

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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DETENTE WITH GOD

IT seems that certain words lie dormant in the English Dictionary until their hour comes and they are brought forth into the light of day. Their usage on some important television interview can bring them from almost total obscurity to the point where they are on everyone's lips. For instance the word 'viable' was not a word which had any great popularity until a year or two ago and then suddenly everyone was talking about *viable* propositions and the viability of the economy and so on. Just as the mass media can control the fashion in clothes it can also, it seems, play a considerable part in the popularising of words and the introduction of them into our everyday vocabulary. *Detente* is certainly not a new word but we are hearing it much more these days. The dictionary definition of 'detente' is "a condition of tension in the diplomatic relations of two states" and it is obviously a French word. By virtue of its definition the word is usually employed in a political connotation and of late has been used much more in the comings and goings of the two big super-powers of U.S.A. and Russia. Indeed President Ford has been using it so often recently that he has felt obliged to give it the definition he has in mind when he is using it in his relations with other world statesmen. The definition of the word also highlights the importance of *communications* between men of different nations and how vital that these lines of communication be kept open. Mistrust amongst men, as well as nations, very largely is caused by weak lines of communication and consequential misunderstandings. Not so long ago the smaller nations of the world were very satisfied and relieved to know of the 'hot line' linking Moscow and Washington and of its frequent use.

Detente between nations then is greatly served by communication and it is a black day indeed for the peoples' of countries who refuse to talk to another. In disputes of any kind there is obvious hope if the antagonists will sit together at the conference table and little hope if they will not. In detente between man and God lines of communication must be kept open and it would be a black day for mankind if God had nothing to say to us (and would not hear us). Is there tension in the diplomatic relations between man and God? There certainly is. Is there tension in our personal relationship with God? If there is then we can be sure that the fault does not lie with God. But God recommends the conference table to us — what does God say to wayward man? "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow: though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool". (Is. 1:18). To Israel of old God said, "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed: and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye". What a wonderful invitation (Ezek. 18:32).

I suppose from the dawn of time man has had strained relationships with God and the first man Adam hid himself in the garden rather than talk to his Maker and I suppose men, by and large, have been hiding from God ever since. There have been, of course, the rare exceptions of whom perhaps Enoch is a leading example. His relationships with God proves that a sublime association is perfectly possible for we are told that Enoch had this testimony 'that he pleased God' and did not see death but was translated to heaven (Heb. 11:5). In addition, we are informed in Gen. 5:22 that Enoch *walked with God*. A good relationship with God would seem to depend therefore upon us *talking* with God and *walking* with God. Walking and talking with God. This is certainly the recipe for a happy relationship with God and we know that if we do not give ourselves wholeheartedly to this end we end up with 'just enough religion to be miserable.' We so very often feel, no doubt justifiably, that we are so unworthy of God's goodness that we are reluctant to approach Him and wonder with the Psalmist what man is that God should be bothered with him. Notwithstanding, the New Testament is full of invitations to us to approach to God and talk with Him. Like the 'hot-line' we have ready access to heaven itself in prayer. Indeed Jesus, in Luke 18, *spoke a parable to this end* (what end?) that men ought always to pray and not to faint.

The early disciples continued steadfastly in certain things which included the apostles' doctrine, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and also included prayers to God. It has been said, doubtless truly, that when one falls away from God the first evidence of it is a cessation of talking with God in prayer. We can become estranged from God, and tension exist, for various reasons and thus we no longer talk to God. Failure in prayer is sometimes because of indifference (Pr. 1:28) sometimes because of stubbornness (Zech. 7:13) sometimes because of secret sin (Ps. 66:18) sometimes because of instability (James 1:6,7) sometimes because of self indulgence (James 4:3) and sometimes because of disobedience (Deut. 1:45; Is 14:37). How is our talking with God?

How is our walking with God? It is one thing to talk but sometimes quite another thing to walk. Enoch's testimony was that he *walked with God* and what a wonderfully descriptive phrase that is. We all walk through life but we don't all walk with God. The Bible mentions more than one way of walking - for instance, we can walk *as fools* (Eph. 5:15) we can walk in darkness (1 John 1:6) we can walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4) honestly (1 Thess. 4:12) disorderly (2 Thess. 3:11) worthy of our vocation (Eph. 4:1). Walking with God is probably best described (in few words) in Col. 1:10 where the apostle Paul exhorts that we "might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God: strengthened with all might according to His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness. Giving thanks unto the Father who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light", "*Fruitful in every good work*' and '*increasing in the knowledge of God*' are, it seems, vital ingredients in a tension-free walk with God and in being well pleasing to Him.

