

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## RENEWAL OF A RIGHT SPIRIT

This morning's news that a six-year old boy, in the USA, took a loaded revolver to school in his pocket, and later shot dead a schoolmate because she had annoyed him, has, understandably, shocked the world. Whatever next, we wonder? Such a thing would have been unthinkable when I was at school. Where are we headed? Here in Britain, we are still reeling from the news that a very charming and popular doctor has been given a life-sentence for calmly murdering fifteen of his patients, and is strongly suspected of having murdering several hundred others. Also this week, school-teachers have been advised to take courses in self-defence in order to protect themselves from attack by unruly pupils, and pupils as young as five years are now commonly expelled from school as being ungovernable. What is the world coming to?

Many teachers say they can't retire soon enough, while others are off sick with stress and nervous breakdowns. It used to be that small children "should be seen and not heard" but nowadays many homes are ruled by the children: and they are certainly seen and heard. There was a time we might reprimand a small boy for throwing a toffee wrapper on the pavement, but not now: we know we would receive a mouthful of very unparliamentary language, and probably a kick on the leg. How could the country get into such a state, we ask?

Man needs to be controlled and if he can't (or won't) control himself, he has to be controlled by a source outwith himself, by laws and law enforcement officers. This has been from time immemorial but in Britain right now the laws are weak and law enforcement even weaker. Most criminals have an excellent chance of escaping detection, but, if caught will receive a very light sentence - even a few hours "community service". This situation is obvious to all, and rubs off on our youth: and is now rubbing off on schoolchildren (especially in schools where teachers are not allowed to retaliate against unruly pupils). The schoolchildren of today are the adults of tomorrow. What hope then, for the future? Can man, so sophisticated and advanced in technology, improve himself morally and socially? What hope is there for this? Indeed, what actual progress has man ever made?

## HUMAN PROGRESS

I suppose we all have our own ideas as to what constitutes human progress. Man has come a long way since the days of lurking around in caves, making flint arrow-heads and rubbing two sticks together to make fire. If we were to be asked what discovery or development we considered to have been the most telling in man's progress, I suppose we might all give differing replies. Some might think that space-

travel has been man's crowning achievement, while others might think that the discovery of electricity; or radio waves; X-rays; anaesthetics; the telephone; discovery of bacteria; combustion engine; steam power; etc. etc. has been responsible for man's best good. Some might suggest items closer to their hearts, i.e. the abolition of the outside toilet; coal miners might suggest "Pit Baths". In the middle-ages even royalty had a bath only two or three times a year. Truly up until this year of 2000 man has certainly 'pulled himself up by the bootstraps' in the realms of engineering, plumbing, architecture, medicine, agriculture and the general sciences.

However, if we were to strip away man's advances in technology and science we would find, I suggest, that **man, in himself, has made no progress at all.** *Man is still the same as he always was,* with his propensity to good and his tendency to evil - both just as strong as ever they were. We still have the forces of good and evil at work in the world. The servants of God are still vastly outnumbered by the angels of darkness. Man finds ready access to Universities and other places of learning but we still have, in the world, men quick to swell the ranks of the I.R.A. and enjoy the carnage of innocent little children out Christmas shopping. We still have the Mafia, the Red Brigade, the Ku Klux Klan and assorted groups of like ilk. On a larger scale we still have wars and oppressions in nearly every part of the globe to say nothing of the attempted genocide of entire races and nations. Recently, the world stood back in horrified disbelief at the rape, slaughter, plunder and murder that had become part of daily life in Bosnia, and the latest twist in human progress: "Ethnic Cleansing". Human progress? We still have, in cities around the world, citizens who are scared to go out after dark, and we have people being 'mugged' in the streets, even in broad daylight. The prisons, in Britain at least, are all bulging at the seams. Things are such, in the world, that people of a nervous disposition should avoid watching even simple News Bulletins on TV.

#### SOLOMON'S VIEW

It would seem then, that any progress man has made has been largely of a *technical nature*, and that morally, and spiritually, man has made no true gains at all. Instead of making any true advance, man has simply been travelling in circles. A child on a rocking-horse may create plenty of activity but never ever gets anywhere. Similarly a child on a merry-go-round covers many miles but likewise goes nowhere. This, perhaps, describes man's furious activities over the centuries - much agonising and much debate but no noticeable improvement in character. This was true of mankind even in Solomon's day. In fact, in *the Book of Ecclesiastes*, Solomon tried, I suggest, with all his great resources of wisdom, to grapple with the problem of man's apparent inability to set his feet on higher ground. We notice that Solomon takes a rather pessimistic view of life in the *Ecclesiastes*, and we constantly encounter his exclamation of "**Vanity, vanity, all is vanity**". All activity seemed to be vain and pointless. There was a repetitiveness about man's daily, weekly and annual pursuits that resembled a going around in circles. In the opening verses of the book Solomon reminds us of the regularity with which one generation rises as another fades away. Even the sun sets out each day but returns again to where it began. The rivers run to the sea, evaporate and return again to the hills as rain, in a great cycle. Each generation of men are captive within their own environment and age, and have little remembrance or effect upon generations past or those yet to come. Solomon thus speculates upon what gives man satisfaction, what 'makes him tick' and how man *is likely to profit in any real sense*. He postulates upon the merits of riches against poverty; wisdom against folly; ease against honest toil. Solomon was in a unique position to comment upon these because he was, himself, fabulously rich and extremely wise. He enumerates the

