

# *The* **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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**May 1997 be a Year of Blessing  
for all our Readers**

God Bless Thy Year  
Thy Coming In, Thy Going Out:  
Thy Rest, Thy Travelling About:  
The Rough, The Smooth,  
The Bright, The Drear,  
God Bless Thy Year.

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## **OLD - YET EVER NEW**

Another brand-new year stretches out before us in 1997. It is difficult not to associate this time of year with new beginnings; new opportunities and new resolve. As one page in the book of life has been turned over, a new page is about to be written. There is, at least to me, something very fascinating and exciting about something completely new. Even just to walk through virgin snow and be the first to place our footprints in a large expanse of new snow is a great event for small children (and some adults) but nothing, I suppose, to the great thrill experienced by the first men to walk on the moon. We might think also of the high sensation, in days gone by, experienced by all those astronomers, scientists, explorers, physicians who, after years of hard toil and much disappointment stumbled upon some new truth, law or principle. Things ranging from the discovery of microbes and blood circulation to the finding of electricity, radio-waves, X-rays, insulin, etc.: even the discovery of the continent of America. A certain Archimedes certainly got excited enough to leap out of his bath shouting "Eureka, Eureka" when one of the laws of hydrostatics dawned upon him. However to come back to a more mundane level. I can still remember the general sense of anticipation (excitement is too strong a word) when the teacher gave out *new jotters*. Each sheet was so white and empty (just like a landscape of new snow) and the invitation seemed to be there to accomplish great things on these waiting pages. The reality was somewhat different, however, and three weeks later, silent parents were thumbing through these jotters cringing at all the wrong sums and spelling errors. I can also vividly remember, at the annual school gala-days, all the children receiving a brand new penny and how we all gazed with admiration at the gleaming metal, bright, pristine and straight from the Royal Mint, and

how we all made a very short-lived resolution to keep it and never to spend it. Nor can I ever forget my first new suit of clothes (when I was about seven years of age) and I can still remember not only the shop but the very counter. The suit was grey (so as not to show dirty marks) with two pairs of (short) trousers. I suppose everybody could bore everybody else with indelible memories associated with very unusual events or new acquisitions; our first new boots, camera, car or house, etc. Unfortunately for the poor little mites in Africa, their abiding memory, if they survive, might be their first decent meal. It is all relative, I suppose. And what, under normal circumstances, could be more exciting than a new baby? I suppose every parent looks upon their off-spring as the best baby ever to see the light of day and a source of great optimism and promise for the future. This child, after all, could well be the next Prime Minister, or at least a rich merchant banker, and so great hopes are sometimes pinned upon a little bundle in swaddling clothes. It's not new: Mary, (and the world) with good reason, pinned all their hopes and human aspirations on a certain new baby, a long time ago in Bethlehem and were not disappointed. **"And Mary pondered all these things in her heart"** (Luke 2:19). Yes, there is interest in things that are new.

### LOOKING FOR SOMETHING NEW

The world lives and thrives on that which is new. Indeed the central theme of media advertising (from junk food to soap powders) is that **"it's new!"** We have, therefore to apply a little intelligence in discerning exactly what is actually new, and what is just something old but in a new wrapper. There is, in fact one accredited school of thought that says that **nothing** is really new. One of the very wisest of men said, **". . . the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing. The thing that hath been, is that which shall be, and that which is done is that which will be done; and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there anything whereof it may be said. See, this is new? it hath been of old time, which was before us."** (Ecc. 1-9). This was Solomon's findings and is certainly largely true of the general levels of human endeavour. As young men in the Church we sometimes, no doubt, had the conceit to think that we were advocating some new thought (something centuries of Bible students had missed) and yet it had all been said and done a very long time ago. As long ago as early in the first century Paul in Athens, came across philosophers and religious pundits who used to gather (like Speakers' Corner in London, I suppose) to be enthralled or intrigued by some new thing. (**"For all the Athenians which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear, some new thing"**) (Acts 17-21). So, even in the realms of religion, that which is **new** is exciting and widely sought after today. Consequently the cults are flourishing; especially those who specialise in the occult, mystery and sophisticated hocus-pocus, and who operate behind closed doors. Also popular are those whose meetings are punctuated with banging of tambourines and dancing in the aisles. We are back to the state of the Athenians and are only 'turned on' by the spectacular new thing. At one time men used to **"search the Scriptures,"** to find God's truth. Nowadays people are **searching the churches,** hopefully to find one that will prove suitable to their taste. A visitor attended one of our local congregations for a while and then came no more; explaining to a member that this Church **"was not what they were looking for."** What are people looking for? What should they be looking for? Surely we should all be looking for the Church that Jesus built, and not merely one suitable and convenient to our plans and our life style. Yes, people are looking for something **"New."**

### OLD, YET EVER NEW

I am sure that a feeling predominates in the world that the Bible is an old book (which it is) and is, therefore, a thing of the past; a closed history of a derelict nation written in a dead language. There is certainly nothing dead about the language of either the O.T. or the New,

and no Book in the world could possibly be more relevant today, not only to the Jews but to Gentiles, to every nation under heaven. The Bible certainly records ancient history but it has always been ahead of its time (even stating scientific facts before men discovered them). It is not dead, it is dynamic. It is full of **"things old and new"** (Matt. 13:52). God's last testament is called the NEW testament and is so dynamic and futuristic that it will never age. It can never get out of date. The N.T. abounds in new concepts and new revelations and contains the very last words of God to man, and so it can never get old. It will never be added to, or subtracted from, and will usher mankind into the next world. God's word is not only perennial, it is eternal, and although heaven and earth are destined to pass away, God's words will abide and prevail. God, in His unlimited grace, has opened up a **new and living way** in the reconciliation of man to Himself; not just New but living (dynamic).