It is interesting to contemplate some of the characters of the Old Testament scriptures (such as Adam, Samuel, Moses, David, Daniel, Noah, Solomon, etc) and think of them in terms of their detente with God, as they endeavoured, throughout their lives, to walk and talk with God. And what of ourselves?

Walk in the light, and thine shall be
 A path, though thorny, bright:
 For God, by grace, shall dwell in thee,
 And God Himself is light.

EDITOR.

IT IS MY PSALM — IS IT YOURS ?

"Sons of men! why will ye scatter
 Like a crowd of frightened sheep?
 Foolish hearts! why will ye wander
 From a love so true and deep."

PERFECT COMFORT - "THY ROD AND THY STAFF THEY COMFORT ME" Psalm 23:4
 WE continue our journey through the valley of the shadow of death. MY PSALM, continues:-
 "I will fear no evil". Let us ask ourselves why? (1) "For Thou art with me". (2) "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me".

In the latter statement we have the blessed assurance that the Shepherd is prepared, and having that knowledge the child of God can find great comfort, in the affirmation of these words 'thy rod and thy staff they comfort me'. Are you at this moment feeling heavy burdened, nervous, anxious? if so, why not repeat the following slowly:-

"FOR THOU ART WITH ME".

"THY ROD AND THY STAFF THEY COMFORT ME".

F.B. Meyer wrote: "the life of the eastern shepherd is very different from anything we are accustomed to in these northern climes. He occupies some rocky coign of vantage, whence he looks out on his sheep thinly scattered over the moorland; or leads them down to the valleys with their strips of green pasture and waters of rest; or conducts them through gloomy gorges where wild beasts have their lairs, they huddling close to his heels, wakeful, far-sighted, weather-beaten, armed with club and staff, always thoughtful for the defenceless, helpless creatures of his charge".

W.M. Thomson, in the Land and The Book speaking of the shepherd said: "He is armed in order to defend his charge; and in this he is very courageous. Many adventures with wild beasts occur not unlike that recounted by David, (1 Samuel 17:34-36 and in these very mountains; for though there are now no lions here, there are wolves in abundance: and leopards and panthers, exceeding fierce, prowl about these wild wadies. They not unfrequently attack the flock in the very presence of the shepherd, and he must be ready to do battle at a moment's warning. I have listened with intense interest to their graphic descriptions of downright and desperate fights with these savage beasts. And when the thief and the robber come (and come they do), the faithful shepherd has often to put his life in his hand to defend his flock. I have known more than one case in which he had literally to lay it down in the contest. A poor faithful fellow last spring, between Tiberias and Tabor, instead of fleeing, actually fought three Bedawin robbers until he was hacked to pieces with their khanjars, and died among the sheep he was defending".

In your minds eye, can you see David, leading his flock, to the green pastures, perhaps over the rocks, through the valley, past the tangled thorn-bushes, to the mountain, seeking for the tender pastures, and finding for them the still waters. Always on the lookout for the prowling wolf, the leopard or panther, or robber. See him as he walks before the flock as the evening draws on, taking his flock to the safety of the sheepfold. Having time for meditation, knowing his own concern for his own sheep, and how he had protected them, no doubt muses, as I have been to my sheep, so the Lord is my shepherd, and He will protect and care for me. So with unshakable confidence he affirms:-

"FOR THOU ART WITH ME"

"THY ROD AND STAFF THEY COMFORT ME"

Get hold of this wonderful truth, my brother, my sister. He is ever watchful over those who own Him as Lord. We can be sure that in our deepest need, He is with us, and if at times we are so foolish to leave the paths of righteousness, we shall not be utterly abandoned. He knows more than anyone that a fall does not always mean a failure. He not only sees us as we are, but as we can be. We are no doubt aware of the fact that there are not many days which are not filled with danger or trials for some of God's children, so it gives us great comfort to know that the rod and the staff, are in His hands.

