

The **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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IT'S ONLY A GAME

After months of frantic speculation and feverish anticipation, we are now plunged into the excitements and vexations of another football World Cup ('soccer' to the uninitiated) currently being held in Mexico. Football is a sport which has not only blossomed throughout Europe but is now the favourite pastime in South America, the Middle East and, apparently, is now making inroads in Canada and the U.S.A. All the boasts from team managers and soccer pundits as to how certain teams would do in the competition will now be justified, or otherwise, and, already, many have had to eat their words and go into hiding. Indeed some teams are already on their way home 'in sackcloth and ashes'. Emotions are running high and only yesterday there were hysterical riots in Mexico City. So far, the British teams have not been doing very well and the media have been trying to explain why this should be (after all, we invented the game) but nobody seems to have reached the conclusion I reached years ago — that we are just not good enough. However, on the radio this morning, one commentator put all the hysteria, excitement, tears and tension into true perspective when he said, "Never mind, it's only a game". Surely these are words to cool the fevered brow "It's only a game". How true. Some, of course, would go as far as to say that twenty-two grown men running about trying to kick a ball between two goal posts ought to have their heads examined, as should the hundreds who watch them, but, of course, psychologists tell us that men have to 'let off steam' somehow. The same could be said, I suppose, of belting a tiny white ball all around the golf course, or breaking a few bones on the rugby pitch. Let's be charitable and say, "It's only a game". And yet every Saturday thousands of fanatical soccer supporters wreck trains, demolish stadia and fight pitched battles, even to the death, ostensibly for their love of the game. Is it not amazing to consider how seriously we treat games, and at the same time treat serious matters with frivolous indifference? Games we treat seriously and serious matters we treat as if they were games.

GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

Surely nothing could be much more serious than marriage and yet it seems to be treated nowadays as a kind of 'Paul Jones' or square-dance where we can all change partners. Young couples seem to enter the life-contract in a very

light-hearted manner, as if it was all 'a bit of a giggle', knowing, I suppose, that if it does not 'work out' they can get a divorce just as easily and try someone else. Consequently many marriages don't last a year. Some of the more serious games are the 'war-games' and the 'power-games'. Politicians play games with the lives of people, and health and life take second place to political considerations. Some governments spend vast sums on guns and at the same time watch millions of their population die of malnutrition, while on the other hand some governments have allowed citizens to die from nuclear contamination (assuring all that there is nothing to fear but all the time withholding vital information). Politicians also engage in power-struggles and use the common people as pawns in their games, as in some of the South American Republics at the moment, and it is usually the poor civilians who come off worst in all these political machinations. During the First World War the cream of Europe's youth were flung into that great war of carnage where millions of young men were considered merely as 'cannon fodder' in a long war of attrition. Army generals, over a bottle of whisky, would quite dispassionately discuss how many hundreds of thousands of men they would lose in the next 'push' and later in their 'Memoirs' admit their tactical mistakes in the battle involving the needless loss of thousands of good men. Then there are those who would say, "Well, these things are inevitable; after all life itself is a game, even a gamble". "Life is a cabaret, old chum" or as Shakespeare said, "all the world is a stage" and we are the players, playing out the serious game of life. Apart from playing games with other men's lives, some play very dangerous games even with their own lives, and every so often we read of the tragic deaths of boxers, racing drivers and various types of 'stunt' men. Yes, men take games seriously but play games with the serious things in life.

A SHOW OF RELIGION?

