

# *The* SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## THE MAN BETWEEN

In these days of industrial unrest we are no strangers to the merits of arbitration. Britain is certainly a striking country these days. The story is told of the man who went into a shop to buy a box of matches and was insisting on buying British matches — the shopkeeper said, "Oh they are British all right and all guaranteed to strike." Arbitration is nothing new of course and has been going on for as long as man has been on the earth — it has been called by differing names but arbitration just the same. Britain has a long history of arbitrating between smaller nations and preventing wars between them. President Carter has been apparently successful in arbitrating between Israel and Egypt and bringing them to the point of signing a Peace Treaty, however fragile. The best description of the arbiter would probably be 'the man in between' or the 'middleman,' and describes a situation where two persons (or two countries, or two corporate bodies) having reached an impasse call in a third party to act as umpire, or impartial judge, to settle the dispute. Countless disputes are settled in this way and there are recognised arbiters in every sphere of political, business and commercial life, and there are some employed on a full-time basis in this capacity. They range from Marriage-Guidance Counsellors to Cabinet Ministers.

In last month's issue of the 'S.S.' my article was called attention to the astonishing similarities between Moses and Christ, and I mentioned but only a few. One I did not mention was the very important function of arbitration or mediation. Moses was mediator between Israel and God and this was brought about by the fact that when, at the outset, God spoke directly to the people they were terrified by His awesome voice and pleaded with Moses that he might intercede between God and them. Man's problem has always been in his communication with God, and although men now enjoy direct access to God through prayer it was not always so, nor as easy. Even now we still require an advocate with the Father and we still have a Mediator between God and man. We have all sinned and our sins have separated us from God. God has not suddenly become weak or deaf, but our sins have alienated God from us. God so transcends all his creatures that man may despair of ever being able to talk to God. There is such a gulf between the super-natural and the natural; between the Spirit and the flesh; between Deity and humanity that man wonders how he can ever communicate with God — especially with his constant feeling of guilt for his sins. Religion (binding back to God) encourages the hope that humanity can contact God and that the wide gulf between the two can actually be bridged in reconciliation with Deity, and the need for a mediator in man's transactions with God have been recorded for us, mainly in the scriptures. Job, for instance, lamented the absence of any mediator, or umpire, who might take his case before God, when he was

bereft of any help or support from his friends, or even his wife. Job was confident that if God knew the facts that God would vindicate Job — but there was no one to arbitrate (Job 9:33). This incidentally is the only reference as such, in the O.T. to a mediator, although in the N.T. Moses is referred to as being mediator under the old covenant. The word for arbiter in the N.T. is *mesites* which is translated mediator and literally means 'the man who stands in the middle' or 'the go-between' and is mentioned thus six times, four of which refer directly to Jesus and two to Moses. Although Moses is pre-eminent in the O.T. as 'the man in the middle' the idea of God dealing with man through the interposition of another has a leading place throughout scripture. Intercessory prayer was a strong form of mediation (although this is now the privilege of all) and well known examples are Abraham's intercession for Sodom (Gen. 18:23) Moses for Israel (Ex. 32:30) Samuel for Israel (1st Sam. 7:8) and Jeremiah singles out Moses and Samuel as chief representatives of this form of prayer (Jer. 15:1). John (in Chap. 17) preserves the great intercessory prayer of Jesus (our Mediator) at the last Passover supper, and intercession is declared to be the chief exercise of Christ's mediatorial function in Heaven (Rom. 8:34, Heb. 7:25). Men also filled the mediatorial function with reference to the making of sacrifice to God (usually priests). Priests were also mediators as custodians of God's revealed will just as the prophets became increasingly prominent as mediators of new revelations of God's will. Kings were also mediators as were the heads of families and tribes, in the Patriarchal Age.