PERFECT COMFORT - "GOD OF ALL COMFORT"

That mighty man of God, the Apostle Paul, bondservant, and one who was separated unto the Gospel of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, gives us from his pen, two marvellous verses in 2 Corinthians 1:3,4 (R.V.). Come aside, and rest awhile, come with me once more to the green pastures, to the pastures of tender grass, then let Him lead us to the still waters, the waters of quietness, and meditate on these glorious verses for a short time. "Blessed be the God and Father

of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our affliction, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any affliction, through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." What a mouthful! Read the verses quickly, and you are confused with the words "comfort" "comforteth" "Comfort" "comfort" "comforted". Have you had the joy of listening to your own children, or grandchildren, reading ever so slowly and deliberately a story for you? Shall we read these wonderful words slowly and with emphasis, as a child would?

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our affliction, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any affliction, through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted by God".

"Take off your shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" Exodus 3:5. Those words were spoken by God to Moses, on the occasion when the bush burned with fire, and was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt Exodus 3:4. Do you not feel a sense of awe, as you read these splendid words from this slave of Christ, one cannot find words that adequately describe these magnificent verses, given to us by this servant of the cross. Come, oh come with me to the throne of grace, and join with me, in sending up a peon of praise to the ALMIGHTY, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort".

We shall no doubt, have something to say about the Father of mercies, in our article on PERFECT JOY - MY CUP RUNNETH OVER, we are concerned at the moment with the excellent thought, that the child of God can today, have the knowledge of:-

PERFECT COMFORT-- "THY ROD AND THY STAFF THEY COMFORT ME" Psalm 23:4
PERFECT COMFORT-- "AND GOD OF ALL COMFORT"

The thought, which should give us great comfort, is, "A calling alongside" it's as if we say:- "Father, do you mind, I have a problem here, I need your help and advice". And the problem "our affliction", and the Apostle says:- "who comforteth us in all our affliction". "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not" Jeremiah 33:3. "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" Isaiah 65:24. "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth" Psalm 145:18.

Do you think we could count the times when the cry of the child in the night, has been answered by a Mother or Father, trying to console the one in distress, may be frightened or sick? There has been "a calling alongside" and it was answered almost immediately. Do you not realize that to those who are willing to accept His terms of discipleship and obey Him, by following out His commandments, they are those who have been chosen by Him before the foundation of the world. Do you realize that He sent His only begotten Son, to die for you, bought not with silver or gold, but with the precious blood of the Lord Jesus.

The Apostle Paul in Ephesians 2:10, says, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them". His workmanship. We belong to Him, so we have no need to doubt His loving care and watchfulness for our welfare, He will take care of us, but lets remember He has a purpose in comforting us in our afflictions, and that purpose is:- "THAT WE MAY be able to comfort them that are in any affliction, through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God". My brother, my sister, the church exists for a purpose, we are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them". It may be that others are "swimming in turbulent waters" walking a lonely path, climbing a seemingly impossible mountain, and it may be that you, just you, because of your long stay in the valley, and your own suffering, can be the one God will use mightily for His glory.

And may the Lord's richest blessing be your portion.

This month's exercise:- Learn by heart 2 Corinthians 1:3 & 4 also Ephesians 2:10;

LEONARD MORGAN

“THE CHRISTIAN’S ARMOUR”

(PART 1)

IN this age of wars and rumours of war, apathy, breakdown of family loyalties, alcoholism, drug taking, permissiveness, divorce, hatred, strikes, divisions and many other departures from Christian standards, we may well enquire what can be done to restore these standards. One thing is certain and that is that we cannot force these standards on anyone. How then can they be restored and when restored, maintained?

The simple and only answer is by the Gospel. The realisation and recognition by any adult thinking and reasoning person that all have sinned and so justly merit punishment by an all just Creator; the acceptance by such a sinner that God so loved us that in order to justify Himself and at the same time pardon the sinner. He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him our risen Saviour, and is immersed shall be saved from such punishment – the acceptance of this proposition or divine revelation by a self-convicted sinner must lead to such a sense of remorse that the sinner must turn to God in anguish and ask, “what must I do to be saved?” Peter’s answer was “be immersed everyone of you in the name of Jesus, the Messiah, for the forgiveness of your sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit; In the promise is to you and to your descendants and to all who are far away, everyone whom our Lord may call” (Acts chapter 2).

And so the acceptance that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, confirmed by the sinner’s repentance and immersion in obedience to the Lord’s command constitutes the new birth and receipt of the Holy Spirit referred to by our Lord Himself in His answer to Nicodemus in John’s gospel chapter 3, “Except a man be born of water and the spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto you, ye must be born again the wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is everyone that is born of the spirit”. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him”. So ends that wonderful chapter in John’s gospel.

