearer when Peter went to Jerusalem and was required to explain his visit to a Gentile home. Peter said, **"As I began to speak the Holy Spirit fell upon them"**, Acts 11:15. Only later, after they had heard the Gospel, did he instruct them to **'be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ'**, Acts 11:48.

Now, we remember that, on the Day of Pentecost, the same Peter had said to the Jews who believed his message, **"Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"**. Shortly after this, he informed the Jewish Council that God gives the Holy Spirit **"to those who obey Him."** Acts 5:32. Therefore, until these Gentiles had heard and understood the message which Peter had been sent to bring them, and had been baptised in the name of Jesus; -

- a) their sins were not forgiven and they were not saved, and,
b) they did not receive that 'gift of the Holy Spirit', which was promised in Acts 2; 38.
2. This raises the next question. **"When the Holy Spirit enabled these Gentiles to speak in tongues, what purpose did this serve?"** Or, in other words, **"Why did the Spirit come upon these unsaved Gentiles?"**

The short answer is: It happened just because they **were** Gentiles! Nothing like this ever happened, either before or after this event, to any other group of converts that we read about in the New Testament! As a Jew, Peter was well aware that fellow-Jews would consider him guilty of a grievous offence when they heard that he had entered the house of a Gentile. And they certainly did, as Acts 11:2-3 reveals!

Therefore, when he set out to go to Caesarea, he was careful to take the precautionary step of inviting six Jewish Christians to go along with him, to witness whatever might occur. The vision he had received at Joppa had taught Peter himself that the Good News is for everyone – even Gentiles. But Jewish Christians generally had still to learn this lesson. They had to learn that even

Gentiles were invited to hear and obey the Gospel. The six Jewish believers who, probably very reluctantly, had entered the house of Cornelius with Peter, were taught that lesson very vividly when the Holy Spirit enabled the Gentiles to speak in other languages, and it was to his companions that Peter's question in v.47 was addressed. It was, in effect, a challenge; "**Does any one of you now dare to refuse to baptize these people...?**"

They raised no objection, because there could hardly have been a more vivid and convincing expression of God's approval of Peter's action, than the dramatic intervention of the Holy Spirit when he began to speak to his Gentile audience. Indeed, his Jewish companions were '**astonished**'! (v.45), and Acts 10:15 and Acts 11:18 prove that both they and the Apostles and brethren in Jerusalem, were quick to recognize the significance of what had happened and had the grace and wisdom to acknowledge that this was God at work.

3. "Was this another instance of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?"

I recall, more than 60 years ago, being taught that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit occurred twice during the New Testament period; once in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost when the first Jews obeyed the Gospel, and once at Caesarea when the first Gentiles became Christians. That explanation was both simple and satisfactory because it dealt very effectively with many of the arguments made by so-called Pentecostal and Charismatic groups, who still continue to claim to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. But I do not now believe that this explains what happened in the house of Cornelius.

I do not think that this was a 'second occurrence of baptism of the Holy Spirit'.

Just consider. We must ask ourselves the question; to whom was the baptism of the Holy Spirit promised, and why was it promised?

1. It was personally promised by the Lord to his Apostles – and **never** promised to anyone else. John 16:7.
2. Those to whom it was promised were instructed to wait to receive it. Acts 1:4-5.
3. When they received the baptism, it would guide them into all truth; they would receive new revelations, and they would be granted total recall of all that they had been taught by the Lord. John 14:26. 16:13-14.
4. Their baptism in the Spirit would endow them with power and bestow on them the authority to become His witnesses, Acts 1:8-9.

On the Day of Pentecost, the Lord's promise was fulfilled. Acts 2:33. The Holy Spirit fell on the Apostles – **not on the listening Jews, nor on the 3000 who obeyed the Gospel.** But, in contrast, in the house of Cornelius the Spirit fell **upon the listening Gentiles.**

The two events are obviously quite different, and the only point of similarity is the fact that, as with the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost, in the house of Cornelius the Holy Spirit signalled His presence and approval by enabling these seeking Gentiles to speak in languages they had not learned. Later, when the converts obeyed the Gospel, we may be sure that they received the forgiveness of their sins and the indwelling presence of the Spirit – God's Own gift to those who obey Him.

Questions to: 11 Stanier Road, Corby, Northants. NN17 1XP

Editorial

The Good Giant

John Charles, the legendary Welsh footballer who achieved iconic status during his playing days with Leeds United and the Italian club Juventus, died last week. He was one of the very first footballers to try his luck playing in Italy (he was sold by Leeds rather than demanding a transfer) and it was there that he was accorded the nickname 'Il Gigante Buono', which has been commonly translated as The Gentle Giant.