various roads in life a man might take and the consequences thereof. Indeed Solomon embarked upon some of those roads himself; even the Epicurean pursuit of sensual pleasure. Man's capacity for such pleasure is insatiable, **"For the eye is never satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing"**. Wisdom is preferable to foolishness but even with wisdom comes a proportionate measure of grief and anxiety - for only "ignorance is bliss". Perhaps, suggests Solomon, true satisfaction is to be found alone in honest toil, in the humble artisan who stands back to admire the work of his own hands. Certainly creative people seem always to be happy. However, at the end of life's day, muses Solomon, man goes to his long home, whether rich or poor, whether wise or foolish. The grave is a great leveller. Man must leave behind his riches, or his wisdom, or his skill, or his knowledge. Such is the dilemma facing thoughtful men, what road should they take through life? Should they seek fame, or riches, or wisdom, or a reputation or skill? Has the human animal power within himself to make true progress? **What are Solomon's conclusions? "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth . . . fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man"**. (Ecc. 12:1-13).

### CAN MAN DIRECT HIS OWN STEPS?

Man has, of a long time, tried to control himself through Law and Order. Law, however, can but *define* sin and crime, it can in no wise reform the lawbreaker. Even the Mosaic Law had this inherent limitation. Few observe God's basic law, **"To love God and to love our neighbours as ourselves"**. There is no shortage of legal prohibitions but neither is there any reduction in our crime waves. Notwithstanding dire warnings from Ecologists the pollution of the atmosphere and rivers goes unabated, as does the constant destruction of jungle rain-forests; as does the killing of animals (like whales and elephants) to the point of total extinction. *Human greed* takes scant regard of what will be left to future generations. Man can not *legislate* his own moral improvement? He can be changed only by some power well outwith himself. We must be changed - we must be 'born again'.

Neither will man be changed fundamentally by any **political initiative**, of whatever colour. Man's circumstances and living conditions might well be changed, but man will remain basically the same. **Revolution and social upheaval** have been resorted to in every century (and we had another bloodless coup only the other day in Nigeria) but the continual necessity for such drastic measures *merely proves* that man changes not. The Russian peasants were, perhaps, rescued from the cruel and indifferent Tsars by the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, but they are, perhaps, presently subjected to just as real an oppression at the hands of those who killed the Tsars. A change of government is very often just a change of tyranny. Over the centuries endless millions have been slaughtered in the name of Social and Political Reform, and to what end? Think, too, of the millions who died only a few years ago because Hitler's Germany considered itself the 'Master Race' and attempted the genocide of not only the Jews but other cultures. The world will always need 'Freedom Fighters' because it regularly produces tyrants. Man is not aware that "The Truth" can make him free (John 8:32) and can make him "Free indeed".

Jeremiah, a long time ago, summed it all up for us when he said, **"O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"**. (Jer. 10:23).

### CLEAN HANDS - PURIFIED HEART

2,000 years ago Jesus said, **"Out of the heart proceed all evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit,**

lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these things come from within and defile a man". (Mark 7:21). Here, in one comprehensive and succinct statement Jesus puts his finger on the spot. *The heart* of man is his stumbling block to any moral, or spiritual progress. His heart must be changed, it must be renewed. The only physician who can accomplish this great renewal is the Great Physician, through the gospel, by His word, and by His Spirit. Such a change is not thrust upon us - man must take the initiative. James says that men (even Christians) must not only '*cleanse their hands*' but also '*purify their hearts*' (James 4:8). First man must be '*cut to the heart*' (as at Pentecost) by the realisation of his own wretchedness, and then he must '*obey from the heart*', that form of doctrine (the gospel) delivered unto him (by Christ's apostles) (Rom. 6:17). This is the only long term hope for sad humanity. Man must "**Trust in the Lord with all his heart, and lean not unto his own understanding**". "**Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me,**" was the prayer of the Psalmist and it must also be the earnest desire of all mankind before we can ever hope for a better world. Jesus brought revolution to the world (without bloodshed) and his doctrine has turned the world 'upside down' or perhaps 'right way up'. The best Social Reformers (indeed nearly all Social Reformers) have been prompted and motivated by Christian principles.

#### CONCLUSION

In short, modern man, while making great inroads into scientific knowledge, is still as backward as the cave man in the matter of morality. And Jeremiah was right, of course, when he stated that "**it is not in man that walketh, to direct his steps**". Man can't help himself, and must rely on outside aid; from His Maker. Christ came into the world to give men "**the Truth**" and the "truth can make them free". The world's ills would be cured overnight if we adopted the golden rule: i.e. "**To love God and our neighbour as ourselves**". And not only to love our neighbours, but to love our enemies. Thus, the teachings of Christ are the world's only hope.

The state of vandalism amongst the very young is merely a question of the chickens coming home to roost. For years many children have been raised on a regular diet of TV violence and they, with society in general, have become quite brutalised and completely insensitive to human suffering. They have also suffered from a lack of meaningful religious instruction in school and an absence of "old fashioned" Sunday School. Society sows the wind and reaps the whirlwind.

We are inclined always to look at man's problems in a global context and think of progress in terms of large numbers, but Jesus spent much time in speaking to individuals, and before *the world* can improve *individuals* in the world must improve. The gospel is not aimed at groups, but at individuals. Jesus knows that if individuals improve, the world will improve. Even *congregations of the Lord's Church* are only as good as the individual members. Thus, any reform, any improvement in the world at large, or in the Church in particular, must begin with individuals: that is, with YOU and with me.

Yes, we can see what the world has come to. But see what has come to the world? Christ the Saviour.