The wonderful sequence appears in chapter 6 of Paul’s letter to the Christians in Rome who had been “born again of water and the spirit”, and so “died to sin”, “How then can we live in sin any longer. Have you forgotten that when we were immersed into union with Christ Jesus we were immersed into His death? By our immersions we were buried with Him and lay (as it were) dead, in order that, as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father so also we might be raised to set our feet upon the new path of life.

For if we have become joined with Him in a death like His, we shall also be one with Him in a resurrection like His. We know that the man we once were has been crucified with Christ, for the destruction of the sinful self, so that we may no longer be the slaves of sin. So sin must no longer reign in your mortal bodies, exacting obedience to the body’s desire. You must no longer put its several parts at sin’s disposal, as implements for doing wrong. NO – put yourself at the disposal of God, as dead men raised to life, yield your bodies to Him as implements for doing right: for sin shall no longer be your master, because you are no longer under law, but under the grace of God” (N.E.B.) In the face of these words of Holy Writ it cannot be disputed that the gospel is the one and only answer to the restoration of Christian standards. If we need any further proof, we need only read chapter 8 of Romans and chapter 5 and 6 of Ephesians pointing to the Christian way of life.

But note (and how important it is to do so) that the Gospel is the answer only if it is obeyed in all its implications. Note also that the restoration of Christian standards can only apply ‘ipse facto’ to christians. This is proved by the fact that all the Epistles were addressed not to the world, but to christians who had become so, by the new birth, and the main object of these letters was to sustain the Christian in the Christian way of life and so prevent the Christian from falling away and returning to the ways of the world from which he had been rescued... So Paul said, in his letter to the Galatians chapter 1:4 where he says, “Our Lord Jesus Christ

gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us (christians) from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father". And our Lord, Himself said to the Apostles, just before His departure, "Go ye, therefore, teaching all nations, immersing them into the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (the new birth) teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (Matt. 28:19-20).

It is obvious, therefore, that when we talk about restoring Christian standards and maintaining them, we are talking about the Christian himself or herself restoring his or her standards to those laid down in the New Testament (i.e. if he or she has fallen short of these standards) and maintaining them after they have been restored.

This the Christian cannot do in his own strength. That is why Paul closes his instructions on how the Christian may fight the good fight of faith and keep from falling away by his exhortation to the christian in Ephesians 6:10-18.

v.10. Finally my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might"
(Our real strength is not in ourselves but in the Lord)

v.11 "put on the whole armour of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil". In Romans 13:12 Paul says "Let us, therefore, throw off the deeds of darkness and put on our armour as soldiers of the light. Let us behave with decency as befits the day: no revelling or drunkenness, no debauchery or vice, no quarrels or jealousies! Let Jesus Christ Himself be the armour you wear: give no more thought to satisfying the bodily appetites. (N.E.B.)

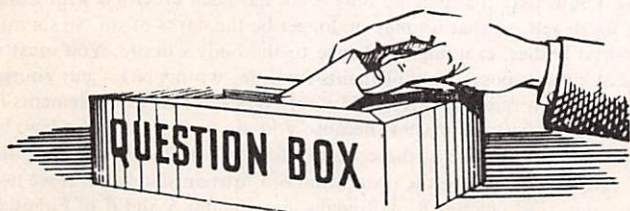
We may ask why it was necessary for Paul to utter such words of warning to Christians. Was it not because they were surrounded by dangers temptations and evil in the world and so laid to be on guard in case they fell away. If so be lost. And his warning is just as relevant, if not more so, today.

Violence, vice, immorality, spiritual wickedness in high places still surround the Christians today. This is not strange. They existed when the first christians lived and have continued for twenty centuries now. They existed when Paul wrote his letter to the Ephesian Christians. In fact, Ephesians contained one of the seven

fact, Ephesus contained one of the seven wonders of the world, the temple erected to the Goddess Diana, the goddess of fertility even the Temple of Diana with its numerous immoral devotees and practices. It rivalled Corinth in its vices. The Christian Gospel was relevant then. It is just as relevant today when the same human vices are rampant.

TO BE CONTINUED"

W.BROWN, Dunfermline.



Conducted by
Alf Mausten

DURING a discussion with a non-christian friend, she said to me, "Well, what is the incentive for becoming a christian; many people seem to get along without christianity?" Would you please comment in order to ease both her mind and mine?