Though Mr. Charles was a big, powerful man, a commanding centre forward or centre-half, he was never sent off the playing field or even booked once during a playing career of some 17 years. Listening to and reading the tributes to him over the last few days the common theme has been that as well as being an outstanding footballer, he was also an outstanding man who through his personal characteristics earned the respect and love of many people.

The essential quality of goodness

It was reading one newspaper piece in which an Italian admirer noted that a more literal translation of 'Il Gigante Buono' was "The Good Giant" that set me thinking. Physically John Charles was a giant of a man (one commentator described him as 'looking like a Greek god'), as he apparently was 'spiritually', when that word is used in its widest context to describe the human nature generally. In this sense it seemed to me that the adjective 'good' was much more appropriate than 'gentle'. Whilst gentleness is an admirable quality in any person, it defines one aspect of that person's make up; goodness however describes the whole of a person's character. 'Good' and 'goodness' are words that have lost a lot of their meaning over the years and now to describe something as good would commonly be regarded as faint praise, especially in a linguistic environment where matters of limited merit are described as 'awesome'. In the common view today, good probably sits about halfway between poor and excellent as a descriptor of the inherent worth of something, though I am sure that is far from what the admirers of John Charles would intend by calling him the 'good' or 'gentle' giant. Rather these are the words that I picked out of my morning newspaper describing him – humility, kindness, modesty and sheer decency, a lovely man who served his football club with grace and dignity. I don't know whether Mr Charles had any religious beliefs but those are all Christian virtues.

Indeed Christians should be wholly good people who have, and display, all of the attributes of goodness and who are not ashamed to be called good. The only way that the dictionary can define good is with a series of other adjectives such as virtuous, pious, kind, benevolent, well-behaved, worthy, commendable and so on though I tend to think that to be 'good' in a biblical sense a person needs to be striving for all of these qualities rather than one or other of them. As Amos pleads for Israel to repent he juxtaposes good with evil, **"Seek good and not evil, that you may live;....hate evil and love good..."** The writer of Ecclesiastes also avers that, **"a good name is better than precious ointment."** When the rich, young ruler asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life he was dismayed by the answer that Jesus gave him. It wasn't enough that he kept the commandments about killing, stealing, honouring, bearing false witness etc. He had to find love in his heart for his neighbour and be prepared to give up his physical riches for the greater treasure of heaven. In response to the young man's initial approach. Jesus had expressed the overwhelming worth of goodness with this statement, **"Why do**

you call me good; no one is good, but God alone.” Referring to this passage in Matthew 19:17 Vine says that it expresses that God is essentially, absolutely and consummately good.

The Christian and goodness

We are to prove it

“be transformed by the renewal of your mind that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good;

Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good.

Always seek to do good to one another.

“there will be tribulation and distress... for those who do evil, but glory, honour and peace for every one who does good”

The above quotations (and there are many more) amply testify to the fact that, for the Christian, doing good is not an optional extra in our Christainity, but is at the very core of our pursuance of godliness. We should be striving to ensure that our whole being and manner of life is an expression of goodness. More than that, after Paul has set out for us some of the basic requirements of Christian conduct (Romans 12), he asserts that it is this model that ultimately will overcome evil. **“Do not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good.”**

We can, with scriptural authority, elevate even further the need for an intrinsic goodness in Christians and I use the word ‘intrinsic’ deliberately because it implies that goodness has been absorbed into the very nature, that it is now part of our essence, our essential being. Paul tells the Church at Ephesus that the ‘new creation’ that we have become in Jesus has a purpose in design that we should be pre-disposed to good works. **“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”** (2:10) Even the death of Jesus had a purpose beyond our redemption, which was **“to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good works.”** (Titus 2:14)

What God’s goodness demands

I am delighted that the goodness of John Charles has been widely acknowledged this past week or so, not least because it presents something of an antidote to the torrent of ‘badness’ that we hear so much about. However it remains something of a mystery why, if so many can acknowledge and be genuinely appreciative of the goodness of a man like John Charles, the majority of those same people will probably have little or no time or thought for the God from whom all that goodness flows. I think I’ve worked it out though. The goodness of a man can be admired, acknowledged and valued, and may even serve as a shining example of the best of human nature, without it placing any obligations on people; it demands nothing of them. God’s goodness does, because part of the deal of our ‘newness of life’ is that He wants us to be like Him and I think in that lies the difference. Goodness is part of our being now, the God Giant demands it. **“And let us not grow weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not lose heart. So then as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”**

The Monogenetic Messiah

"ONLY BEGOTTEN GOD"

(Ernest Makin, Wigan)

"And the Word was made flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) amongst us, and we beheld His glory as of the ONLY BEGOTTEN FROM THE FATHER, full of grace and truth."