Could it be that to many of us, religion is just a game? A respectable game, perhaps, but a game nevertheless? Is religion one of 'the games people play'? Is religion, as the song-writer says, a question of "putting on the agony, putting on the style"? The poet Burns was not an irreligious man, but he regarded the outworkings of religion in his locality as a bit of a game, with the landed-gentry sitting in the best pews and the clergy putting on a good performance. It must be true that many churches 'play to the gallery' rather than being solely motivated to worship God. The stained-glass window is surely not for God's benefit. As young children we used to play 'houses' or 'hospitals', and is it possible that, as adults, we play 'churches'? Those who play the church game have a mental picture of what 'church' should be like and consequently are greatly surprised (and often disappointed) when they come to our meeting-places and find no spire, no choirs, no stained-glass windows, no organ, no font, no high altar, no 'minister', no clerical garbs. It is difficult to take men seriously when they dress up in ridiculous clothes. In fact it must be difficult to keep a straight face at the General Assembly (of the Church of Scotland) when the Moderator appears in his frock-coat and gaiters. Who says religion isn't a bit of a game? It is said that the size of the congregation of some denominations increases greatly on Easter Sunday when new 'rig outs' and Easter Bonnets vie with one another for attention. Is it possible that people would 'go to church' mainly to show off new clothes, or for some equally trivial reason, or to catch the eye of one of the opposite sex? I am reliably informed that the answer is

“Yes”. I certainly notice a dramatic increase in the number of cars outside some churches when it's ‘Communion Sunday’ and apparently that is the only time some members turn up. Congregations swell, apparently, on those ‘special’ occasions such as Christmas, ‘christenings’, pulpit exchanges, film shows and the like. In such establishments men and women seem to be playing ‘church’ and the worship of God seems to be of secondary importance. Such would probably be very surprised to hear that the word ‘church’ does not ever refer to a building of stone but to **people** — to those called out from the world to promote and project the things of God. Is it possible that members of the churches of Christ are, quite often, merely playing at ‘church’ and would welcome any move for us to become more like the denominations around us, with choirs, with ‘a minister’, with an organ and with, if we could afford it, a few stained-glass windows? Is it possible? Is there any evidence of such a trend? In order to compete with the denominations are we in danger of becoming one, or have we moved in that direction already? (Since starting this article an invitation to our congregation has been received to a weekend of Meetings on the theme “Glorifying God” but restricted to **unmarried members only** (18 years or over) and promises “plenty of entertainment”.)

THE REAL CONTEST

It is certainly true that the N.T. nowhere associates the Christian life with some frivolous game or pastime in any **literal** sense. Indeed the apostle Paul seemed to think that bodily exercise profiteth little. The very same apostle did, however, liken the Christian life in a **figurative** sense to games held in Corinth, Delphi and Olympia. These games consisted of all kinds of athletic activity and included footraces, horse racing, boxing, wrestling, jumping, discus and javelin throwing. The games at Olympia were, of course, forerunner of the present Olympic Games, and Paul alludes to them in his first letter to the Christians at Corinth. He reminds them that, as God's apostle, he could have insisted upon being supported financially, but chose to provide for himself, with the work of his own hands, so that he might preach the gospel quite free of charge (I Cor. 9: 18). It was reward enough to him that he could do this work without charge. In the following verses Paul goes on to explain that he made all kinds of personal sacrifices, and all kinds of personal privations, “for the gospel's sake” so that he might be like one of the well disciplined and highly trained athletes who ran in the local games. “**Every man who striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible**” (v. 25). The analogy is really quite an ingenious one and there must be very few of us who cannot readily see the lesson. Any athlete worthy of the term is very careful about what he eats and drinks and what he does. No gluttony or self-indulgence; no party-going or riotous living. Paul is not advocating that we all become athletes in any physical sense but that we become athletes in a spiritual sense, living temperate lives. The other point emphasised by Paul is that athletes go to all this trouble and endeavour for an earthly prize, for ‘a corruptible crown’ but we do it for a heavenly. The true athlete spends a rather lonely existence, separated from his fellows, and from things which would militate against his purposes, sweating and forcing himself (or herself) into hours of weary exercises. He is sustained only by the driving force of the end-result; by the hope of reward, by the desire for success and human adulation. His is