It is rather strange that I should be asked this question because I have already commented on this subject elsewhere, but in order to assist readers of the S.S. no harm will come of repeating what I said on that occasion. I can well understand the attitude of the questioner in this seemingly Godless age and I trust that my comments will help to dispel some of the doubts.

INCENTIVES

Incentives are widely used these days. They are intended to motivate people: to incite them to greater action. They may be things external to the individual which he will strive to obtain. Situations which are manipulated in order to call forth greater effort. Or things within the individual which encourage him to do something. We need to understand something about incentives so that we might better explain the behaviour of ourselves and that of other people around us

The Complexity of Man

Man is a complex individual who responds to 'drives' and 'urges'. He is obviously influenced by other individuals who together form a community. If christian communities exist within a greater non-christian community, then the interaction will provide stimuli which will feed individual drives and urges. Therefore, the christian may respond to things which are contrary to his new nature, and the non-christian may respond in such a way that he will be willing to forsake the old life and embrace the new. We must look first at things which motivate us and which are external to ourselves.

Money

Money is a powerful incentive. In the quest for it many have become selfish, greedy, and avaricious. Paul states, "The love of money is a root of all evil" (1 Tim. 6:10) and so men have lied, embezzled, murdered in order to amass it, The compelling appeal of the things that money can buy drives men on. The urge in the present day is so great that financial and economic disaster on a vast scale looms over the world like a forbidding spectre.

Paul says, "Flee these things". He argues that it is profitable to have a contented spirit or disposition. He advances the case for godliness in this life because, "It is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8). Why do we have to respond, as we sometimes do, to this potent incentive, so that we "pierce ourselves through with many sorrows", when the benign love of God is calling us to contentment in this life and assurance of heaven.

Dear friend, the wealth of the world is as nothing when compared with the vaults of the Bank of Heaven. Paul shows us the true riches when he says, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich" (2 cor. 8:9). Open your heart to Him and He will pour down blessings such that you will not be able to contain.

Position

How vain and egoistical man is. We love to have some ascendancy over our fellow-men. But wasn't it through humility that Jesus demonstrated true greatness? He asks each one of us to contrast our love for him with our love for the world. To let our love for him become all-embracing and all-pervading. To lay hold on eternal life and to fight the good fight of faith. Can there be a higher position than to be a child of God, a joint heir with Christ?

Jesus said, "What shall it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul". What indeed. The end of the mighty of this world is occupy a few pages of history. To walk with the Lord is truly to walk the corridors of power.

The Ravages of Sin

There are millions of people dying without Christ. To carry the gospel to such should be the most tremendous incentive for the christian. Let us carry to the world the glorious Will of God in the person of Jesus His Son, for, says Paul, "we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (2 Cor 4:7). Isn't it a stupendous thought that God has allowed us, imperfect as we are, to be the custodians of His message of salvation. We ought to cherish this and thank Him, and ensure that the message reaches the hearts and minds of those for whom Christ died.

Satisfaction

You do not satisfy a man by increasing his wage packet: you merely decrease his dissatisfaction. What really satisfies? I would say, the contentment of true godliness. The knowledge

of sins forgiven and the availability of the resources of heaven. To know that what is laid up for us in heaven is infinitely greater than that which is laid out on earth. The inner glow we feel when we understand that mingled with our Lord and Master's blood was love and compassion such as the world cannot give. To appreciate that He laid down His life for us.

What price, then, the glitter and show, the insatiable demands of the world. The love of God is personified in Christ, and underneath are the everlasting arms. It is enough.

Achievement

Dear friend, how little we really achieve in this life. The grandest edifice that we can build is subject to time and decay. When we notice the inexorable advance of years we look back over our lives and even though we might have been successful as the world reckons success we still have to ask ourselves the question "What have I done which is really lasting?" It is Jesus who points us to the eternal and who wants us to become involved in the heavenly project. He wants to save us so that we might be instrumental in bringing others to Him. If we bring to fruition the works of the Divine Planner then we can truly say that we are achieving much. That work will last. It is eternal.

A word also to fellow-christians. Why do we often find things to do which are more urgent than God's work? We preachers: do we strive to improve or are we content with sustained mediocrity? Leaders: do we appreciate that we are leading a campaign against the armies of sin and that our troops need to be fully equipped? Soldiers of Christ: do we really have the stomach to wage spiritual warfare? Dear christian, we see real achievement when we see a person being baptized into Christ, confessing His name. This is the light overcoming the stygian darkness of sin. This is the spur that we need.

Conclusion

Christian, there are many incentives that come your way. Choose the right ones.