Not just anybody could be a mediator between God and man and any mediator had, firstly, to have some quality which endeared itself to God, and secondly, to be endowed with some special charismatic quality amongst men. He had to be able to relate in both directions. Moses apparently had an abundance of all the courage, strength of character, wisdom and patience for just such a task — and he was faithful in all his house. In many ways Moses typified the present mediator between man and God — Jesus Christ. Jesus is mediator because of His qualities, His deeds and His faithfulness to the Father. Indeed each time Jesus is described, in the N.T., as mediator the statement is linked with a reference to his qualifications to be such, e.g. in 1st Tim. 2:5 Paul says, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." And so notwithstanding all the mediators who may have gone before, there is now but one mediator between God and men. If therefore the Pope or any others should claim that function, we may safely conclude that they are gravely mistaken. The merits of Jesus as mediator lies in all directions. He was prophet, priest and king. As a priest he not only prescribed sacrifice but supplied, Himself, that all atoning sacrifice, whereas the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin, the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all and every definitive prophet of all the long line of prophets since time began, and gave God's final revelation to man. God certainly had at sundry times and in various manners spoken in times past to the fathers by His many prophets but hath in these last times spoken unto us his His Son. No further prophets will be required for no further revelation will be forthcoming. The Levite priests had to be constantly replaced because of the death of each generation but Jesus has an everlasting priesthood, being not subject to death. By His own atoning sacrifice he ended all previous sacrificing and His type of sacrifice is required but once, just as often as the faith was delivered to the saints — once. Jesus knew Himself to be greater than all previous prophets (Mark 8:27) and knew Himself to be a greater preacher than Jonah (Matt. 12:41) and knew Himself to be wiser than Solomon (Matt. 12:42) and transcended not only all mortals but angels as well (Heb. 1:5). His kingdom is greater than any temple, even Solomon's, and He is the mediator of a greater and better covenant established upon better promises. (Heb. 8:6).

In the world of commerce and business if one party defaults in a contract then the covenant or contract is null and void. A distinctive feature of the first covenant was that although Israel continually defaulted in their obligations to God, God did not rescind the contract. This is perhaps, apart from other reasons, that the first covenant, or the law, was added because of transgressions in the first place. This point is, I think, made by Paul in Gal. 3:19-20 where he extols the virtues of the second covenant over the first covenant and says that the second covenant was not contingent upon the services of some mediator, such as Moses, for God had not mediator when He spoke to Abraham and promised the second covenant (Gen. 12). Paul is, of

course, trying to convince his fellow Jews that the Mosaic law was but temporary and secondary and had in fact passed away, having been replaced by the second and final covenant of which Christ is mediator. He goes on to say that this second covenant was a promise given to Abraham, whereas the law through Moses did not arrive on the scene until 430 years later. "Wherefore then serveth the law?" (to what purpose was the law of Moses?) — it was added because of transgressions, just until the seed (Christ) should come, the seed (singular) mentioned in that promise to Abraham. The law was therefore added because of transgressions, possibly to curb them and certainly to identify and quantify them. Thus the contrast is drawn between law and promise and the new covenant is one of promise — the law was merely our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.

We are dealing, therefore, with a much better covenant based upon much better promises with a much better mediator between God and man. Jesus alone knew the Father and can reveal Him to others and He therefore surpasses all others in revelation. As an agent in reconciliation He himself provided the sacrifice, and having immortality He can communicate to men the new life which He possesses, and men will reach God only through their incorporation into Him. He truly is the Way, the Truth and the Life and through Him only, can we come to the Father (John 14:6). What a Saviour. What a mediator.

EDITOR

## GLEANINGS

Let her glean among the sheaves." Ruth 2:15

Our theme — the joyful message

Our Text: "And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." Romans 15:29.

JOSEPH B. ROTHERHAM: "To us, in this age of the world, looking back, as we do, on the First Advent of our Redeemer and his Manifestation among men as accomplished facts, this view of the Gospel naturally and logically comes first before us.

No Christ, no Gospel. The Person of Jesus our Saviour is "the A and the Z" of Good-News to us as sinners. He himself is the Centre, as well as the Circumference, of the charming story. Around him — subordinated to him — everything else in the Good-Tidings falls into its right place.

The Gospel of Christ's Person is of supreme importance and interest. It tells out the blessed truth that Jesus of Nazareth is the Image of God. As the truthfulness, tenderness, purity, unselfishness, and compassion of Mary's Son are unfolded to our eye, in his wonderful life and still more wonderful sufferings and death — this is the Joyful Note that is sounded forth: Such is God! The truthfulness of Jesus is entire; his tenderness is unaffected and unfathomed; his purity is all-consuming; his unselfishness has no haze on its transparency, and his compassion leads him to sacrifice himself in order to save those on whom it rests. Reader! You believe this. As you read of Jesus, simply and candidly, and permit his whole portrait to come before you, this is the irresistible and ineffaceable conviction impressed on your conscience and your heart. You know that you yourself are not for a moment to be compared with him. You know that you never saw his equal — that the best men and women you are acquainted with are but distant, very distant, approaches to him. Did you ever fully take home to your heart the assurance that, just what the visible Jesus is, that the Invisible God is too? Such is truly the case.