(John 1:14)

On four other occasions the apostle John uses the phrase "ONLY BEGOTTEN" to describe the ineffable and intimate relationship between Jesus and the Father. (See John 1:18, John 3:16, John 3:18 with 1 John 4:9)

In these passages Jesus of Nazareth is revealed to us as the "Unique One", the "Only One" or the "Anointed One". The phrase translated as "only begotten", from which we obtain the anglicised word – monogenetic, literally means the "only offspring". Such a child, (cf. Isaac in Hebs 11:17; the daughter of Jairus in Luke 8:42; the demonic child in Luke 9: 38 and the only son of his mother in Luke 7:12), would be special, dearly beloved and particularly valued by the parent.

The Beloved was recognised and acknowledged by His Father at His immersion, **"and Jesus when He was immersed, went up straightway out of the water; and lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I AM WELL PLEASED."**

In a prophecy of Isaiah Jesus, the Messiah, was described as "the God chosen Servant, a beloved Son who pleased the divine soul", who was " Spirit filled and ordained to proclaim justice to the Gentiles".

When Jesus uttered the words " I and the Father are one", He was defining more than the Son doing the works of Him who sent Him and obeying the Father's words. Jesus was referring to a divine, intimate relationship that had no origin in time; the Christ did not become, but was necessarily, eternally and foundationally the "Word" who was the Son.

Jesus told us the He was the ALPHA and the OMEGA, the first and the last; and nothing is before the ALPHA and nothing is after the OMEGA.

THE "ONLY BEGOTTEN SON" or "GOD ONLY BEGOTTEN", see John 3:18 (i.e. monogenes theos), who was from eternity and is eternal became "FLESH" and voluntarily accepted limitations in time and space. Jesus was the sole representative of the character and nature, the will and love and the graciousness that is the Father. This is the doctrine of the incarnation, EMMANUEL, God with us in the flesh. The Christ, "ONLY BEGOTTEN GOD" became human as the God/Man,

and the apostles declared His glory as they had witnessed it. Literally thousands of others saw the "signs and wonders" performed by Jesus of Nazareth and benefited contemporaneously from His love, concern, compassion and involvement with ordinary men.

"No one has seen God at any time, THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him unto us." John 1:18.

We are taught that; God is invisible, 1 Tim.1:17 and Col.1:15; God is spirit, John 4:24 and that humanity cannot look at God and live, Exod.33:20. Within holy writ there are many recorded appearances of the divine being, theophanies or christophanies. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob spoke to Moses; the God "of seeing" spoke to Hagar; the "God of Bethel" spoke to Jacob; Manoah and his wife spoke and saw God and there are remarkable descriptions of the experiences of Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel as they encountered divinity. Thus in the Patriarchal period, the Mosaic era and latterly in the New Testament early history, God adapted His form so as to communicate with those who were to drive forward His redemptive plan. The Angel of Jehovah is the usual title of the Christ as He visited man in the Old Testament. The incarnate Christ is the penultimate theophany and we await, with hope and expectation, the ultimate theophany when Jesus returns. Jesus as THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON FROM THE FATHER, appeared to men, exhibited His glory and drove forward God's gracious redemption through His life, His theocratic-politico murder, His magnificent resurrection and His glorious ascension to the glory that He had before the foundation of the world. JESUS, THE FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD, now offers eternal life to those who believe.

At climactic times God has chosen to reveal Himself in forms to suit His purposes. However in Jesus, the ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, God became visible, living a life of sinlessness and qualifying as the sacrificial Lamb of God. As we see Jesus we see and encounter the Father through Him. Physically we cannot see Jesus of Nazareth today, we encounter Him, and through Him the Father in the living word of God, our Bible. Hence like Timothy we **"study to show ourselves approved of God, a workman that needs not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth."**

When the word 'bosom' is used in John 1:18 it describes a most intimate and eternal divine relationship between God the Father and God the Son. The force of the verb 'to declare' in the same text is made more powerful when the translation is 'to explain'. The ONLY BEGOTTEN SON FROM THE BOSOM OF THE FATHER by His words and actions 'explained' God.