Friend, there is one great incentive before you. Be ye reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. Believe on Him, confess Him before men, be baptized into His name, and be saved. (All questions please, to Brother Alf Marsden, 377 Billinge Road, Highfield, Wigan).

SCRIPTURE READINGS

OCTOBER 1975

5—Ezekiel 2 to 3:3	Revelation 3:1-13
12—Ezekiel 3:4-17	Revelation 3:14-22
19—Genesis 28:10-22	Revelation 4
26—Exodus 12:1-14	Revelation 5

MESSAGES FROM GOD

THE church at Sardis. We have a graphic picture of a church with a good reputation. It was perhaps both wealthy and apparently prospering. It was a working church too. Yet it was not satisfying some necessary standard of the Saviour. Some feature of the works was incomplete. It would seem there was a drift away from "the faith once and for all delivered" seeing the call is to return to what was first taught. A merely formal worship with regularity and order calls for waking up to reality. The condition was not hopeless, and a remnant

kept true faith and walk. The name Sardis means remnant. A certain Bishop Melito of Sardis wrote a commentary on "Revelation" in the second century. This may mean that the church did heed the warnings.

The church at Philadelphia. Here is a contrast. This church has little strength but it is so much alive that God is going to give a wonderful opportunity for the use and therefore development of that strength. Obedience and confession of Jesus were the characteristics qualifying for more service, and powerful enemies would be brought to humiliation by these evidences of God's favour. Relief would be granted in times of great trial, and the victor's crown be assured. Promise of great honour of eternal measure is made for those who endure.

The church at Loadicea. Even the dying church at Sardis is less harshly warned than this. God's complete knowledge of our spiritual condition makes His judgement perfect, and His instruction for our needs perfect also. A letter from the apostle Paul had been received

here, and we can appreciate it would be full of love and encouragement to zeal and service, and the letter to Colossians had also been read. Epaphras and possibly Archippus had worked here (Col. 4:2-17). Doubtless it had been built up against opposition from both Jews and Gentiles. There was a Jewish element in the town and it was a highly prosperous business community. We must suppose that many had been won for Christ and the numbers had grown so that it was rich in material things always a highly dangerous condition for Christians. Over the years it had developed a boastful attitude, and thoughts which remind us of James's warnings (2:1-9; 4:13 to 5:6). The loveliest promise stands for the humblest members who will answer the knock and let the Saviour into their hearts. Jesus gives us on another occasion so similar and lovely a thought - "My Father will love him, and We will come in and sup with him" (John 14:23).

A Glimpse Into Heaven

Visions of God are described in Isaiah and Ezekiel, and His glory mentioned many times in the Old Testament. We are reminded of the hymn "Immortal, invisible, God only wise, in light inaccessible, hid from our eyes". Manifestations of His illimitable power are displayed in lightnings, thunder, voices, trumpets, elsewhere in scripture. These were - so to speak - publicly displayed at Sinai for the benefit of His chosen people, and the rushing mighty wind of Pentecost at the institution of the New Covenant. Here in Revelation we have the ecstatic experience of the beloved disciple described in some detail, yet with much that is incomplete necessarily, and some mysteries which have so far defied all commentators. This is not surprising since the glory of the Creator of the Universe must be beyond finite human understanding - "Eye hath not seen, neither ear heard".

The heavenly throne has its retinue of heavenly beings - twenty four elders, four living creatures (unfortunately described as "beasts" in A.V.), innumerable angels. These all render continuous praise, first to Him who sits on the throne as the Almighty, Eternal One (4:8), then as the Creator (4:11), and finally to the Lamb that was slain to redeem mankind with His own blood (5:9). What a lesson on God's love for humanity that the culminating praise is for this humiliation of the divine majesty at the hands of His created

beings! "The highest place that heaven affords if His by filial right", but it is His because He was slain for us. May we more fully appreciate it as we come nearer to being made fit to share the glory (1 John 3:2). After describing the glorious appearance of the throne with the most precious and most beautiful earthly things without any attempt to describe the PERSON HIMSELF, John introduces the four and twenty elders. Each one occupied a throne and each one had a golden crown. Whereas being "elders" they must represent mankind, they must be heavenly not earthly creatures, divine monarchs? The revised translations do not attribute to the many share in the benefits of redemption. They are identified with the living creatures", they have harps and bowls of incense, but their praise and worship is for what Jesus has done for mankind (5:9). Their number naturally makes us think of the patriarchs and the apostles who represent authority in the Old and New Covenants. The four living creatures in the same way make us think of the four gospels. Their continuous activity, their eyes without and within can well represent the Word which is "quick and active" discerning the intents of the heart (Heb. 4:12). Some have suggested Matthew the lion, Mark the man, Luke the calf and John the eagle - a little thought tells us why. We are used to the thought of myriads of angels, seeming to need no explanation. We cannot imagine heaven without angels) "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?"