We have the very best authority for saying it. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." (John 14.9). These are the words of Jesus himself. "We gazed upon his glory," says that apostle who was wont to recline in his bosom. (John 1.14). Beloved disciple! We would ask thee: "Of what sort was the glory of the Incarnate Word, on which thou didst gaze?" "A glory as of an Only-Begotten from a Father." This is the apostle's reply. He seems to say, "Conceive of the Infinite One as a Father; conceive of such a Father as having One Only Son, just like Himself; conceive of the Only-Begotten as here with us, a partner in our blood and flesh, pitching his tent beside ours in the noontide of his life's journey, coming into our tents with unembarrassed freedom and humility as one of ourselves, but ere long disclosing such favour and truth

of speech and action, that we see through the veil, and are entranced, and mentally exclaim, 'Lo! all heaven is here before our eyes: this is the Only-Begotten Son of God.' Such is the glory on which we gazed. There is no other glory like it. It simply becomes the high relationship. Now have we seen God. Ah! God is a glorious Being."

"The . . . Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." — Mark I. I.

CAMPBELL MORGAN: "These words give us Mark's conception of the value of the story he was about to write. It was wholly good tidings, a story to cause gladness, news which would bring hope to those who should need it. That is a truth which should never be forgotten by those who are called to declare the story. Sometimes the dark and awful facts of human life are in danger of giving an almost gloomy note to the preaching of the Gospel. It never should be so. Sin is a terrible fact, and the more we understand our message the more will its terror be felt. But that message is first, and always, the good news of the possibility of complete deliverance therefrom. The preacher of that good news should always be confident, jubilant, a veritable optimist in all the richest senses of that often much-abused word. He is full of hope, and it is hope well founded. He hopes in God, on behalf of man, and his right to do so is that of the Crucified and Risen Christ.

The secrets of the Gospel are suggested in the remaining words — "of Jesus Christ the Son of God." The good news is simply and wholly the story of that Person. His two-fold being and relationship are set forth in the first and last of the words describing Him; and the meaning of His presence in the world in the central one. He is Jesus, Man of our humanity. He is the Son of God, and of His very essence He is the Anointed King-Priest, reigning over man, as God, and reconciling man to God as Man. This is indeed a glorious Gospel."

LANCELOT OLIVER: "Joy is one of the first-named blessings of "the Gospel." When an angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds they were sore afraid, "and the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Good tidings here translates *euangelion*, and the words following show that the joy which the birth of Jesus gave to the shepherds the news of that birth would give to others also. It is here the birth of Jesus that is named as tidings of great joy, but all we know about Jesus — His life, death, burial, and resurrection — all may be so-called, for all, rightly understood, give joy. Joy, all joy, exceeding joy, results from believing "the Gospel." Thus we read:

"There shall be the root of Jesse,  
And he that ariseth to rule over the Gentiles;  
On him shall the Gentiles hope.

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing." Paul speaks not only of the progress but also of the joy of faith. Peter, speaking of Christ Jesus, says, "On whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Because the Gospel is a gospel of great joy we may speak of the great joy of the gospel."

Selected by Leonard Morgan.

## REDEEMING THE TIME

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." Eph. 5:15-16.

We live in an era which can be described as mechanical. An era in which computerised gadgets do almost every activity in our lives. But despite all these, we still find it hard to get time for other activities. Many people, including Christians, blame their shortcomings on lack of time. Our failure to do the work of the Lord is also blamed on lack of time.

I will like to share with you what may seem a ridiculous result from a research done on many churchgoers in the United States and then from it learn how we can apportion our time to fit ourselves into the service of the Lord.

The Maranatha magazine quoted Cam Thompson's work in which he pointed out that, "The average age of a Christian is 75 years. In general, he spends 6 months in worship, 6 years in eating, 9 years in amusement, 7-12 years in dressing, 6 years in travelling, 19 years in working, and 23 years in sleeping. Yet sometimes we hear our friends say, 'I wish I had time to read my Bible and pray and witness'."

I daresay that this is true with every person whose Christianity is restricted to Sunday worship. Ponder over this result and judge for yourself whether you come into the same category. It is sad to say that very often we as members of the Lord's Church fall victim to a condition of this type. Many of you will agree with me that the reason is obvious. We have failed to see ourselves in the light of what Apostle Paul wrote to the Church of Ephesus. In the epistle he stated thus: "See them that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore, be ye not unwise but understanding what the will of the Lord is." Eph. 5:15-17.

Paul is telling the people that it is impossible to get the time. For this reason it is imperative that they set time for themselves to work for the Lord. These Christians were human beings as we are and were also prone to making mistakes as we do. In order, therefore, to overcome the adversary, we need to be well equipped, we need to redeem the time.