EDITOR

## GOOD NEWS THAT MUST BE TOLD

In the early chapters of Acts we read of the fantastic growth of Jesus' new Church. In Acts the 8th chapter the members of that Jerusalem congregation were scattered from the city by persecution, as the Christians took flight into surrounding Judea and

Samaria. Luke records "they that were scattered went everywhere preaching the Word." (Acts 8:4).

All of this was after the apostles had suffered temporary imprisonment for their witness of the resurrection. It was after Stephen had been brutally murdered for his testimony. Now a general persecution began led by an intense young Pharisee named Saul.

Yet so good was the good news of the gospel that these Christians continued to tell it despite persecution at home and resistance abroad. So good was the good news that the early Church continued to proclaim the message of Jesus till it had been carried to the whole world (Col. 1:23).

Good news by its very nature must be told. There is something that compels us to share with others those things that are truly joyous to us. The news is shared because it's good and in turn it's good because we have shared it.

It is the hope of every committed Christian to duplicate that "grass fire" evangelism that took the gospel into all the world despite Jewish and Roman persecution. One doesn't have to be a pessimist, however, to admit we are falling far behind in that task. This, despite the committed efforts of many mission projects throughout the world, and the oft and forthright reminders by our evangelists of our personal responsibility to the Great Commission.

### SHARING PERSONAL JOY

In the New Testament we see that personal evangelism was the sharing of a personal joy, rather than perfecting a new method. Certainly, any tool we can use to help us teach another is good and we need reminders of our responsibility, but the fundamental question of motivation in preaching and sharing our faith has to be because it means something to us. The simplest method is simply fulfilling that motivation.

In Acts we see a compulsion to share. Peter and John, after being warned by the Sanhedrin to speak no more about Jesus, said, "**We cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard**" (Acts 4:20). The Jerusalem Church prayed for boldness that they might "**speak Thy Word with all confidence**" (Acts 4:29).

May I suggest that our problem, today, may not be so much in failing to feel the weight of the Great Commission but in our failure to **feel the uplift** of the Gospel. We may not be telling it because the Gospel has ceased to be "good news" to us. If the good news by its very nature must be told then it has ceased to be good or it has ceased to be news.

### PSALM 51

I find God's plan for personal evangelism in Psalm 51. In this text David expresses his anguish for the sin he has committed. He recognises the righteous judgement of God and pleads for realised forgiveness and restored fellowship.

Note for a moment verses 10-13: "**Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Thy presence. And do not take Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Thy Salvation. And sustain me with a willing spirit.**"

After requesting this renewal and a restored joy of salvation and willing spirit he continues: "**Then I will teach transgressors Thy ways, And sinners will be converted to Thee.**"

David saw that when forgiveness has taken place and a sense of joy in salvation was there again, **then** he would be ready to teach and convert.

### THREE THINGS NEEDED

In following David's petition may I suggest our need for three things as we attempt

to restore New Testament evangelism: (1) **A greater sorrow for sin.** Truly, in the 20th century we have lost our sense of sin and remorse that leads to genuine repentance. James tells us that part of that drawing near to God experience is to **"Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom"** (James 4:9).

(2) If we have felt the weight and despair of sin we shall surely **feel the relief and joy** in sins forgiven. Imagine an imperishable inheritance more precious than gold (or the winning lottery ticket) reserved in heaven for you (See 1 Peter 1:1-8). But we don't have to imagine; it's ours, if we are in Him and can therefore, **"greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory"** (1 Peter 1:8). "The Good News" is good news.

Many of us in our culture find things close to us often hard to talk about. The gospel is precious I'm sure to most of us, but we have not yet found a handle on that joy part.

(3) We need a greater sense of **sharing our faith.** When we've sorrowed and now rejoice, when we've been blind but now see, surely it's a natural thing to go and tell others **"what great things the Lord has done for you and how He had mercy on you"** (Mark 5:19).

When our faith becomes a joy to live it will become a joy to share. It will not merely be a memorisation of key scriptures and a outlining of certain steps to a prospect, but rather the telling of both the truth of God's Word and the reality of that truth in our lives and what it all means to us.

May I suggest that we start by beginning to share that faith with each other and allow our worship and other times together to become celebrations of that joy we have in common. How can we preach the good news to the world and be mute on the glad tidings when with each other! If we can't share it with a brother who can we share it with?

How good is the good news to you?

S. MAY

## TEARS THAT STARTED A REVIVAL

In Nehemiah chapter 1 we have the account of how Nehemiah met one of his brethren from Judah and asked how things were there. What he heard started a revival in Nehemiah and eventually among his own brethren and the king of Persia.

What Nehemiah heard was that the people of Judah were poor and suffering. Their neighbours were hard on them and showed them no respect. The wall of Jerusalem had big gaps in it so that it really was no protection to its inhabitants. The temple stood no more; there wasn't even a foundation left to build on. This tells us somewhat of the spiritual climate there. When Nehemiah heard this, verse 3 says that he **"sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven"**. All the man's devotion to his people was manifested in his grief as he heard the sad story. His true patriotism lay in his recognition of the relationship between his people and God and in his carrying the burden to God in prayer. There is something about when tears and prayers are joined together that gets the job done.

Nehemiah's tears are not because he is gazing upon the corpse-littered streets of a city that has been gutted by war. His tears were not the tears of a criminal who is being forcibly dragged to the scaffold to pay with his life for evil he had done. Nor were his the tears of a child that had been chastised by his father because he had disobeyed him. Nor were they the forced tears of a scene in a drama. Nehemiah's tears were because of *an apostasy of his people*. These tears started one of the greatest revivals of all time. It all started when Nehemiah "sat down and wept".