The verb 'became' in John 1:14 indicates transition. As John explains the Word existed before He became 'flesh'. The word 'flesh' indicates most powerfully the reality of the human nature of the 'only begotten Son'. As the only begotten from the Father, Jesus revealed His glory and His status by the many 'signs and wonders' witnessed by His contemporaries and attested to by the writers of holy writ. Jesus of Nazareth was 'full of grace and truth', while another translation indicates a Saviour who showed 'unfailing love and faithfulness'.

Paul, the apostle, praying for the 'saints and faithful brethren' at Colosse is moved to eulogise the Saviour as in Colossians 1:15-17. Paul quotes from what is theologically recognised as an early Christian hymn of praise, which adores,

When Jesus uttered the words “I and the Father are One” he was defining more than the Son doing the works of Him who sent him...

worships and celebrates the total supremacy of the only begotten of God. The Christ, who was Jesus of Nazareth is called the 'image of God'; and in Hebrews He is the 'radiance of (God's) His glory; THE EXACT IMAGE OF HIS NATURE'. Adjoining this text is a prophetic messianic statement from Psalm 2 (worth a read). In the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, Paul, preaching the good news says that God has fulfilled His promise to 'our children' in that He raised up Jesus, THE FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD.

"You are My Son, TODAY HAVE I BEGOTTEN YOU". Jesus is unique because He is the firstborn from the dead and "THE RULER OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH." In the ancient middle east the relationship between a 'high king' and a 'vassal king', who owed allegiance to the high king was expressed by the phrases, lord and servant, master and slave or father and son. (NB. 2 Samuel 7:5 and 12-16). The resurrection was a defining moment in the relationship between God the Father and the only begotten Son from the Father. This undeniably historical event, was also a most significant signpost on the pathway of the Godhead's redemptive plan. Jesus of Nazareth, in the Davidic genealogical line, assumed the humility of a man, obedient to the death on a cross and now He has been 'highly exalted'; given a 'name which is above every other name' and every tongue will ultimately confess that Jesus the Christ is Lord.

As he exalts the gospel in the preamble to the Roman letter Paul writes, "His (God's) Son was born a descendent of David and He (Jesus) was declared the SON OF GOD WITH POWER BY THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD according to the spirit of holiness." Jesus the Christ, 'the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth' by His doing has released us from our sins by His blood. By His doing those who believe and have been immersed into His death share a symbolic resurrection with Him, (Romans 6), and will ultimately and eternally share in His victory over death.

For those who are faithful the only begotten God from the Father has "become our wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption."

PRAISE THE LORD AND BOAST IN HIS LOVE FOR US.

A final thought. Those who accept Jesus for what and who He is are offered a most gracious and remarkable gift, which is totally undeserved. I, you and anyone else have been given power to become a 'child of God'; a 'fellow, heir' with Jesus, **"according to His divine power He has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who has called us to glory and virtue."**

"AS MANY AS HAVE RECEIVED HIM, TO THEM GAVE HE POWER TO BECOME THE SONS OF GOD, EVEN TO THEM WHO BELIEVE ON HIS NAME." There is a resounding statement of hope for the believer in Titus 3 beginning at v3 and ending in v7. We are promised that those who acknowledge Jesus will be justified by His grace and, "BECOME HEIRS IN HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE".

A Tribute to Ralph Limb. 1920 - 2004

Ralph was the eldest of the five children of brother and Sister Charles Limb of Eastwood, Notts. It is a powerful testimony to their Christ-like parental influence, that all five, Ralph, Royce, the twins Eric and Nora, and Glenys obeyed the Gospel and married Christian wives and husbands, and set up their own Christian homes. Without doubt, brother and sister Limb senior would be justly proud of the children they raised, and the Limbs are a fine example of the sort of Christian family that has always formed the reliable core of our local congregations.

Ralph was born in Eastwood on the 20th of November 1920 and finished his course on the 5th of January 2004. In 1947, on the 27th of September, he married Elwyn Barker, the daughter of brother and sister Walter Barker, another fine Christian couple well-known among Churches of Christ, especially since for many years Bro. Barker was responsible for the printing of the "Scripture Standard" at his print-works at Langley Mill, a few miles from Eastwood.

During the 2nd World War, as a Christian and like his father before him, Ralph decided that he could not, with a clear conscience, bear arms as a soldier, believing that to do so would be a violation of the principle of love, taught and demonstrated by the Lord whom he served, and he was directed to work on the land. Throughout this difficult period he continued to preach the Gospel, as opportunity presented itself.