But we can become aware of this situation only when we realise the responsibility and brevity of life. We often fail to realise that we are bought with a prize and as such more is expected of us. So to make it our prime aim to redeem the time, we need to understand our responsibility as the followers of Christ, and most of all to accept them. Any person who names the name of the Lord, therefore needs to accept the following:

#### 1. Subordination of Earthly Duties to Heavenly Ones.

There is a considerable need to understand that all Christians are called for a spiritual responsibility. The Book of Phillipians tells us that 'our citizenship is in heaven,' Phil. 3:20. So we need to seek those things which are above. In essence we are to exclude ourselves from this rat-race in search of worldly treasures. Our portion should be as Peter said, 'show forth the praise of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light' 1 Peter, 2:9. In actual fact we need to prove to the world that we are satisfied with having food and raiment 1 Tim. 6:8.

#### 2. A Consistent Example to the World.

Our example to the world is very important and very necessary. We all know of the statement, 'Actions speak louder than words.' It is not what we say that proves to the world that we are Christians, rather it is what we do. And as Jesus said, we are the light of the world. It is only when we shine that the world will know our presence. A lamp-post without a light means nothing to a man in the dark. The Apostle Peter exhorted the wives to live a life of holiness for the glory of the Lord 1 Pet. 3:1-2. And Apostle Paul also wrote to the Church of Corinth to learn of him as he also learned of Christ 1 Cor. 11:1. In effect, we need to prove to the world in both our actions and speech that we have been with the Lord.

#### 3. Responsibility to the World.

Have you ever given thought to the statement, '!...son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel, therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me' Ezek. 33:7. This is a message to all believers since this message was to Ezekiel, a faithful prophet of the Lord. Christians, as we should know, are followers of Christ, and if followers then we, too, must be prepared to lay down our life for the salvation of others. For this is exactly what our Master did. But this responsibility can be fulfilled only when we devote much time to serving others. Sometimes it will mean devoting our life to others.

#### 4. Brevity of Life

Most of us will agree that we all have in mind the desire to do the will of the Lord and look forward to the day when we will be free to do so. One thing we forget is that life is short. The Psalmist has stated, "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is there strength, labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off and we fly away. Ps. 90:10. Death is universal and unless the Lord returns soon we will all die. But the Bible tells us that, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good

or bad." 2 Cor. 5:10. Knowing that the distance from the cradle to the grave is so short, it is very important that we share the faith and hope in us every moment of our life rather than thinking of a glorious day when we will be able to devote all our life to the service of the Lord.

In conclusion, I will draw your attention to this writing by an anonymous author:

We go through this world but once. A friend of mine; so why not make the journey worthwhile, and give to those who walk along with us a helping hand, a word of cheer, a smile?

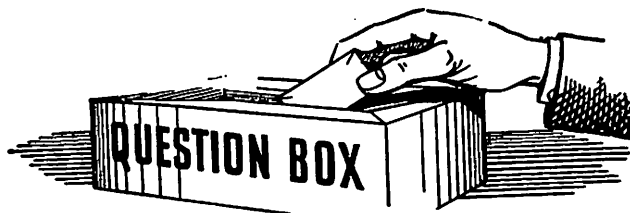
We go this way but once. Ah! nevermore can we go back along the selfsame way to get more out of life, undo the wrongs or speak love's words we know but did not say.

We go this way but once. Then let us make the road we travel blossomy and sweet with helpful, kindly deeds and tender words, to smooth the path for bruised and stumbling feet.

With this new insight and appreciation of the value of time, let us determine to make our days count for God. Remember Paul's message to the Church in Corinth, "... be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. 1 Cor. 15:58.

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Conducted by  
Aif Marsden

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Recently I was in the home of a fellow-Christian and we were discussing the sort of things that a Christian should do. We agreed on some things, but disagreed on others. Could you please comment on this?

The most pleasing aspect of this question is the fact that Christians are so concerned about the quality of the Christian life that they are prepared to discuss it when they meet together in each others homes. This is most encouraging and is just as it should be, because it is quite evident to me that we shall never improve the quality of our Christian living unless we are willing to think about and to discuss the ways in which we can please the Lord. I am not aware of the things which were discussed on this particular occasion, but it seems to me that the questioner is echoing the words of Paul when he wrote to the Colossians, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." (Coll. 2:6,7).

#### Established in the Faith

I suppose that giving one's life to Christ can be likened in some ways to taking a new job. Even though one may know the essential facts of any new position, it takes time and effort to **become established** in that position. There are new facets of the task to uncover; new people to meet and new relationships to be established; new concepts to be appreciated and new horizons to view. The same things are true of our Christian lives; we put off the old and put on the new, but it takes time and effort before we become fully established in the faith.