Look at the people Nehemiah wept for. They were the favoured of God. Their history was written on the golden pages of conquest. Their feet paced the basin of the Red Sea. Their armies watched fortified cities crumble to dust in their advance. Their song had been: **“Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power; Thy might, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy”**. Theirs was the tabernacle - holy place - covenant - oracles - promises. Now! Dry rot of apostasy had set in. A mighty nation had sinned - now she counted the wages (Rom. 6:23); but too late! This tragic account was like coals of fire in Nehemiah’s heart. Here is where the story begins: Prayer that ends in power! Fasting that ends in feasting! Grief that ends in glory! This is the story of a revival that begins, where all must, in tears!

### POWER OF TEARS

James tells us that the fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much (James 5:16). When a righteous heart overflows in supplication, then all heaven gathers to attention. When trembling fingers drip with holy concern, then mercy and grace descend. Because of pure desire of an obedient heart, power and wisdom to meet every problem involved was given. Such was the prayer of Nehemiah. So must it ever be or never be!

Have you ever thought of the relationship of great men of God and tears? David reigned during the golden age of Israel. The heathen were given to Israel for their inheritance. One ingredient seemed so necessarily a part of the mixture that David stressed repeatedly in his Psalms:

**“My tears have been my meat day and night”**. (Ps. 42:3).

**“I water my couch with my tears”**. (Ps. 6:6).

It was said of Jesus **“and when he was come near, he beheld the city (Jerusalem) and wept over it”** (Luke 19:41). The greatest evangelist of all discovered this secret.

**“Serving the Lord, with all lowliness of mind, and with tears, and with trials which befell me by the plots of the Jews”**. (Acts 20:19).

**“I ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears”**. (Acts 20:31).

**“For many walk, of whom I told you often and not tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ”**. (Phil. 3:183).

**“I wrote unto you with many tears”** (2 Cor. 2:4).

The tears of Paul melted the opposition and paved a blazing highway around the world.

God heard their voice weeping and saw their tears running down the cheeks of Israel and promised **“. . . and they shall come again from the land of the enemy”** (Jer. 31:15,16). Then Jesus attended a feast in Simon’s house and a sinful woman came in and washed the feet of Jesus with her tears and wiped them dry with her hair. When Jesus was criticised for allowing this known sinful woman to do this to him, he reminded Simon how he was the guest in his home and he hadn’t even offered him water to wash his feet in, and said **“. . . but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head”** (Luke 7:47, 50). Then in Mark 9 a father brought his epileptic boy to Jesus saying, **“With tears, I believe, help thou my unbelief”** (Mark 9:24). Jesus healed the boy.

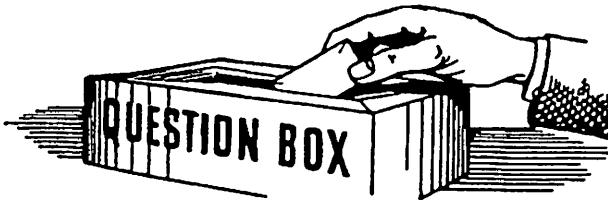
### SEAL OF SINCERITY

Everywhere people are crying, **“Where are our converts? where are all those that have been baptized for the remission of sins? Where are all those that churches carry on their membership roll?”** Let’s answer with a question: **“Where are the tears?”** Dry-eyed Christianity lacks appeal. A conspicuous lack of tears betrays the fact that our message is all of the head and none of the heart. Nehemiah’s tears supplemented to tell the story of God’s faithfulness toward those that **“sow in tears”** (Ps126:5, 6). Somehow there is

in human tears a force that knocks at the very gates of heaven and pleads at the throne of God. No pious prayer or sermon can match tears. Tears bear a message straight from the heart of man to the heart of God, whether burning on cheeks of David confessing his sins, or scolding the palms of Peter who has denied the Lord.

Precious to the Father is that river whose fountainhead is the broken heart of a weeping saint. It is a tide that sweeps before it the faithful in setting up the gates, rebuilding the walls, establishing that righteousness which exalts the nation. Innumerable lips have made request, but there is that in tears which demands of God an answer. We need to let the gospel glitter anew against the background of sincerity. Remember the precious promise: "I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears, behold, I will heal thee" (2 Kings 20:5; Isa. 38:5).

K. MARSHALL




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Conducted by  
Frank Worgan

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*"In Leviticus 16:16 we see a direct link with Hebrews 9:23. The question is: What are 'the heavenly things'? And why should they require purifying, being in heaven?"*

Here is the verse to which reference is made in the question:

*"It was therefore necessary that the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with (or by) these rites; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these," (RSV).*

The 9th chapter of the letter to the Hebrews refers to the Tabernacle and the animal sacrifices which were offered according to the Mosaic Law.

I might say, in passing, that it is worth noting that all illustrations used by the writer of this letter, as he deals with the subject of Worship, are based on the Tabernacle system and not on the Temple. This is because;

(1) Whilst the Tabernacle was built by Moses in obedience to the *direct* will, plan and command of God Himself, the Temple was built according to the plan of David, under the *permissive* will of God.

(2) A Tabernacle - a moveable structure - was more appropriate to the needs of a pilgrim people, than was a Temple. The replacing of the Tabernacle with the more permanent Temple indicated that Israel had lost sight of her 'pilgrim' character.

#### THE INTRODUCTION

In chapter 9:1-10, the writer introduces a discussion of things with which his readers would undoubtedly be familiar; namely, the furnishings of the Tabernacle and the sacrifices that were offered in it.