Alexander Campbell met the Rev. W. L. McAlla in an extremely interesting public debate in Washington, in 1842, on the subject of baptism. The Rev. McAlla said that he intended to prove that the N.T. was just a natural continuation of the O.T.: that Abraham and his seed were the divinely instituted, true and visible Church of God; that the Jewish society prior to Christ, and the Christian society after Christ, were **one and the same Church**, just in different dispensations (Christ's Church merely a branch of the Jewish); that Jewish circumcision before Christ and Christian Baptism after Christ was one and the same seal though in different forms; and that the administration of this seal (baptism) upon infants was God ordained. This was how Mr. McAlla tried to show that the sprinkling of babies "was a divine command." Brother Campbell, of course, soon demolished all of these reasonings and showed that Christ's Church was certainly no appendage to the old economy but the NEW covenant promised by the prophets. Jeremiah said that this new covenant would be **quite separate and different** from the old one (the old one made in the day when God rescued the Israelites from the Egyptians). Isaiah talks of many 'new things' to come; a new name; a new song; even a new heavens and a new earth. Ezekiel likewise, adding that God would put a new heart and a new spirit into man. It was not a case of patching up an old Jewish system but was to be entirely new. Jesus said, **"no man putteth a piece of new cloth to an old garment . . . neither do men put new wine into old bottles."** A new patch on old cloth only makes a bigger hole and new wine in old bottles is a disaster. Paul (Heb. 8) says that in any case, if the first covenant had been perfect there would have been no cause to bring in a **new one** (v. 7) but by employing the word **"new"** God had of necessity made the first covenant old. **"Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away"** (v. 13). This is how Paul introduces (two chapters later) the **"new and living way"** opened up between man and God, through the death of Jesus Christ. That way was opened up some 2,000 years ago and will never be closed. Many of those men in Athens (previously mentioned) who were ever on the lookout for something new, failed to recognise the sheer novelty of the new things that Paul had brought, for when they heard of the resurrection of the dead some found it hilarious, while others said "We will hear thee again on this matter" (Acts 17:19). Clearly the 'resurrection of the dead' was something new to these Athenians, (who claimed to be connoisseurs of the new) but was a bit too much for them to take. Is it too much for you, dear reader? What other Book makes such claims and promises? Who can say the Bible is not full of new things?

If we add an 's' to 'new' we get 'news' and although the gospel is, by definition 'good news' it is somewhat surprising that the word 'news' never appears in the N.T. and appears only once in the Old. News there is nevertheless, in the N.T. and glad tidings of great joy; tidings of truth; and hope; and peace; of promise; of reconciliation; ultimate salvation; of eternal life and immortality. These, with forgiveness of sins, are all new to Jew and Gentile

alike, and every person entering the world has a right to know about them. Yes, the N.T. is about 2,000 years old but its contents are new to each generation. The fact that 'one and one make two' is a truism as old as time, yet each generation of children has to be told about it. As the hymnwriter says, "These things are old" (certainly) "but ever new." Let us ever seek to publish abroad God's 'good news' to a dying world.

### BEHOLD I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW

Not only is the N.T. full of new and wonderful things but it can also effect great works of personal re-natal in those who embrace it. God says, "**Behold, I make all things new**" (Rev. 21:5). That's a promise, ever in the present tense, and which can never lapse or age. This book (Rev.) talks of the new song, the new name, the new spirit, and the new heart, new creatures, a new heavens and a new earth: all coming to pass by the power of God. "Behold I make all things new." And on a very personal level, man also can be 'born anew' and experience a rebirth: the **new birth**. Born of water and the spirit. "**Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a NEW CREATURE, old things are passed away; behold all things ARE BECOME NEW**" so says Paul (2 Cor. 5:17). No matter how low we may have sunk into sin; no matter how deep-dyed and tainted with evil we may become, there is always the opportunity for us to arise (like the prodigal son) and return to our Heavenly Father. We cleanse ourselves in the watery bath of regeneration and arise, as new creatures, to walk in a completely newness of life. As Paul says, "**old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.**" Yes we all blot our copy-books. Those nice white empty sheets of paper are quickly covered in our mistakes, blots and blemishes. If, however, in true penitence we take our soiled and sullied pages to our Heavenly Father, He can give us a fresh sheet and we can start again. We can wash our sins away and start with a clean sheet, as innocent as a new born babe (Acts 22:16).

For those who have already become 'new creatures' and who are 'in Christ' there lies a responsibility to "**walk in newness of life.**" (Rom. 6:4). Old things are passed away and all things are become new, the old style of life must go, and a new and better must begin and continue. We must serve God, not in the oldness of the letter but in the newness of spirit (Rom. 7:6). Each new day gives us new opportunities to live better lives than we did the day before; for God's mercies are "**new every morning**" (Lam, 3:23). Each year, likewise, is one of those milestones on life's journey, whereby we can pause awhile, reflect upon the year gone past, and gaze upon *the new year* stretching out before us. As the challenge of this brand new year beckons to us may we make a really determined effort to make 1997 a very prosperous and profitable year in the Saviour's service.