To establish means to fix, to set, to make fast; it is the confirming of the saints in the gospel and in the teaching of Christ. According to Romans 16.25-27, the confirmation of the saints in the gospel is under the direct power of the everlasting God. He has revealed the mystery 'which was kept secret since the world began.' This work was also administered by the apostle Paul and others, because Paul writes, "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established" (Rom. 1:11).

Yes, before we can do anything else we must be established in the faith. When Paul wrote to Thessalonica he said, "But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil. And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you" (2 Thess. 3:3,4). So every Christian should determine to read God's word and to understand what He wants us to do, and then do it. That way we cannot fail to grow.

### Constancy

Failure to agree in every details is not the end of the world. Disagreement is often a sign of differences in spiritual maturity. What is important is that we should all have a willingness to learn, so that we shall not be found *constant in error*. It is constancy *in the truth* which should be the aim of every Christian.

How are we to achieve this? When Paul wrote his letter to Ephesus his plea to them was, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (Eph. 3:17). The verb used here is an old one and means 'to make one's home, to be at home'. What seems to be indicated here is that a necessary pre-requisite to the attainment of spiritual maturity is that Christ should be allowed to make his home in our hearts. Further on in the letter we are told that in addition to the spiritual in-dwelling of Christ, there are the gifts which he dispensed to the church out of the munificence of his ascended glory, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, pastors and teachers. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:11,12). The intention is that we should become mature men, our level of attainment being "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (v13).

There is a specific objective in all of this; "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (v14). The early church was troubled by the twin evils of Docetism and Gnosticism, and the only way to combat these was by being rooted and grounded in the love of Christ, and constant in the faith. Today, many plausible deceivers talk to us on our doorsteps and in our homes; the only way to combat them is by being constant in the faith, and unwavering in our desire to uphold the unity of the church.

### Knowledge

If we are to become spiritually mature and do the things that a Christian should do, then knowledge of God's word is vital. Paul's prayer for the Colossian Christians took this form, "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." (Coll. 1:9,10).

I have always contended that it is possible to know and understand the revealed will of God. Indeed, the Colossian passage makes it plain that we can only walk worthy of the Lord by knowing the will of God. His revealed will is found in the Bible. The tragedy of our witness today is that too many Christians never bother to read the Bible except when it is read in public meetings, and explained by preachers. The alarm bells should ring when we view denominationalism around us; only the clergy handle the book and the rank and file are willing to let them; we have seen where that road leads to! Each individual Christian should understand that his personal stability in the faith depends upon *his* knowledge and understanding of the word. What did Paul say to Timothy? "O Timothy, guard the deposit." If the elders of an assembly are not fulfilling their God-given function, then *each Christians* knowledge of the word should tell him so. Each Christian should also know what to do in such a situation. Is the preacher preaching error? We would know if we knew the word. Switch off the time-consuming monster in the corner for a change; take down God's word from its shelf; and instead of the sordid imagery we are so accustomed to seeing, we shall find leaping from the papers of the holy book a message of life and hope which will thrill the heart, strengthen the weak hands and fill us with a consuming Christian purpose. The book is ours; God wrote it in blood; why do we neglect it?

Dear questioner, I cannot tell all that a Christian should do in every circumstance in which

he finds himself, but one thing I know with certainty; there is an answer, there is a course of action that we should take; you and I have to fix our eyes on the Lord, and read and study God's word. Then we shall know. I have tried to point you in a direction which should improve the quality of each individual Christian life. Let us then, together, strive to be full established in the faith; let us be constant in applying that faith to the extent of our knowledge at any given time; and let us determine that each day that God spares us we shall learn something more of His will. Enrichment is then assured. May God bless you.

(All questions, please to: Alf Marsden, 377 Billinge Road, Highfield, Wigan, Lancs.)

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

JUNE 1979

3 I Kings 8, 12-28 Acts 6

10 Exodus 2, 1-22 Acts 7, 1-29

17 II Chron. 24, 1, 2 and 15-25 Acts 7, 30-60

24 II Kings 17, 21-41 Acts 8, 1-25

### Daily Ministration

It is a matter of real difficulty for most of us to get a true conception of what this means. If the number of men came to be about 5,000 (4,4), how many people were really involved? It surely must have meant at least 10,000 including women and children. The number of disciples was multiplying (6,1). The apostles in particular but we may surely add many more to have joined them as working partners, were occupied in works of mercy and in teaching. When the "son of exhortation" became a disciple (4,36) and many like him, they could not be idle spectators of the apostles, and we have no doubt that by this time the powers of the Holy Spirit had been imparted to some by the apostles (6,5) though their **authority was exclusive** (5,13). Many foreign-born Jews, who were present at the feasts as a matter of custom, naturally stayed at Jerusalem when they were baptised and identified with all the believers. They would require the help which for the first time in history became the holy ambition of men and women animated by the spirit of Jesus as expressed by His behaviour and His teaching. So among them there were widows as among the inhabitants of Jerusalem and these were specially cared for by the apostles themselves. Their numbers would be small in proportion but their needs especially urgent. It was inevitable that the treatment of some not natives would appear unequal, so murmuring arose.