He is careful to point out, however, that everything included in worship offered according to the Covenant enacted at Sinai, was merely preparatory and represented or portrayed, something to come later which would accomplish what had been impossible to achieve under the Mosaic system.

The frequent references to '*blood*' are significant. That word is mentioned 12 times in this chapter alone. The reason for this is given by the writer when he states that, under the Law, '*almost everything is purified by blood, and without the shedding of blood there would be no remission of sins*' (v.22).



### THE PROBLEM

It is this reference to 'purification' that is the crux of the question which we are requested to consider.

We have no difficulty in following the writer's reasoning when he refers to the purification, or cleansing, of the Tabernacle and everything and everyone connected with it, because we recognise that this cleansing was necessary for the purpose of sanctification.

This was the way in which people and things were made fit for the service of God.

It is here, however, that we are reminded of the vast difference between what was effected by the blood offered in the Tabernacle by the *Aaronic* High Priest, and that which was offered by the High Priest who was '*after the style of Melchizedek*', the Lord Jesus Himself.

The Tabernacle and the High Priest who served in it, along with the sacrifices he offered, were only copies of the '*true*' or '*real*' sanctuary, which is Heaven itself, and of the True High Priest, who offered blood, which *really* took away sin.

That word '*copies*' is the word '*hupodeigmata*' and means that they were '*imperfect representations of the real*'. As symbols, or types, they conveyed a sense of the '*true*', but what they were and what they accomplished, fell far short of the reality.

The meaning of the passage therefore, is that under the Mosaic system, God was willing to allow the High Priest to enter the Holy of Holies and approach Him on behalf of the people, as he bore the blood of an animal sacrifice which was, in itself, a confession of their guilt before Him. But Heaven itself, the true Holy of Holies, could not be entered on that basis. A better sacrifice was required. That better, effective sacrifice was that of the blood of Christ Himself.

We need not see a difficulty in the use of '*sacrifices*' in v.23, and '*sacrifice*' in v.26, because the word '*sacrifices*' relates to those that were offered on the Day of Atonement, which is the occasion referred to in v.6, whilst the '*sacrifice*' mentioned in v.26, is the one, true act of atonement, accomplished by the shedding of the blood of Christ.

### TRUE PURIFICATION

The writer implies that the use of animal blood served an important purpose as the means of ritual cleansing. In verse 13 we are told that such sacrifices were effective in '*purifying the flesh*', and v.22 states that '*almost everything*' was '*purified with blood*'.

But such sacrifices were ineffective in the infinitely more important matter of the cleansing of the heart and conscience. This is stated in v.9, where we read that they were sacrifices '*which cannot perfect the conscience of the worshipper*'.

What we see here, therefore, is a reference to the contrast between the *physical* (bodily) *cleansing*, for which the Tabernacle and the animal sacrifices were sufficient, and the *spiritual cleansing*, that of the conscience, or the spiritual side of Man's being, which needed the 'better sacrifice'.

The writer states that the 'heavenly' or 'spiritual' things, are only cleansed by the sacrifice of Christ Himself.

Verses 13-14 appear, to me, to provide the answer to our question:

*"For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through Eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God purge our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God".*

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## “CHRIST, OUR ADVOCATE”

(1 JOHN 1:8-2:2)

In John's day false teachers known as Gnostics were troubling the Churches of Christ, Gnostics derived their name from *gnosis* the Greek word for "knowledge." They taught that they had superior knowledge to that of other Christians due to a special enlightenment which they had experienced. Further, under the influence of Eastern religions, they considered all matter evil. Only the spirit was regarded as good. Since the human body is material, Gnostics reasoned, it is evil. It therefore mattered little what one did with his body. He could commit all manner of immorality with it and yet maintain purity of spirit. The logical consequence of such reasoning was the denial of sin or the possibility of a Christian committing sin and a rejection of the need for the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. In the passages under consideration and its broader context, the aged apostle John refutes this erroneous and deadly heresy.

The spiritual posterity of Gnostics can be found today in groups such as Christian Scientists who deny the reality of sin, and certain Holiness groups who affirm that Christians are incapable of sinning. It is also found in some Calvinistic groups who, in order to bolster their doctrine of "once saved, always saved", affirm that whatever a saved person does with his body does not affect his spirit at all. He can, if once saved, actually engage in acts of immorality and never lose his salvation.

### DENIAL OF SIN

Some were saying that they had no sin (1-8). Sin here is spoken of in an abstract sense, not in the sense of specific acts committed in violation of God's will. John said that two consequences stem from such a denial of sin: (1) "**We deceive ourselves,**" and (2) "**The truth is not in us.**" It is sad for a person to be deceived by others but sadder still that one would deceive himself. Those who say they have no sin actually fly in the face of the facts to the contrary. They have persuaded themselves that they are sinless. For one to lie to himself is for him to be utterly devoid of the truth.

### CONFESSION OF SIN

One must acknowledge that he is the sinner and confess his sins, specific acts of disobedience, to the Lord (1-9). The pioneer preachers used to emphasize that God has two laws of pardon, one for the alien sinner which requires faith, repentance, confession of Christ, and baptism in order to the remission of sins, and one for those who have obeyed the gospel thereby being added by the Lord to His Church but who have wandered back into sin. This "second law of pardon" requires repentance and confession in order to receive God's forgiveness (Acts 8:12,13; 18-24). If an erring Christian in penitence comes to God confessing his sins, he has the assurance that the same blood of Jesus which washed his sins away in baptism will now cleanse his sins committed as a Christian.