What's new? "**Behold I make all things new.**"

EDITOR.

## GLEANINGS

*"Let her glean even among the sheaves"*

Ruth 2:15

### THE BIBLE SPEAKS

"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

Matthew 6:28-29

"Whence it cometh and whither it goeth"

John 3:8

"Ye are God's husbandry"	1 Corinthians 3:9
"We are His workmanship"	Ephesians 2:10
"The power that worketh in us"	Ephesians 3:20
"It shall not return unto me void"	Isaiah 55:11
"He shall be like a tree planted"	Psalms 1:3

**WE QUOTE HENRY DRUMMOND**

"Men are not to consider lilies simply to admire their beauty, to dream over the delicate strength and grace of stem and leaf. The point they were to consider was HOW THEY GREW - how without anxiety or care the flower woke into loveliness, how without weaving these leaves were woven, how without toiling these complex tissues spun themselves, and how without any effort or friction the whole slowly came ready-made from the loom of God in its more than Solomon-like glory. 'So,' He says, making the application beyond dispute, 'you care-worn, anxious men must grow. You, too, need take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink or what ye shall put on. For if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?'"

**SOMEONE HAS SAID**

"The lilies grow, He says, of themselves; they toil not, neither do they spin. They grow, that is automatically, spontaneously, without trying, without fretting, without thinking. Applied in any direction, to plant, to animal, to the body or to the soul this law holds."

H.D.

**J. B. PHILLIPS**

"In this work, we work with God, and that means that you are a field under God's cultivation . . ."

1 Corinthians 3:9

**THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS -**

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Longsuffering
- Gentleness
- Goodness, Faith
- Meekness, Temperance

Colossians 3:12-13

**GLEANINGS**

"Manuals of devotion, with complicated rules for getting on in the Christian life, would do well sometimes to return to the simplicity of nature; and earnest souls who are attempting sanctification *by struggle*, instead of sanctification *by faith*, might be spared much

humiliation by learning the botany of the Sermon on the Mount. There can indeed be no other principle of growth than this." H.D.

### PAUL SAID

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ."

Galatians 3:26-27

### WE QUOTE - W. E. SANGSTER

Paul never completely lost a sense of deep indebtedness to his old religion (he was in debt to it to the end), but it had failed him in the central moral struggle of his life and, where Judaism failed, the living and indwelling Christ succeeded and, at the wonder of having Christ within him, Paul never ceased to marvel and adore.

Consider this astonishing fact! Only thirteen of Paul's letters are preserved to us. Many of them are quite short. One is barely half a page. Yet, in that little sheaf of precious letters, this myriad-minded man, with many, many important things to say, says one thing over and over and over again. In Christ! In Christ! IN CHRIST! Dr. Adolf Deismann, the eminent German scholar, has counted the number of times Paul uses this expression - and its sister - phrases ("in Him," "in the Lord"). He found that it came to 164. Think! - 164 times in thirteen letters, only one of which could be called long. How important it must have seemed to him. It was the key of all he had to say. The victorious life, or - as we are saying here - the Radiant Life, is the life that is lived in Him. That is how one becomes "a new creature." Paul said himself: "**If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature.**" And this is what is meant, also, by being "**born again.**"

Selected by Leonard Morgan.

## "IN GOD'S SANCTUARY"

In the seventy-third Psalm we find the writer perplexed over a very common problem - Why do the wicked prosper? The age-old puzzle had almost become an obsession with the Psalmist. In verse seventeen we find him saying "**Until I came into the sanctuary of God then I understood their end.**" The inspired penman was simply saying, I was confused until God's presence pervaded my life. Then the dilemma was solved. I understood more clearly his purposes. Brethren is it not so with us today?

The word sanctuary means literally: 'A structure made holy by God's presence.' Under the law of Moses both the Tabernacle and the Temple qualified as an early sanctuary (Heb. 8:2; 9:1). But today, as Stephen proclaimed in Acts 7:48, "**God dwelleth not in Temples made with hands.**" Jesus stressed that the place of worship is inconsequential (John 4:23,24). The Lord doesn't abide in a special place; we make a special place for Him in our hearts (1 Peter 3:15). Thus in the Gospel age, Jehovah finds sanctuary in the Christian's life and in the Church (1 Cor. 3 and 6). As members of the royal priesthood we ought to be found in the presence of God at all times. We should never hide from His holy presence as did Adam and Eve. Nor shall we try to sneak away from it as King Saul did at the Witch of Endor's house. It does not strengthen us to warm by the fireside as Peter did, or head in the other direction like Jonah when we could wisely place ourselves in the sanctuary of God. Until we yearn for the divine presence and are found therein like Paul, David and Daniel were, we shall wander aimlessly through life (Phil. 3:8-10; Psa. 42:1; 122:1; 119:164; Dan.

6:10). Let us notice three great lessons from the text of Psa. 73:17.