Indeed, all three sons of Br. Charles Limb followed their father's example and became active in preaching and teaching the Word whilst engaged in secular work. But, with a view to becoming more effective in this ministry, Ralph involved himself in the study of the Scriptures by correspondence, with Br. Walter Crosthwaite of Ulverston, and in September 1949 he hoped to move to Ulverston for a period of personal study with Br. Crosthwaite, as other several young men had already done. With this in mind, Elwyn, a qualified schoolteacher, even made enquiries about a teaching post in the Ulverston area.

Sadly, the former 'Old Paths Evangelistic Committee', which, in those days, employed Bro. Crosthwaite, declined to agree to the move, because, whilst studying and serving the Lord in Eastwood, Ralph had accepted a small amount of financial help from America, obtained for him by Br. C.E.McGaughey, the highly respected evangelist who had met him during a visit to the churches in this country and who had been impressed by his character and ability.

At that time, Ralph had already been offered - and had declined - an invitation to study at a college in the United States, and Br. McGaughey's kindness was designed merely to help him to continue to study in this country. For this reason alone the attitude revealed by the Committee's decision is all the more sad - and difficult to understand - since they must have known that Ralph had already turned down opportunity of study in America.

However, in spite of the disappointment at this narrow attitude, Ralph did not abandon his plan to prepare himself for more effective service. At that time, Bro. Albert Winstanley was working as evangelist, with the Church meeting in Burns Street, Ilkeston, and he invited Ralph to work and study with him. This was an arrangement that lasted for about six months, until Albert moved to Tunbridge Wells. In November 1950, Ralph and Elwyn bought a caravan and also moved Tunbridge Wells, in order to continue to work and study with Albert and Jean.

Some time later near the end of 1951, and after a short period of work with the Church in Brighton, they moved back to Eastwood, to help to prepare for the opening of the new meeting-place in Seymour Road, where members of the Limb family remain faithful and active to this day. In May of this year, the Eastwood church plans to celebrate its 50th Anniversary and it would have been wonderful if Ralph had survived to share the joy of this occasion!

Ralph continued in Eastwood until 1962, when he was invited to work with the group of brethren meeting at Sible Hedingham. These were mainly American Christians based at Wethersfield, and Ralph worked with them until the base closed about five years later. This closure and the subsequent departure of the American brethren meant that, although Elwyn was still employed in teaching, Ralph no longer received financial help, and he decided to prepare to support his family by becoming a schoolteacher. With this in mind, he undertook a course of training at Braintree College of Further Education, beginning in September 1967, becoming a qualified teacher in 1971.

This remained his secular employment until his retirement in 1983, but throughout his entire life, the Church and the proclamation of the Gospel was the focal point on which Ralph's life centred and around which it revolved. Whether he was provided with financial support to enable him to devote all his time to the work, or whether, like Paul, he 'laboured with his own hands', it made no difference to him. Either way, he regarded his income merely as a means of enabling him to serve the Lord whom he loved.

Ralph was not a 'professional preacher', nor was he a self-promoting person who sought to draw attention either to himself or to the work he did for the Lord. He would never push himself forward in an effort to become noticed, or to make a name for himself. A deeply spiritual man, who loved the scriptures and knew them well, he was content to work in places where the going was hard and the discouragements many, but where the need was great. Because of this, wherever he served he served quietly, never seeking the praise of his brethren but being content to leave his Master to be the Judge of his work.

Although much of his life was spent outside of Nottinghamshire, those who have read his contribution to the "History of the Local Congregations" will recognize that his love and concern for the churches in his home-county remained strong, and it is my personal opinion that, when he and Elwyn moved from Eastwood, the work of the Lord in the county suffered a great loss.

Ralph's deep love of the Lord and His Church, illuminated his preaching and teaching and clearly shone in his transparent sincerity whenever he preached, and those who knew him will testify to his tender-heartedness and to the strong emotion that so evidently welled up in his heart whenever he preached about the sacrifice of the Saviour.

He leaves behind a wife who faithfully supported him in his work for some 56 years, and children who are a credit to him, and of whom he was justly proud. If I may add a personal note; I shall always think of Ralph with warm affection, having known him for more than 60 years. He will be greatly missed, and we extend our sincerest condolences to Elwyn and the family. But Ralph's work and influence lives on, not only in his fine family, but also in the lives of all those who knew him. And, of course, he is now 'at home with the Lord!'

Frank Worgan.