To deny that one has sinned is to call God a liar, for God in His word has warned numerous times that a child of His can sin and fall from grace (1-10). Please note the following passages which clearly teach the possibility of apostasy (1 Cor. 10:12; Gal. 5:4; 1 Tim. 1:19,20; Heb. 6:4-6; 2 Pet. 2:20-22).

### CHRIST OUR SINLESS ADVOCATE

John the aged apostle writes to Christians, his beloved children in the faith, and pleads that they keep themselves from sin, yet knowing the frailty of human nature, he is aware of the possibility that they can and may sin (2:1). In that case he points them to our Advocate, Jesus Christ. An Advocate is a lawyer who represents one on trial in a court of law, He stands before the judge to plead his client's case. Jesus, not Mary, nor any human being, be he called pope, priest, preacher, or president, stands between God and the Christian. Jesus is our Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5). He is our High Priest (Heb. 4:15).

He is Deity, yet has lived as a man and understands man's weaknesses and temptations. ". . . He ever liveth to make intercessions for them" (Heb. 7:25).

Not only is Christ our Advocate, He is also the propitiation for our sins (2:2). To propitiate means "to appease, to render favourable." By His atoning death, Jesus has taken away our sins, thus removing the barriers to fellowship with God. Jesus died not only for Christians but for the sins of the whole world. However, the benefits of this salvation are available only to those who comply with the conditions which He Himself has laid down (John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Matt. 10:32; Mark 16:16).

In the Church of the third and fourth centuries there arose a false teaching based on a misunderstanding of the purpose of baptism. Because baptism is for the remission of sins, some taught that if a Christian sinned following baptism, there was no more forgiveness for him. It is said that it was for this reason that the Emperor Constantine put off his baptism until the day before his death. Somehow believers in that time had missed the wonderful teaching of First John in this passage and did not avail themselves of the "second law of pardon."

As Christians, we are privileged indeed to have continual access to the cleansing blood of Jesus knowing that we can approach our Advocate and High Priest and find grace to help in time of need!

R. RUTHERFORD

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

May 7	Genesis 2:4-25	Revelation 22
May 14	Genesis 22:1-19	James 1
May 21	Joshua 2	James 2
May 28	1 Kings 3:1-15	James 3

### REVELATION CHAPTER 22

All great cities are built upon the banks of a river. London has the Thames; Paris the Seine; New York the Hudson; and Rome the Tiber. The New Jerusalem also has a river running through it. It is "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (22:1). We read: "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (22:2). Here is a river that will never be polluted. As we read these opening verses of chapter 22, we think of Milton's poem: *Paradise Regained*.

Jesus is given various titles in this chapter: "the Lamb" (1:3); "Alpha and Omega," "the Beginning and the End" and "the First and the Last" (13); "the Root and the Offspring of David" and "the Bright and Morning Star" (16); the "Lord Jesus" (20); and "Lord Jesus Christ" (21). A study of all His titles could prove a profitable exercise.

We hear a lot today about "human rights." But what rights on earth can compare with this one? "Blessed are they who do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter into the city" (14). We recall the words in the book of Genesis: "So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (3:24).

There is an interesting turn of phrase in this chapter. Three times we read: "the prophecy of this book" (7,10,18). However, in verse 19 we find: "the book of this prophecy." This is a clear indication that the book of Revelation is now about to be completed and added to the great canon of Scripture. The warn-

ing is clear: nothing is to be added or subtracted from the Revelation (18,19). The punishment is also clear.

The New Testament Scriptures end with these words: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." (21). The Old Testament Scriptures conclude with the words "curse" (Malachi 4:6). Is there a lesson here?

### THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

*Author:* "The most likely candidate is the James, who was Jesus' brother. He became a Christian when he saw the risen Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:7) and went on to become a leader in the Church at Jerusalem (Acts 12:17, 15:31ff; 21:18)." (The Lion Handbook of the Bible). (There has been much debate over James' identity.)

*Those Addressed:* "to the twelve scribes which are scattered abroad . . ." (1:1). It is obviously addressed to Christians with a Jewish background.

*Date:* uncertain.

*Outline of Contents:* "Salutation (1:1); Dealing with trials (1:2-4); Gaining wisdom (1:5-8); Assessing wealth (1:9-11); Recognising temptation (1:12-15); Ascribing all good to God (1:16-18); Hearing and doing (1:19-27); Discriminating (2:1-13); Faith working (2:14-26); Teaching with reticence and wisdom (3:1-18); Breaking with peace and loving the world (4:1-17); Accusing the rich (5:1-6); Waiting patiently for the Lord (5:7-11); Swearing forbidden (5:12); Applying spiritual principles (5:13-20)" (Ronald A. Ward).

*Comment:* "The epistle itself is entirely different in its complexion from all those in the sacred canon; the style and manner are more that of a Jewish prophet than a Christian apostle . . . Our blessed Lord is only mentioned twice in it, but it has nothing of His miracles or teaching, of His death or resurrection, nor of any redemption by Him. It begins without any apostolic salutation and ends without any apostolic benediction.

In short, had it not been for the two slight notices of our blessed Lord, we had not known it was the work of any Christian writer. It may be considered a sort of connecting link between Judaism and Christianity, as the ministry of John the Baptist was between the old covenant and the new. There is neither plan nor arrangement in it; but it contains many invaluable lessons which no serious person can read without profit." (Adam Clarke).