### GOD IS ACCESSIBLE

It is a wonderful thing that He who made the world is not very far from each one of us (Acts 17). We can seek the Lord and find Him even though He is far above us as the heavens are the earth (Isa. 55:6-9). We don't have to get a prayer card and stand in line like Oral Roberts' followers do. We don't have to wait for an audience with our Father as do the Roman Catholics regarding the "Pope." God is accessible now for each one of His children. We can go directly unto Him through Jesus Christ our high priest. One of the most interesting scenes in the Bible is found 1 Kings 18, where Elijah taunts the prophets of Baal who were unable to make contact with their pagan god. In Habakkuk, chapter two, the prophet reminds the heathen that his idols of clay, wood and stone just cannot grant a blessing. He then concludes by saying: **"But Jehovah is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him."** Let us give thanks that it is even so today. God is accessible.

### WE SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY

The psalmist had a problem. He came into God's sanctuary. He left with a different perspective altogether. Being in the presence of Deity makes a vast difference. In Exodus 32 we see two men - both servants of Jehovah - Moses and Aaron. One has the tables of stone containing God's law; the other has fashioned a golden calf to be used in idolatrous worship. What made the difference in Moses and Aaron? One had been in close communion with God! When our lives are filled with pressing problems and trying circumstances we should avail ourselves of the transforming power of the Lord's presence. Once we have been in a covenant relationship with our Maker and then depart our heart is heavy until restitution has been made. We know, better than anyone else, how difficult it is **"to sing the Lord's song in a strange land"** (Psalms 137:4). In the sanctuary of God our soul is at home and at peace.

### BLESSING FROM BEING IN HIS DIVINE PRESENCE

In Isaiah, chapter six, we have a graphic picture of the power of worship unto the Almighty. This period of devotion and homage caused the prophet to place himself at God's disposal. The Lord of Hosts was exalted and Isaiah humbled himself to carry out the will of heaven. This is the purpose of assembly worship today. Man is made better by true, spiritual worship. In the gathering of the saints we gain incentive and inspiration to **'go about doing good'** unto our fellow man. Private worship is also uplifting. In fact, unless we draw nigh unto God when we are all alone our religion is in vain. Verily, our professed adoration is just as good as it causes us to be when no one is watching. If our personal godliness is like the Priest and the Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan we will be sadly lacking in God's sight. One major reason they **'passed by on the other side'** because no one was there to applaud - they were not in the mood and besides, their work didn't call for spontaneous sympathy! How about it brethren? When we are all alone with God does our religion have any reality to it? One of the most powerful scenes in the Bible depicts Jesus all alone in the Garden of Gethsemane. There, in the sublime presence of Eternity He was strong enough to humbly say: **"Thy will be done."** He arose from the soil with strength enough to do the will of the Father. We too can find a blessing from being in the sanctuary of God.

One day we shall be in the actual presence of the Creator. One day we shall know the resplendent glory of His power. May we so live upon the earth in the shadow of divine love that over on the other shore we can pay eternal homage to His name!

## MOTTO FOR THE NEW YEAR

"HE that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs xi. 30)

Time, as it swiftly passes along makes one continuous and imperative demand upon us, namely WORK. In New Testament times, it is very clear that all the followers of the Lord were workers. There was no such distinction known then as is known now - Christians and Christian workers. This is a distinction that ought not to be. If not Christian workers, they are Christian drones or Christian cumberers.

God 'will render to every man according to his deeds. To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality eternal life.' In that day no professions, however fair, no ceremonial observances however imposing; nothing but sterling worth - not conventional worth, not the thing that passes current amongst men for worthiness, but that which can be weighed in God's balance, that which will ring true when God tries it - only sterling worth, will abide that testing day.

The motto calls attention to a kind of work that cannot be equalled in importance for beneficial and lasting results. It is a work in which all Christians can engage, and for the doing of which all believers are responsible. The work is nothing less than *soul winning*. There cannot possibly be any higher work than that; and certainly the servant of the Lord is not justified in aiming at anything lower.

It is little use seeking to change men's lives without changing their hearts and consciences. It is impossible to bring about a new heaven and a new earth as the result of Acts of Parliament. Only as the reward is right and that can only be right as and when the soul is won for the Saviour - only in this way is the highest, most blessed, and most permanent good done to men.

Soul winning, then, is a work *par excellence*, all other must take a back seat. It therefore calls for the best of our time, talent and thought. To make a fortune, to build a city, to found an empire, equals not in the estimation of the Lord the work of soul winning.

The method to be adopted to succeed in this work is indicated by the word 'winneth.' "He that *winneth* souls is wise." The word in its connection is full of meaning. Not by physical force can the work be done. We cannot either frown or dragoon persons into the love of Jesus. We cannot drive them into an obedience of the faith. We are not to use the lash, but we are to *win* souls. If we are to lay hold of the heart, to gain the affections, we must use the *persuasive* power of the Gospel.

We shall do well to copy the example of the Lord Jesus. He sets us the perfect model in the method of winning souls. The way in which He speaks of His Cross breathes persuasion. 'I, if I be lifted up, will *draw* all men unto Me.'

He expected that His Cross would *charm* men, that it would eclipse the heroism of the world, and strip it of its glamour and attractiveness. Where there is the same tender winning spirit, then plain straight talks can be had with those by whom we are surrounded, and they will not be resented to the same extent as they would be if mingled with wrath and denunciation.