WIGAN FELLOWSHIP

FRIDAY APRIL 30TH – MONDAY, MAY 3RD 2004

The Wigan Fellowship, held every two years since its inception in 1990, provides a tremendous opportunity to enjoy a series of stimulating lessons over a relaxed weekend in Christian company. Weekenders requiring accommodation and day visitors are all welcome to come and share this time with us. With lessons to improve our Biblical knowledge and inspire us to greater spiritual heights, singing to raise the roof, time to discuss our common faith with fellow Christians there truly is something for everyone. As we discuss...

“Matters of First Importance”

...our speakers this year, God willing, will include Frank Worgan, Alastair Ferrie, Brian Stevens, Jon Galloway, Trevor Williams, Mitch Vick and Doug Melling and the weekend will include a number of presentations by the Solus singing group from Scotland.

The programme starts at 8.00pm on Friday, April 30th with a devotional session to set the tone for the weekend and continues from 10.00 am on Saturday, 1st May and again on Monday 3rd May, with normal services plus social activity on the Sunday. We are confident that, as on previous occasions, your effort to join us will be rewarded by an uplifting experience. Families with children are welcome and some crèche facilities are available. Full catering is provided.



We look forward to welcoming you to Wigan. It is important of course that we have an accurate idea of the likely number of visitors - *both those requiring overnight accommodation and day visitors* - so we do ask if you are planning to join us that you refer to the Booking insert in this copy of the magazine for details of how to contact us. Full details of the programme will be sent to every congregation listed in the CW Directory. If your congregation is not listed, or you require an individual copy please contact Robert Marsden at the address on the back of the magazine.

News and Information

Ghana Appeal

The work of evangelism, as well as healing both physically and spiritually, continues in Ghana and we thank donors who have contributed to furthering this work.

The seminar held in Accra was such a success that a study group is continuing there on a regular basis. The teachers are mature brethren in the faith and this is invaluable in helping Christians to grow in understanding. Brethren attending such classes are then able to teach their local congregations on returning home. Your donations have considerably helped here as well. Again we appeal for bibles and study material which are always urgently needed.

Money has also been made available for the completion of meeting-houses where construction has already started, as well as starting to build where ground had previously been purchased.

In the tropical climate illness is more common than in more temperate regions and recent cases vary from excessive boils to the extremely serious condition of the elderly mother of a church leader. Without your help many such cases would have died.

Those wishing to contribute please make cheques payable to:
Dennyloanhead Church of Christ Ghana Fund, and send to treasurer,
Mrs. Janet Macdonald,
12 Charles Drive, Larbert,
Falkirk, Stirlingshire. FK5 3HB
Tel: 01324 562480

Obituary Bro William Mair

Buckie, Scotland.

Our Brother Bill passed away to be with his Lord whom he loved and served to the end. Many readers will know that he was our leading preacher and teacher for a great many years.

Although he had been experiencing serious lung problems he encouraged his brethren, continuing to preach though often apologizing for being unable to stand up to do so.

Bill became a Christian in 1952 and immediately showed a burning desire to be a doer of the Word and not a hearer only. Thus he served until only a few weeks before his death. He has left an enormous gap in the teaching and preaching in the Church that will be very difficult to fill.

The writer, and Bro. David Murray of the Aberdeen assembly, were honoured to take his funeral service in the Buckie Church building. Due to the respect shown for our brother Bill by an attendance of approximately 500 people it was necessary for us to borrow the Baptist building across the road and relay the service there.

We ask for your prayers for his wife Jessie and her family. Bill had fought the good fight, finished the course and now has claimed the crown of righteousness reserved for those who are faithful to the end.

**Bill Pirie,
On behalf of assembly at Buckie.**

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is published monthly.

PRICE PER COPY – POST PAID FOR ONE YEAR

UNITED KINGDOM. £10.00

OVERSEAS BY SURFACE MAIL. £10.00 (\$16.00US or \$20.00Can)

OVERSEAS BY AIR MAIL. £14.00 (\$22.00US or \$28.00Can)

PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO "SCRIPTURE STANDARD"

DISTRIBUTION AGENT & TREASURER:

JOHN K. KNELLER, 4 Glassel Park Road, Longniddry, East Lothian, EH32 0NY.

E-mail: john@kkneller.freeseve.co.uk

Tel: 01875 853212 to whom change of address should be sent.

EDITOR: ROBERT MARSDEN, 4 The Copse, Orrell Road, Orrell, Wigan, England, WN5 8HL. Tel: 01942 212320 E-mail: bob.rock@virgin.net