### KEY WORDS

I see a number of key words and phrases in these first three chapters of the epistle. First there is *faith*. What is faith? Faith implies reliance upon God and obedience to God. "Now it is true that faith is the belief of testimony, but it is not the mere mental assent to the veracity of that testimony. It goes far beyond this. It involves the surrender of self without reservation to Him who is the object of faith. Faith in Christ is a pledge of allegiance to Christ. Inherent in it is the idea of trust which leads to commitment, the utter abandonment of one's self to another in the full confidence that what He has promised He will do" (W. Carl Ketcherside). Abraham, the father of the faithful, is mentioned by James as an example of one whose faith was seen in action (2:21-24). Rahab is also given as an example (2:25). We are not saved by faith only; nor are we saved by works only. But we are saved by faith at work.

Our faith in God is not worth anything unless it is tried and tested. So God puts all His people to the test. We read: ". . . knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience" (1:3). *Patience* is another key word. In the Greek it is *hupomone*. John Chrysostom once described *hupomone* as "the queen of virtues." The word speaks of steadfast endurance and describes the man who never gives up and who never loses heart no matter the trials and tribu-

lations he might have to face in this world. **"Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him"** (1:12, N.I.V.).

*Wisdom* is a word that cannot be ignored in the letter. The Greek word for wisdom is *sophia*. Augustine said that *sophia* "pertains to the knowledge of eternal things" and Cicero said that "it is knowledge of things both human and divine . . . It is the chief of all the virtues." "*Sophia* is that ultimate knowledge which is nothing else than the knowledge of God. *Sophia* is the furthest reach of the human mind" (William Barclay). **"But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere"** (3:17, N.I.V.).

*Religion* is another important word in James' letter (1:26,27). It is a translation of the Greek word *threskeia* and signifies religion in its external aspect. As one commentator put it: "To James, real religion or worship did not lie in elaborate vestments or in magnificent music or in a carefully wrought service; it lay in the practical service of mankind and in the purity of one's own personal life."

We read in this epistle of "the perfect law of liberty" (1:25). How does this phrase square with the words of Paul when he wrote: **"for you are not under the law, but under grace?"** (Roms 6:14). What exactly is "the perfect law of liberty?" It cannot be the completed N.T. Scriptures because there was no compilation at the time. I see it as synonymous with the perfect life of Christ, whose example I must follow at all times. His was a life of love and love is the key to "the perfect law of liberty."

#### THE TONGUE

Who has written better than James on the subject of the power of language?

(3:1-12). Alexander Campbell once wrote: "No uninspired man has given such a picture of the power of human language, for good or for evil, as that drawn, in a few words, by the eloquent Apostle James. To that great instrument of speech he ascribes a transcendent potency . . . if the tongue is sometimes set on fire by hell, it is sometimes set on fire by heaven; and hence men are both blessed and cursed by the faculty of speech." Yes, there are two kinds of eloquence - the eloquence infernal and the eloquence supernal. Campbell himself had the latter in abundance. Jesus had it in perfection.

IAN S. DAVIDSON,  
Motherwell.

### TEST YOUR BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE

1. A prophet likened "all flesh" to this plant.
2. A navy brought these birds to king Solomon.
3. This animal spoke to his rider.
4. Jeremiah saw this tree budding.
5. Elijah hid beside this brook.
6. Who was Gideon's youngest son?
7. According to Acts, this woman was a doorkeeper.
8. Who was the chief man on the island of Malta?
9. Who came to Jesus by night?
10. Here Paul was called "Mercury" and Barnabas "Jupiter."

### MEDICAL WORK IN GHANA

During our visit to Ghana in October 1999 we met a Canadian Nurse named Wanda who teaches in the Church of Christ Mission Clinic in Kumasi.

We also met a brother in pain when

we visited Bodwesango and we directed him to the Kumasi Hospital. The following e-mail demonstrates how advanced technology can help our brethren in remote areas using the Ghana Appeal funds.

Hi Graeme;

This message is concerning David Fobi's illness. He was brought to me a week ago with a letter from you and dated January, 20/00. I had one of our Doctors (a surgeon) at our clinic examine this man. I wish this man had gotten medical help a long time ago. By delaying he has many problems now. I decided that I would pay for all of his immediate tests and call you when there is something to report. No surgery can be done until his condition is made more stable. Throughout the testing of this past week we kept Mr. Fobi here on our campus (in the Primary Health Care Quarters - they are empty at this time). I just don't know where to start: he has had chronic urinary retention for years which has caused damage to his kidneys, which is probably contributing to his hypertension (high blood pressure). This urine retention has been caused from his prostate. I told the doctor to admit the man and that I would contact you with the information. During the next five days, David will be catheterised and his bladder will be emptied slowly, meanwhile he will be given mass dosage of antibiotics and IV fluids (intravenous infusion) and lasix to encourage his kidneys to work. This hospital stay will cost: Hospital stay/Doctors and nurses charge - c44,000/per day (x 5 days); Catheterisation - c5,000; Medicine & Infusion - c26,000 to 27,000.

Once David is stabilised and the doctor has the results back from the various tests proving that there is no malignant cancer he will remove his prostate. He said the cost for the surgery will amount to 3 million cedis at the

most. I have already paid over 100,000 cedis for his tests and doctor visits. The doctor also requests an IVP X-ray (c120,000) and chest X-ray (50,000) and this other blood test (c60,000) to determine if David has cancer anywhere else in his body. I was pretty sure you could cover the cost of David Fobi's medical bills up to now and I told the doctor he could not do the surgery or other tests until I heard back from you. I hope I have explained the details easy for you to understand. If you have any questions please just ask. I pray I haven't done anything you would not have wanted me to do, but if I have please tell me. Please reply quickly so I can give an answer to this man regarding his surgery. Bye God Bless, Your sister in Christ - Wanda Spiers.