In prosecuting this important work, *character* is a principle factor. The Revised Version renders the motto 'He that is *wise* winneth souls.' It takes a wise man to do the work. He who would be a winner of souls must so live before the world as to attract it to the Saviour. He must 'walk in wisdom towards them that are without.' Christians are placed in the world in order to attract the ungodly to Christ. Jesus said, 'Ye are the *light of the world*, so let your light shine that ye may be seen of men.' The Christian man must not live so as to give the lie to his profession. He must act out his belief; the life and the lip must be in happy



and honest harmony; and both in complete and continuous submission to the law of the Lord.

Soul winning cannot be effected by compromise. **'Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you.'** To enter into unholy alliances with the world to compromise with sectarianism, for the sake of being accounted generous and large-hearted, means weakness to all efforts of soul winning. Favour or popularity gained by connivance with wrong - in business, in politics, in social circles, is treason to the Lord.

He who walks closest to Christ will have the most power to win souls. It is when the Christ is seen incarnated in our conduct that we have power with God and with men.

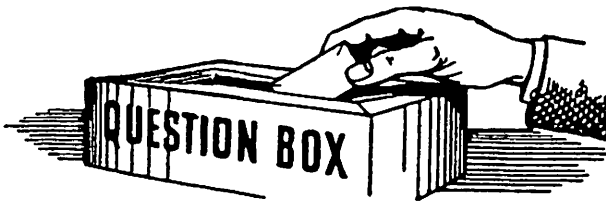
They that are wise in their walk and wise in their work may turn many to righteousness. They that are wise to win souls shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and the stars for ever and ever.

Let all the members of the brotherhood rise up to the dignity and responsibility of soul winners. Let all the Gospel discourses be studied and delivered with that one end in view. Let all Sunday School teachers think over their lessons, and face their classes with the thought of soul winning dominating them, they toil among the grandest soil that the Church has got to cultivate - the children's hearts. Let all who profess and call themselves Christians equip themselves for this important work.

We are not working alone in this matter. Our Leader said, **'All power is given unto Me.'** That power is for our use. We do not live beneath wintry sky, we live beneath a living heaven. Shall we take the motto with us down through the year, and with the help of Him who had said, **'All souls are mine,'** seek to win the souls of our relatives, friends and neighbours to the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?

BARTLEY ELLIS

(Extract from article written in 1900)




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Conducted by  
Aif Marsden

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*"Paul in Eph. 6:18 talks of 'praying always and watching thereunto.' What does 'watching' mean and involve."*

It will be as well to quote Eph. 6:18; **"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."**

The Greek word used here is *AGRUPENO* (literally meaning 'to chase away sleep'), and it is used metaphorically in Eph. 6:18 and also, in other places. This verse also has the idea of being alert, and persevering in the state of alertness. While we are doing this, we are to be praying and humbly petitioning for all the saints. Paul must have considered such watchfulness and wakefulness to be extremely important when he wrote this letter.

When I read this question my mind went back to Nehemiah as he and others strove to repair the walls of Jerusalem. In Neh. 4:17 we read, **"They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought**

in the work, and with the other hand a weapon." They had to be vigilant while they were doing the Lord's work, and the message of Paul is that we also have to be.

### THE CONTEXT

From verse 10 of Eph. 6, Paul exhorts the saints to be strong in the Lord. It is the *Lord's* strength which is going to win the day; we cannot stand in our own. To fight the 'war' which he envisages, we have to put on '**the whole armour of God.**' This is not carnal armour, because we are not engaged in carnal warfare; it is a war against an enemy we cannot see, but we know that enemy to be extremely strong.

Who is the enemy? Paul indicates that "**we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.**" A very formidable force arrayed against us, intent on destroying God's work and God's people. The figure which Paul uses is Homeric in proportions; wrestlers standing face to face, intent on hurling their opponents to the ground and holding them there. Consider for a moment our opponents; world rulers of darkness, supernatural beings led by the Adversary himself, Satan. In John 14:30 Satan is called "**the prince of this world;**" in 2 Cor. 4:4, Paul refers to him as "**the god of this world.**" He also speaks of "**spiritual wickedness in high places,**" and seeing the world today, who can doubt that evil is rampant in the world? Christ, of course, has hurled Satan to the ground already, but the power of evil will remain until Satan and his hosts are finally cast into the abyss; Peter says that Satan, "**goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.**"

Both Peter and Paul, however, are concerned to warn us of the ever-present danger of sin; Paul exhorts us to "**be strong in the Lord . . . Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.**" What are the non-carnal weapons with which we are to fight the onslaught, of sin? *Truth, righteousness, the Gospel, faith, salvation, and the word of God.* With these weapons to hand, what has the Christian to watch for?

### WATCH AND PRAY

Ever since the advent of Christianity, men have striven to establish righteousness, unfortunately, many have striven in vain because they have tried to establish **their own** righteousness. This is not the slightest use because in Rom. 3:10 Paul concludes, "**There is none righteous, no, not one.**" This, of course, includes both Jew and Gentile.

Paul then introduces the only kind of righteousness - the God kind. This kind of righteousness is not a new discovery so far as Paul is concerned: he asserts that it is outside the law, but has been witnessed by the law and the prophets. It is by faith in Christ Jesus unto all that believe. Therefore we must watch and refute any doctrine which does not have God's Christ manifesting God's righteousness. I don't need to tell you where such doctrines are to be found in the world.