The Amazing Contrast

We conclude our inadequate notes with the thought of contrast between "the lion of the tribe of Judah", and "the Lamb as though it had been slain". We think again of our Saviour as the One without whom was not anything made that hath been made, the One who was in the beginning with God and was God, but emptied Himself of glory that He might share our life, and accept that unspeakable humiliation of the cross. "And from my smitten heart with tears, two wonders I confess, the wonder of His glorious love and my own worthlessness". His crowning glory in the celestial regions is His utter humility and selfless love. There the glory; here "He was despised and rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief".

ARTICLES WANTED

ARTICLES are always required for the 'S.S.' if we are to try and maintain a paper printing 'home-grown' material. Before ever taking on the job of Editor I occasionally heard brethren complain of the number of articles in the 'S.S.' which had been taken from other religious papers. A little thought will convince any reasonable person that an editor has no other alternative if the brethren in this country do not contribute articles in numbers sufficient to keep the paper going month by month. Another reason for the appeals for articles is the fact that the editor must try and maintain a 'pool' of material from which he can choose items as being timely each month. Articles come in various lengths and on different topics and thus a 'pool' is necessary so that they may lie there until required. I have had one or two letters on this question lately and I hope that these few remarks may help to clarify the position. It should also perhaps be pointed out that writers for the 'S.S.' are scarcer than they used to be. If one were to flick through the pages of old copies of the 'S.S.', prior say to the 1960's, one would encounter names of brethren who no longer write for the 'S.S.' and the reason for this is, of course, a matter of history. The object of the 'S.S.' has not changed as far as I know and that object should be well known by now. The editorial policy is still the same as far as I am concerned and the paper is produced by and for, primarily, the 'Old Paths' brethren. Elsewhere there is in this paper an interesting and thought provoking letter on this very subject and mention is made of the financial solvency of the magazine. The paper has struggled during all of its existence as far as finance is concerned and the brethren involved have shunned the ready expedient of going for help to the brethren of other countries, and surely we're glad they have. There would seem to be no reason to me why the paper should go down because of lack of money but it is surprising to consider the number of brethren who pay 72p for a gallon of petrol but think the 'S.S.' is expensive at 7 or 8p. Only yesterday our brother treasurer informed me that with rising postal charges, and printing costs, the days of the 'S.S.' seem to be numbered. I personally believe, and always have, that the 'S.S.' fulfils a need, even although the need is felt only in 'particular areas' of the church. and I sincerely feel that brethren will appreciate

fully the need supplied by the paper, only when it goes out of existence. I would hate to think the paper would cease only because of lack of financial support especially when we consider the large amounts of money we spend on daily newspapers and monthly magazines.

I sincerely thank all the good brethren who have supported the 'S.S.' with their written efforts in the past and I hope that you will again put pen to paper and keep the 'S.S.' pages filled. Thank you, EDITOR.

A QUESTION FOR US

19, Marus Avenue,
Marus Bridge, Wigan.

Dear Editor,

I would be pleased to have this writing included in the Scripture Standard.

I feel obliged to ask the question "why does the scripture Standard continually have to request articles from the church?" I do not ask this in a spirit of sarcasm but am anxious to determine the real value of the magazine as a paper for Christians. The conclusions I deduce are:-

- 1 Christians in the U.K. are reluctant to write articles. On the other hand most are willing to communicate verbally!
- 2 The circulation of the paper is limited. But, the writer has just received a letter from an American brother in response to a recent advertisement in the Scripture Standard!
- 3 The editor is eliminating numerous articles I doubt this although if this letter is not published I may reassess the opinion!!
- 4 Christians are ignorant of subjects suitable for written presentation. However the number of sermons - and their length - would not appear to justify this particular conclusion.
- 5 Christians in the U.K. do not appreciate the paper. Here, I believe, is the crucial issue. I plead with readers of the Scripture Standard to conduct careful, honest, self-analysis in answering.