*We had sufficient funds to reply the same hour . . . "Please proceed."*

This the latest news . . .

Hi Graeme: It is so great what you are doing for this man. I pray the Lord blesses all of you. I wish you could see the look on David's face when he came from the hospital yesterday. "Hope." Yes I was waiting for the completion of his hospital stay. The doctor feels that David's kidney function will continue to improve. He thought maybe 6 weeks if Mr. David follows his orders which means drinking at least 2-3 litres of water a day and no protein. When his kidneys return to proper function the doctor will book the surgery. I will send more information later. The doctor wants David to stay here with us where David can be monitored. We are letting David and his wife stay in one of the dorm rooms of our Primary Health Care Quarters. David was in hospital for over a week and his bill came to 868,500 cedis. Again I thank you and I praise God that we met and got to know each of us were Christians. I feel very honoured to be able to help you with this

man. Bye, God Bless. Your sister in Christ, Wanda.

Brethren in Christ, I am well aware that while sister Wanda thanks me, she is thanking all those involved in helping keep this appeal going. I only include this article to keep you all informed as to the way the money is used. David is not in the clear yet, please pray for him.

Thank you for the cheque received for £75 for medical aid (from a group of three 28/2/00). No address given, receipt No. 1302.

GRAEME PEARSON

## OBITUARY

**JEAN E. WINSTANLEY**  
(15.10.1924 - 10.1.2000)

There are people whose passing leaves us with little to say because their lives have been such that it is better to remain silent. There are others who merit our highest respect and admiration and about whom we cannot remain silent. Jean Winstanley was of the latter kind.

I have known Jean for about 60 years and during that time, as Albert's co-worker and cousin I was, on many occasions a guest in their home. That is the place where one sees the real person. Some women remind us of Martha. Others bring Mary to mind. I think that Jean combined in herself the characters and virtues of both. She was always ready to serve but never too busy to worship. Like Timothy, Jean knew the scriptures, because she was brought up in a Christian home by worthy parents. As a result of her upbringing she became a follower of the Lord whilst quite young no more than 13 years of age, and she remained true to her faith all her life.

She did not always enjoy the best of physical health, but even in times when she was unwell, she never made this an excuse for neglecting her duty either as wife, mother, or member of the Church.

The presence of so many at her funeral was, itself, a testimony to the affection and respect in which she will continue to be held.

Jean has now gone home and is separated from us, if only for a short time. She is certainly not separated from her Saviour, for, in His glorious presence she is more alive than ever before, for, to be with Christ is "far better." If we also remain faithful to the Lord we shall one day make the same journey to the same happy destination.

FRANK WORGAN

## COMING EVENTS

**BUCKIE SOCIAL MEETING**  
D.V. to be held

On SATURDAY, 29th APRIL, 2000  
*Speaker: Bro. David Murray, Aberdeen*

**PETERHEAD**

**Family Enrichment Weekend:**

Dates: 7th to 9th April (inclusive)

Times: Friday 7th - 7 pm

Saturday 8th - 7 pm

Sunday 9th - 10 am, 11am & 6 pm

*Speaker: Dwight Eppler (Florida) D.V.*

**Gospel Campaign assisted by**  
**Harding Students**

Dates: 18th to 25th June  
(*Inclus., but no meeting on Friday 23rd*)

Times: Sunday 18th - 6 pm

Weekdays - 7 pm

Sunday 25th - 6 pm

*Speaker: Bert Ritchie (Coleraine) D.V.*

## GHANA APPEAL

It is over a decade since the Ghana Appeal was instigated and its success and influence has grown far beyond our greatest hopes.

As our resources are limited it was decided, in order to be more effective, to, concentrate them on one nation and in hindsight this was a good decision. We have been able to keep in close contact with the work there and, through

that, grow closer to the people. Our understanding of situations there has steadily grown and with it the ability to help more effectively.

Sick people have received medical attention - many with serious complaints - and typical examples have been quoted from time to time. This is an ongoing need.

It was not long before we realised the great urge in our Ghanaian brethren to evangelise and teach the Gospel to others, so funds were also used to help them do this. They have been helped in travelling to establish new congregations, to purchase Bibles, hymn books, and teaching materials, as well as building meeting places. Because of the general demand for rented premises there is a need for this.

As I said, the need is ongoing. We appreciate your continued contribution very much indeed and thank you for it.

Cheques should be made payable to "Graeme Pearson (Ghana Appeal)" and sent to: Graeme Pearson, 13 Fairways, Dunfermline, Fife. KY12 0DU. Tel. 01383 728624.

BILL COOK

## MUTUAL HELP

The family is a school of mutual help. Each member depends on every

other. Today the robust father holds the "wee laddie" on his knee, or leads him up the stairway of that schoolroom in which he is to be taught his alphabet. But there is a tomorrow coming by and by when the lisper of the A B C will be the master of a home of his own - with an infirm, grey-haired parent dozing away his sunset years in an armchair. Each helps the other when and where the help is most needed and every word and deed of unselfish love, comes back in blessings on its author. God puts helpless babes, and infirm parents into our families for this purpose (among others) that the strong may bear the burden of the weak, and in bearing them may grow stronger themselves in Bible graces.

10. Lysira (Acts 14:8 & 12).
9. Nicodemus (John 3:1-2).
8. Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:7)
7. Rhoda (Acts 12:13)
6. Jotham (Judges 9:5).
5. Cherith (1 Kings 17:3).
4. Almond (Jeremiah 1:11).
3. Ass (Numbers 22:30).
2. Peacocks (1 Kings 10:22)
1. Grass (Isaiah 40:6).

## ANSWERS

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