Ever since the infamous Pilate asked the question "What is truth?" men have sought the truth of certain matters all through history. Someone appears in a court of law and pleads 'not guilty' when he may be 'guilty'; the truth has to be sought and many times cannot be found simply because the evidence has been effectively hidden. Children may lie to parents, or vice versa, concerning important matters; the truth may only appear much later, perhaps when it is too late. So we can appreciate that finding the truth can be a very serious matter, especially when it concerns the salvation of the soul.

Happily the sincere seeker of the truth concerning his soul's salvation need not be confused. Jesus said, "**I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.**" Now that is a very comprehensive statement. It means that by

accepting Jesus - what He taught and what He did - not only shall we find the way to God, and know the truth about Him, but in the process we shall secure for ourselves eternal life. So Jesus is the Key that opens the door of truth, and He is the only infallible Way for us to learn the truth.

The Christian must jealously guard the teaching which Jesus gave so that it cannot be corrupted in any way. It must not be diluted to serve our own ends. Unfortunately, many churchmen, who should know better, have seen fit to ignore this, and in the process have confused people to such an extent that they have given up seeking the truth. Let us stand for Jesus. Let us be counted for Him. Most of all, let us uphold Him as the Truth.

So far as I am concerned, the word of God, the Bible, is sacrosanct. It is God's revelation of Himself. I despair when I hear Christians say that its message is contradictory in some places, and that some of its teachings don't apply to us today. I don't know what they mean, because once we begin to doubt the authenticity of any part of the Bible, where do we draw the line? It has been give by holy men of God moved by the Spirit; by the Lord Himself; and by the Apostolic authority. If it is God's revelation of Himself; would He have given a contradictory message? Surely, it is our lack of understanding which produces so-called contradictions.

I would refer you to Paul in 1 Tim. 6:20, "O Timothy, guard the deposit; that which is committed to thy trust." Do you ever marvel that we today - sometimes wayward, sometimes indolent - have been entrusted with God's revelation? God help us to be worthy of His great trust, and to guard this instrument of salvation with every fibre of our being. I believe the Bible to be inerrant in what it teaches, and I trust that you will never think it a contradictory document.

Faith must always be our shield. It must be a shield which can quickly be turned in any direction, for the multiplicity of destructive 'missiles' coming our way seems to be never-ending. We must, however, not fall into the trap of standing still just to ward off the missiles of the wicked; we have to journey on to claim the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus. Guarding all the while, but always seeing as our goal the Lord Christ Himself as He beckons us on to the end of the road. We can almost hear Him saying, "Keep your eyes on Me, fearful saints; see the glory which is at the end of the road. Press on; I trod the road before you, and you have not yet resisted unto blood." No; we dare not walk without our shield of faith. It is our passport to Heaven. It is our means of victory in Christ. We must guard the faith at all costs.

#### PRAYER

Oh, yes; I must pray, I listen to B.T. and the Cable companies extolling the sophistication of their respective means of communication, but they haven't even begun to see the communication given to the saints. We can get down on our knees and talk to the Creator of the universe. Distance is no object; we can talk as long as we want and there is no charge, He presides over the whole cosmos, and yet He finds time to talk to us. Someone has said,

"Satan trembles when he sees  
The weakest saint upon his knees."

Well he might, because he knows his end. His wickedness, however, makes him want to take others with him, especially the saints. So, dear brethren, *watch*, pray stand guard, and don't forget to wear the whole armour of God.

(All questions please, to Alf Marsden, 20 Costessy Way,  
Winstanley, Wigan. WN3 6ES).

## LET US PRAY

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you" (John 15-7).

Every Christian should live a life of prayer. All prayer should be from the heart; if it is to mean anything at all.

**Effectual prayer** only exists if we pray aright; from the heart; believing, expecting, anticipating, knowing the truth of the gospel and promise of God. We need them to pray from the heart and not the head.

We need to be in tune with God, Christ and the Holy Spirit, in order for our prayers to be effectual and to produce the desired results. If out of tune we are at variance with the Heavenly Father. It is important to find scriptural support to cover what we are desiring of God, for only in this, can we be assured of the promise.

"Ask what you will and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7).

### IT'S A PROMISE OF GOD!

John 5:14,15 states, "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything ACCORDING to His will, He heareth us. And if we know that He hears us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have petitions that we desired of Him."

This dear reader, is a promise of God, to you, to me, to the Church. Use it, believe it. Of course there is more to receiving answers to prayer, than just praying and asking our petitions. We have to pray believing, expecting and waiting upon God.

"When you pray believe" (Mark 11:24). But do we really believe? We must believe in the promise of God. It certainly makes a lot of difference as to what we believe. What we believe at times is the difference between success and failure in our praying!

**Faith** in the word of God is the key to every successful prayer and can remove mountains. We must learn how God works, and work with Him. Forget self and submit to the will of God.

In this we may then experience the love, blessing and peace of God. May it be then, that we look at our prayer-life, and recognise our failings. Brethren, prayer is not "old-fashioned," or "out of date" or "out of line" in this modern age. It is essential more than ever before. The problem today is that we, the Church and the individual, fail in the use of fervent prayer, in the manner sought of us. The Devil delights in this, and sad to say he is having his way. Brethren, let us change all this, and live a full life in Christ, in prayer, worship and fellowship . . . "The effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James 5:16) How strongly do we believe this?

Andrew Sharpe, Newtongrange.