### General consultation

How wisely the apostles acted! These transformed men guided by the Holy Spirit "called the multitude together" and put the problem to them with the truth that it was not reasonable, fit or pleasing to God that they, given authority among the believers, should spend their time in material philanthropy when the more urgent work of speaking God's message of love and forgiveness and witnessing to the resurrection of Christ, was peculiarly their work. Like the Saviour Himself they did the physical relief work as a "must". You cannot be a Christian without that, but it is the outcome of divine truth, not the truth itself. The church of Christ cannot be propagated by physical birth or material philanthropy. The welfare state is not the answer to human need — it may even become its damnation. So others must be chosen at this point in the church's history to share the responsibility while those the Lord chose and appointed to set up His church "continue stedfastly in prayer and the ministry of the word" (6,4). It seems that men from among the foreign-born Jewish Christians were put forward by their brethren — the names show this. Their qualifications "full of the holy spirit and wisdom". We do not know the where, when or how of the choice — it must have been a large meeting, probably in the Temple precincts (see 5,13). The appointment was made with prayer and the laying on of hands of the apostles. The work of philanthropy was developed and the Jerusalem minority of believers grew to larger proportions. Many priests who should certainly have been the thoughtful members of the community became obedient to the faith. They became followers of the Lord Who fulfilled it.

### Violence the result of success

The defection of priests must have been a sever blow to the religious authorities. The influence of the apostles grew day by day as



they persecuted their work in homes and of all places IN THE TEMPLE. Fear of the people delayed action against them and gave them still use of the Temple courts. However this could not continue and Stephen's work brought him into conflict with Jews of very keen national zeal. He was probably one of them originally. His appointed work among widows did not stay there. We imagine he would have special concern to relieve widows concerning whom complaint was made, and would not stop at believers. This may have brought him into conflict with the foreign-born Jews like Saul of Tarsus, zealous for the Law partly on account of their living among Gentiles. The dispute with them brought wrath upon him especially as they were quite unable to withstand his word and his spirit. Helpless in this way they roused all possible opposition against him. His miraculous power only enraged them against him as had those of Jesus before, and the same action was taken. Harsh as his concluding words appear, they did but express the truth very plainly and were spoken without spite. In the same way that Jesus finally brought the truth to bear against the scribes and Pharisees as "His time" drew near (Matthew 23) so Stephen skillfully portrayed historically the rejection of truth by the forbears of those who now used false witnesses against him. Tracing their past, he faces them with the truth that Joseph was rejected and yet saved their fathers, Moses was rejected and yet saved them, and the work of God for them met with unfaithfulness and heathenism. There was a double accusation of disloyalty to the law and the Holy Place. He answers with accusation of rejection in the past in their dealings with God, and a reminder to those who were listening would come to a knowledge of the truth? Stephen did not really need to defend himself against the charges — both were true but they were neither disrespectful nor blasphemous. Saul approved the murder. Stephen died but the truth had been spoken and the spirit of Christ manifested with his dying breath.

### Samaria

The despised and hated nation is no longer so. The programme puts it second (1,8). It seems significant that two of the men appointed to look after the poor made themselves useful in the wider field. Stephen's work must have had a big influence on Judaea. Philip chose to go further and was

wonderfully successful. He is one of those of whom we have further note in the Acts. He was taken from his work in Samaria to bring the Ethiopian the gospel and then preached in many cities before settling in Caesarea where he entertained Paul and had a family of four daughters who had the gift of prophecy. He is the only named evangelist in the N.T. though Timothy is instructed to do the work of one. (Acts 21,8:2 Tim. 4,5).

R. B. SCOTT.

### "The Use of Illustration in Teaching" (1)

#### 1. — On THE IMPORTANCE of Illustration in Teaching

(1) THE important of illustration for the purpose of enforcing truth is so obvious, that it seems a work of supererogation to say one word concerning it . . . A man may often find materials to enliven a discourse which might otherwise have proved very dull, or to fasten on the conscience a truth or a warning, which otherwise would have fallen on the ear unnoticed, and glided past the mind unfelt. It is not enough that truth be pointed, like a straight smooth piece of steel; it needs side points, as a dart, that it may not draw out, when it effects an entrance. Anecdotes and illustrations may not only illustrate a point, and make an audience see and feel the argument, but they may themselves add to the argument; they may at once be a part of the reasoning, and an elucidation of it. Indeed, a just figure always adds power to a chain of logic, and increases the amount of truth conveyed. It is also of great use in relieving the attention, as a stopping-place where the mind is rested, and prepared to resume the reasoning without fatigue, without loss. Almost any expedient, which decorum permits, may be justified, in order to awake and fix the attention of an audience. Such attention, however, cannot be *kept* but by truth worth illustrating.