If the paper has a role to play in U.K. Christian Life then let us establish:-

- 1 The aim(s) of the paper. THE NEED
- 2 The regularity of publication. THE FREQUENCY OF THE NEED
- 3 The presentation of the paper vis-a-vis its financial solvency. SUPPORT OF THE NEED.

I submit that if a need exists then the need should be met. But, the financial problems of the paper and the lack of response to pleas for other methods of support inevitably lead me to assume that any need is not urgent.

Of course I agree that the magazine may meet a need for particular areas of the church. Hence it is justified. However I suggest that a more general appeal is probably dependent upon basic reform which is impossible to introduce within the framework of current publications.

Yours in Jesus
Ian K. Parker.

GOOD-BYE GOD

SOME people go to church on Sunday,
But only once that day,
And when they leave the service
You almost hear them say:
"Good-bye God, I'm going home,
For this day's all that's mine;
I've given Thee a portion....
One hour of it was Thine.
For I must have diversions,
In pleasures haunts I'll seek
Some needed recreation....
Help for the coming week".

So, God, I'll not be here tonight
I know you'll understand,
And I can't come for Wednesday meet...
My work has its demand.
I have my family to sustain
And other reasons why?
I need to gain all earth can give,
Until the day I die,
So, good-bye God, till Sunday morn,
I'll worship Thee again....
UNLESS some come to visit me
And I should be detained".

Selected, "Christian Woman".

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

THE address of the secretary of the church at Haddington, Miss Mary Murdie, has changed to
47 Riverside Drive,
Haddington, East Lothian.

The church at Haddington, by the way, will be joining the church at Tranent for all meetings for the next several weeks owing to building alterations being carried out to the hall where the Haddington church usually meet.

MARY MURDIE

DISTRIBUTION OF THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD

SINCE April 1972 Brother Charles Grant has been responsible for the dispatch of the S.S. to individual subscribers. He has done the work faithfully and well and we are sorry that he finds his work and other duties make it impossible for him to continue. The very best thanks of all concerned are extended to our brother and those of his family who have helped him. We were delighted to hear that he has passed his first examinations and we pray for his continued success toward becoming a fully qualified Laboratory Technician.

Please address all correspondence (other than editorial matters) to the Agent and Treasurer Brother Paul Jones.

POSTAGE STAMPS

Owing to the rise in postal charges, it has now become uneconomical to send small packets of British stamps by post. While these are still welcome, it would be better if possible to get someone to bring them. Foreign stamps have also been kindly sent from many parts of the world. Over 74lbs. of all kinds have arrived (more than a quarter of a million stamps), and in addition to the proceeds of about £60 another £182.60 has been sent as donations. Thus, about every three months another parcel of Bibles can be sent to someone on the list.
Miss R.M. PAYNE
1 Kenilwort's Avenuc, Reading, Berks.

OBITUARY

BRISTOL, Bedminster: It is with much sorrow that we record the passing of our Sister Amy Gipp at the age of 82. She commenced her christian life with the church at Aberdare in S. Wales, but owing to the depression moved with her husband to London and was associated with the church at Wandsworth Bridge Road. Owing to failing health she moved to Bristol to share a home with her sister and brother in law, Bro. and Sis. A. Grey, and she was identified with the church here.

L. DANIELL

COMING EVENTS

Bristol, Bedminster: St. John's Lane.

SPECIAL MISSION

October 4th to October 9th

Sat. and Sun. 6.30 p.m.

Mon., Tues., Wed., Thurs. 7.30 p.m.

Brother Len Morgan will be the speaker.

A warm welcome will be given to all who can come and join us. L. DANIELL

Blackburn, New Wellington Street,

Gospel Mission from Oct. 25th to Nov. 2nd.

Speaker: Bro. L. Daniell (Bristol).

Meetings:

Sat. 25th Oct. Tea 6p.m. Meeting 7.30p.m.

Sun. 26th Oct. Meeting 6p.m.

Tues., Wed., Thurs., Sat., 7.30 p.m.

Sun. 2nd Nov. 6p.m.

Refreshments on Saturday Meetings.

ALL WELCOME T.Tyson (Sec.)

Kentish Town : 104th Anniversary Meetings

October 4th and 5th. Mission with Bro. W.

Murrell for two weeks. Visitors welcome as usual. R.B. Scott

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CONFERENCE SECRETARY: TOM WOODHOUSE, "Jesmond," 8 Shoulder-of-Mutton Hill, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Notts. NG17 7DX.

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