## SERMON ILLUSTRATION

Illustrations have been compared to the barbs that fix the arrow to the target. But it is to be remembered that barbs alone are useless. An archer would be poorly off if he had nothing in his quiver but arrow-heads or feathers. For an illustration to be useful or successful, there must be *something* to be illustrated. A sermon made up of anecdotes and flowers is quite as deficient as a sermon of the driest abstractions.

Cheever

Illustrations, however beautiful, are dangerous if not employed with care. They may

gratify without conveying instruction. When in excess, they become a mere diorama of illustration, leaving gratified curiosity and weariness behind. Superior elocution can do much, but a heavyweight of adornment will enfeeble the strongest. A multiplication of beauties neither helps the beautiful nor the useful. The choicest tulip-bed in richest bloom loses its attractions if strewed over with buttercups and daisies, and occasionally the tree covered with blossom fails to produce the richest fruit.

Anon

As I was once endeavouring to explain to a class of children *the nature of faith*, I told the familiar story of a child on shipboard, from whom a pet monkey snatches his cap and darts with it up into the rigging. The little fellow makes after him, climbing higher and higher, till at last the sailors, to their horror, see him far up at a point where he is going dizzy. He is just about to pitch headlong to the deck. His father called up from the cabin, shouts to him to leap out into the water as his only hope. The child hesitates, but finally trusting his father's wisdom, makes the tremendous leap, and is brought up by the sailors safely. One little hearer in the class, as I was rendering the story as vividly as possible, seemed much impressed, and sat deeply thinking while I tried to make the application. The truth seemed to have taken hold of him. "A hopeful case," I thought. At last, when he could hold down the ferment in him no longer, and I turned to hear his question, he asked, breathlessly. "Well - but - what became of the monkey? It was, in his teacher, the old blunder repeated, *of making the illustration more impressive than the illustrated truth.*

G.B. Wilcox.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

Feb. 2	2 Kings 4:8-37	Mark 5:21-43
Feb. 9	Deut. 2:1-7	Mark 6:1-13
Feb. 16	Esther 5	Mark 6:14-29
Feb. 23	2 Kings 4:38-44	Mark 6:30-56

### A DEAD GIRL AND A SICK WOMAN

In Mark 5:21-43 we read of Jesus healing the woman with an issue of blood and raising from the dead the daughter of Jairus, one of the rulers of the synagogue. His power over disease and death was proof positive that He was the Son of the Living God.

The importance of these two miracles is seen from the fact they are recorded in all three of the Synoptic gospels. Mark's record contains the most details. We read: "**And immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up: and she felt in her**

**body that she was healed of that plague"** (5:29). "**And immediately the girl arose and walked . . .**" (5:42). Healing was instantaneous. No wonder there was astonishment in the second case!

I admire Jairus. He is described as "**one of the rulers of the synagogue"** (5:22). His duties would have included the conducting of the synagogue worship and the selection of those were to lead the prayer, read the Scriptures, and preach in it. But he believed absolutely that Jesus could heal his daughter. Even when news came of her death, Jesus encouraged him by saying: "**Now don't be afraid, just go on believing!**" (5:36, Phillips). His faith was rewarded.

I admire the woman also. She believed that just a touch of Jesus' garment would cure her completely. She was proved right. Her touch was different from all others because it was a touch of faith. Herbert Lockyer has written: "Hers was

not faith without a touch, or a touch without faith. Believing, she appropriated and was healed." Surely she always cherished her debt to the Man of Galilee.

#### **A PROPHET WITHOUT HONOUR**

Jesus found a lack of faith in "his own country" (6:1) or Nazareth. Knowledge of His family and His humble background was a real barrier for them. In fact, things were so bad that the people took offence at Him; so much so that **"He could there do no mighty work save that He laid hands upon a few sick folk and healed them"** (6:5). Jesus said: **"Only in his home town, among his relatives and in his own house, is a prophet without honour"** (6:4, N.I.V.). I like the comments of James Macknight on this verse: "This expression is proverbial, signifying, that those who possess extraordinary endowments, are no where in less request than among their relations and acquaintances. The reason is, superior merit never fails to be envied, and envy commonly turns the knowledge it has of persons some way or other to their disadvantage. Jesus therefore finding His townsmen the same stubborn, incorrigible, wicked people as ever, He did not perform many miracles among them."

#### **JOHN THE BAPTIST BEHEADED**

I have been thinking about John the Baptist a lot recently. He was one of the great men of God. It must be noted that the God whom I love and serve allowed this outstanding servant to be beheaded in a prison by a wicked ruler. King Herod had arrested him because he had disapproved of his relationship with Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. But Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. Herodias was otherwise-minded. Eventually she got her way as a result of an unwise oath by Herod to her daughter. We read: **"Whatsoever you shall ask of me, I will give it to you, unto the half of my kingdom, And she**

**went forth and said unto her mother, 'What shall I ask?' And she said: 'The head of John the Baptist' "** (6:23-24).

Herod was forever haunted by this deed. When he later heard about the marvellous works of Jesus he truly thought that John the Baptist had been raised from the dead (6:16). I have no doubt that John will be in heaven and Herod is doomed to that other state. In other words, the tables are turned in eternity. I take great comfort from the fact that God will sort everything out in eternity. Justice is not always done or seen to be done on earth, but it will be done in the world beyond.