Dr. Abercrombie speaks of the importance of illustrations and analogies for assisting and training the memory of children. The same discipline is equally necessary for the hearers of sermons. Although they may have forgotten the text, the subject, and almost the whole design of the preacher, they will not unfrequently carry away the illustrations, and everything in the train of thoughts lying immediately in their neighbourhood. And, indeed, a single illustration will sometimes

flash the meaning of a whole sermon upon the minds that otherwise would have departed scarcely knowing the application of a sentence.

Everyone must have observed the effect of the introduction of such lights and illustrations upon an audience. The whole assembly may have appeared up to the point uninterested, listless, even oppressed with stupor; but the moment the preacher says, "I will illustrate this point by a relation of what took place in the life of such or such a person," an entire change comes on the whole congregation. Every countenance is lighted up with expectation, every mind is on the alert. Even if the minister says, "We will suppose a case for the purpose of illustration," even then the attention of the hearers is at once aroused. The presentation of actual facts, or cases of interest in point, is so attractive, that if real incidents are not at hand, it were better to suppose them than leave the subject without such illustration, in instances where it admits of it.

Accordingly, in the Scriptures, and in discourses of our blessed Lord, it is evident that suppositions are made, and fables are related, to illustrate and enforce truth, to give it life and action. This constituted a powerful charm in our Saviour's preaching, even for those who cared nothing for the spiritual lessons He was enforcing. The beauty and exceeding aptness of His cases and illustrations may have caught many a careless soul when the bare dry truth would have failed to touch the heart. The truth that a man is miserable who layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God, might have been stated in ever so forcible language without reaching the conscience of the hearers. But when our Lord proceeded to say, "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully," with the solemn close of the epilogue, "Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee!" what conscience could remain unmoved? The hearers of our blessed Lord were so deeply interested and absorbed in such narratives, that sometimes they seem to have forgotten that they were merely illustrations; and interrupted Him, carried away by their feelings, or desiring the thread of the narrative to unwind differently, as in the case when they broke in upon one of His parables with the declaration, "Lord, he hath ten pounds already!" One can see the company,

their interest, their eagerness, and the truth taking hold upon them; we can hear their exclamations, as if a drama of real life were enacting before them. And it was life, taken out of the form of abstract, and dramatised for their life, their instruction.

— *Cheever*

(2.) The revealing the Word by similitudes is very useful and profitable; for it conduces much to make truth go to a man's heart before he is aware, and to impress it upon his memory. Many remember the simile, and so the truth which it conveyed. It is reported of the Marquis Galeacias, a nobleman of great estates, and near of kin to the Pope, that once coming but to hear Peter Martyr preach, by a mere simile that he used, God smote his heart, and made it the means of his conversion. The simile was thus: Peter Martyr in his discourse had occasion to say, Men may think very hardly of God and His people, but this is because they do not know Him; as suppose a man a great way off sees a company of excellent dancers, the musicians are playing, and there is exact art in all they do. At the distance he regards them as a company of madmen, but (added he) as he draws nearer and nearer to them, and hears the melodious sound, and observes the art that they use, then he is much taken and affected. So it is with you. You are a great way off, and look from a great distance upon the ways of God, and so you think His people mad; but could you come to observe what excellency is in them, it would take captive your hearts. God blessed such a similitude as this to that great man's heart, so that though he wife and children lay imploring at his feet, yet he came to Geneva, and there continued all his days. But we should take some heed here.

1. Similes should be brought from things known.

2. We must not urge similes too far, we must take heed of a luxuriant, wanton wit.

3. And they must be very natural, plain, and proper, or else man will appear in them rather than God.

— *Burroughs, 1599-1648*

(3.) Nothing strikes the mind of man so powerfully as instances and examples. They make a truth not only intelligible but even palpable, sliding it into the understanding through the windows of sense, and by the most familiar as well as most unquestionable

perceptions of the eye.

— *South, 1633-1716*

(4.) A proverb or parable being once unfolded, by reason of its affinity with the fancy, the more sweetly insinuates itself into that, and is from thence with the greater advantage transmitted to the understanding. In this state we are not able to behold truth in its own native beauty and lustre; but while we are veiled with mortality, truth must veil itself too, that it may the more freely converse with us.