#### **JESUS FEEDS THE FIVE THOUSAND**

Actually, Jesus fed more than five thousand in this incident because Matthew records: **"And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children"** (14:21). Again, it is a miracle recorded in all three of the Synoptic gospels. And what a miracle. Five loaves and two fishes turned into a feast! Jesus performed it out of compassion for the people. I note that when **"they did all eat they were filled"** (6:42). Jesus can do the same for us today spiritually. He, and only He, can fully satisfy the hungerings of the soul.

#### **JESUS WALKS ON THE WATER**

We read in this portion of Scripture of Jesus going up a mountainside to pray (6:46). Prayer was vital to Jesus. Prayer, therefore, should be vital to us. Someone once remarked: "Prayer is not so much an emergency appeal in need as it is a continuing and unbroken conversation and fellowship with God." M. Friendlander once commented: "Prayer has the salutary effect on purifying, refining and ennobling our heart. It banishes evil thoughts and thus saves us much pain and sorrow." Another unknown author has written: "God will not do for us what we can do for

ourselves. Prayer is the co-operation of our effort with the grace of God."

We also read of Jesus walking on the Sea of Galilee in full view of His disciples, who were struggling to row a boat at the time because of an adverse wind (6:47-49). No wonder they were terrified at the sight (6:50). He dispelled their fears by making Himself known and by climbing into the boat, which immediately caused the wind to die down (6:50-51). Verse 52 is interesting: "**For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.**" They appear to have forgotten for the time-being that the Master had, only a few hours before, fed the thousands. Albert Barnes has commented: ". . . they were slow to perceive His power. They did not quickly learn, as they ought to have done, that He had *all* power and could therefore allay the storm."

### MANY MORE HEALED

Word had spread that Jesus was in Gennesaret. The people knew that He could cleanse all manner of disease: thus the placing of the sick in the market-places of the villages and the towns in the region (6:56). We read: "**They begged Him to let them touch even the edge of His cloak, and all who touched Him were healed**" (6:56, N.I.V.). What an impact He must have had on this population! I often wonder how they felt later on, when they heard of His crucifixion in Jerusalem. His death must have produced great distress in those who believed on Him, whether openly or secretly. Everything Jesus said and did pointed to the unavoidable conclusion that He was the promised Messiah. He was guilty of nothing. He was the innocent one, the righteous one, the Son of the Living God. Dear reader, he is worthy to demand your life, your soul, your all.

Ian S. Davidson,  
Motherwell.

## TEST YOUR BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE

1. Where did God send Jonah?
2. On which mount did Solomon build the temple?
3. Which prophet was less wise than his donkey?
4. How many steps did Solomon's throne have?
5. At what age did Saul become King ?
6. Where was Absalom born?
7. Whom did Mary visit after Gabriel's message to her?
8. Where did Quirinius govern?
9. In which city were Paul and Silas imprisoned?
10. For how long did Paul, stay in Corinth to teach God's word?

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## GHANA APPEAL

The following report arrived too late for last month's "Scripture Standard" from Ghana.

Allow me to deviate from tradition in this report. I am not putting forth any direct appeal in this issue. It is not because we don't need anything. I want to tell our numerous supporters of progress on the evangelist front concerning the Churches recently. The second half of the year has seen the Churches move into top gear in propagating the Gospel of Christ, the evangelists and preachers have come together mobilising members into this laudable action programme. The results are encouraging. Our Lord is blessing the work with tens of souls being added steadily. New grounds are being surveyed for new congregations to be established in the new year. May you all join us in prayers for the harvest is truly plenteous but the labourers are few. We thank you for your continued material supports without which we could not have come thus far, we

pray that the Lord rewards you bountifully. It is sad to inform you concerning the home-calling of one of our stalwarts of the evangelist programme. Brother Kodwo Mensah died on 6th November, 1996. We have really lost him. But Christ has gained him. Pray for the widow, two year old daughter, 3 sons and a baby which is expected.

Wisdom Kpehor.

I would also like to inform the readers that today (9th December, 1996) I have placed an order for 324 health books for adults and children. This should complete the task that we set out to do on returning from Ghana to send books to every congregation that we have been assisting. When the latest order is split and sent, 749 books will have been distributed to 40 congregations. Thank you for this response. As we begin a New Year it would be good if we could set a target to complete the meeting places at Odumasi, Patriensa and Nobewam, which are modest in size. Koforidua and Accra are much larger.

Graeme Pearson.

Please make cheques payable to Graeme Pearson (Ghana Appeal), and send

to G. Pearson, 13 Fairways, Dunfermline, Fife, KY12 0DU, Scotland. Tel.: 01383 728624.

## COMING EVENTS

(A note for your diary)

### TRANENT ANNUAL SOCIAL

15th March, 1997

at Loch Centre

Details later.

10. Fifteen months (Acts 18:11).
9. Philippi (Acts 16:12,22-23).
8. Syria (Luke 2:2).
- (Luke 1:39-40).
7. Elizabeth and Zechariah
6. Hebron (2 Sam. 3:2-3).
5. Thirty (1 Sam. 3:2-3).
4. Six (1 Kings 10:19-20).
3. Balaam (2 Peter 2:15-16).
2. Mount Moriah (2 Chron. 3:1).
1. Nineveh (Jonah 1:2).

### ANSWERS

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