— *John Smith, 1618-1652*

### THE ART OF ILLUSTRATION II Our Lord's method of teaching

(5.) With matter divine and manner human, our Lord descended to the level of the humblest of the crowd, lowering Himself to their understandings, and winning His way into their hearts by borrowing His topics from familiar circumstances and the scenes around Him. Be it a boat, a plank, a rope, a beggar's rags, an imperial robe, we would seize on anything to save a drowning man; and in His anxiety to save poor sinners, to rouse their fears, their love, their interest, to make them understand and feel the truth, our Lord pressed everything — art and nature, earth and heaven — into His service. Creatures of habit, the servants if not the slaves of form, we invariably select our text from some book of the Sacred Scriptures. He took a wider, freer range; and, instead of keeping to the unvarying routine of text and sermon with formal divisions, it were well, perhaps, that we sometimes ventured to follow His example; for may it not be to the naturalness of their addresses and their striking out from the beaten path of texts and sermons, to their plain, speaking and homethrusts, to their direct appeals and homespun arguments, that our street and lay preachers owe perhaps not a little of their power?

### EVANGELIST WANTED

The Slamannan District Churches of Christ require an evangelist and all interested brethren should apply in writing to the District Secretary: Hugh Davidson, 21 Glen Lyon, St. Leonards, East Kilbride, G74 2JJ.

## OBITUARY

**EASTWOOD.** Sister Daisy Barker passed peacefully from this life on February 16th at the age of 89 after a brief illness.

She was immersed in the meeting house at Midland Road, Heanor at the age of 10, so had been a faithful Christian for about 80 years. When the congregation at Heanor ceased to exist Sister Barker transferred her membership to the assembly which meets at Seymour Road, Eastwood and was an example of faithfulness to Christians, young and old. Many friends as well as Christians will remember her as 'Aunty Daisy.'

She will be missed, but we can rejoice that she has gone to her eternal rest and to be forever with the Lord. Rev. 14:13.

G. E. BULLOCK  
(Secretary)

### OBITUARY

**BLACKBURN,** New Wellington Street. The church here at Blackburn are saddened to record the passing on February 26th of our well loved Sister May Renshaw at the age of 74 years. She was laid to rest on March 2nd, 1979. She was added to the Lord's Church approx. 60 years ago and had been in fellowship at Hamilton Street for most of that time. Over the last two years she had been in fellowship with us here in Mill Hill and was a regular attender at all our meetings until she suffered a stroke on January 28th, 1978. She lay in hospital for 13 months unable to communicate with all who visited her.

Our Sister May will be sadly missed but we have the joy of remembered she won both her sons into the church and also her husband who passed away about six years ago.

To all her family who are left behind, especially her sons Roy and Derek, we pray God will comfort them and give them peace, secure in the knowledge that one day we will all meet again in heaven if we remain faithful and finish the course as May did. The writer had known her all his life and can witness to her steadfastness.

HARRY N. HOLDEN

### GIVE HIM THE BEST

The story is told of a girl by the name of Ruth, whose aunt had urged her to become a Christian, but the girl delayed making her decision, saying, "I will when I am older."

There came a day when Ruth's mother was ill, and Ruth ordered some beautiful flowers at the florist's and had them sent to the house. When she returned, she went to her mother's room, but the flowers were not there.

"Didn't the florist send the flowers I ordered?" she asked her aunt. "Yes," she replied, "They are down in the kitchen. As soon as they begin to be withered and dry, I will bring them up to your mother's room."

Ruth was shocked, and her eyes flashed as she said, "I want my mother to have these flowers while they are fresh and beautiful. I love her too much to give her what is wilted and faded."

"Oh!" exclaimed her aunt, in feigned surprise. "You told me that you intended to give your life to Jesus when it was wilted and faded, and so I supposed you would feel that way about this gift to your mother."

Ruth saw the point. "You are right," she said. "I have not been fair to Jesus. I will give him the best of my life now while I am young and strong and able to serve him. I will give myself today and always."

—via Denton, Texas, Bulletin.

*The consciousness of well-doing is in itself ample reward.*

\* \* \*

*The trouble is you're only young once; after that you have to think up a good excuse for what you've done.*

\* \* \*

*Good nature and good sense are usually companions.*

\* \* \*

*Life is a short day but it is a working day.*

\* \* \*

*The pilot who is always dreading a rock or a tempest must not complain if he remains a poor fisherman.*

\* \* \*

*To climb steep hills requires slow pace at first.*

\* \* \*

*The worst use that can be made of success is to boast of it.*

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