truly an earthly prize. We likewise, indeed we moreso, should run the Christian race with strength of purpose, never to be diverted from our main resolve, eschewing all encouragements to opt out of the race and to 'take it easy' at the side of the track. In the next verse (v. 26) Paul adds, **"I therefore so run not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air. But I keep under, my body and bring it into subjection lest that by any means, when I have preached to others I myself should be a cast-away."** Here Paul affirms that he was not 'playing games'; he was not running uncertainly (aimlessly) nor was he (changing the figure to pugilism) beating the air (or shadow-boxing). Quite a few boxers look very impressive, and very fierce, when they are shadow-boxing and it is only when they are actually in the ring with an opponent that their inability is manifest. It must be true to say that much of our efforts in the church are more akin to 'beating the air' than anything else; more shadow-boxing than real conflict; more discussion than actual effort. Paul however, was in real earnest, and made every punch tell — in the proper parlance Paul 'punched his weight'.

Thus to some, religion might be just a game, but to Paul the Christian life was a momentous race for all to run, offering to those who would complete the course the heavenly prize of life everlasting. Paul's grand purpose was not only to save souls, but in the process to save his own for it was possible that having preached to others he himself might be a cast-away. His strategy was to live a temperate life-style, of self-denial and patient perseverance. Athletes were quite prepared to do it for the laurel-leaf diadem; Paul was prepared to do it for the crown of righteousness. Near the end of his life, he could say, **"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but to all them that love His appearing."** (2 Tim. 4: 7).

The race is not a sprint but more of a marathon, and marathons are very popular these days. Those who run them would not describe them as a 'game' but are quick to testify of the discomfort, the 'pain-barriers' the thirst and the exhaustion. Being first past the post is not really important, however, and all those who persevere to finish the course share in the satisfaction and in the glory. There are, after all, many watering places on the way. May the Lord help all those who have entered upon the Christian race to **"lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith"** (Heb. 12: 1).

To some, religion may indeed be just 'a bit of a game', a performance or even a charade. Let it not be said of us. Nor should our efforts for Christ amount merely to sparring with a few shadows, or squaring up well to a non-existent opponent? Let us resolve to be more effective in the work of the Lord.

EDITOR.

GLEANINGS

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

THE NATURE OF CONVERSION

"What kind of turning is meant, when, in the Scripture sense, conversion is spoken of? It is not every turning that would be called a conversion. Our Latin

friend, 'conversion', is restricted in application to a certain kind of turning. Men may turn round times without number, and yet not be converts to Christ. They may turn from one religion to another, and from one denomination to another, until they have been allied with all, and still have given no ground for others to believe that they are converts in the Scripture sense. What, then, is conversion in the Scripture, spiritual acceptance of that term?

Paul's language in I Thes. 1:9-10 sheds considerable light on our query. "Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven." There was a previous life **turned from**, and a new line of conduct **turned to**. They had been idolaters. In conversion they turned their back upon idolatrous customs. In the wider language of Acts 14:15, there was a turning from **vanities**. Whatever things were vain, empty, worthless, antagonistic to God, were left; and, whatever was revealed as the divine will they turned themselves to, engaged themselves in. It was not an engagement **merely in contemplating** God, studying His character, His ways, and His revelation, however useful and delightful that might be. It was a **servng** of God. A faithful servant carries out his master's will, does what he is bidden. In like manner the true convert has turned from wrong things, and is busy doing what God has commanded.

To do what God enjoins implies the possession of knowledge derivable only from revelation. The convert is acquainted with God's revealed will, and cheerfully does it. Hence Paul could speak of himself as sent to the Gentiles, "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts 26:18). First, there is light imparted; then, acting according to the light, men are freed from sin and Satan's sway, and brought into the service and liberty of the truth and of God."

Alexander Brown

NEUTRALITY

"Tell me not of neutrality; it is out of the question. Ah! here is a case of neutrality upon record to this book: "Curse ye Meroz!" Why? What had the people done to expose themselves to this bitter malediction? Had they taken up arms against Jehovah? No! Had they gone over to the enemy, and fought against the chosen people? No! What, then, had they done? Nothing! **Their neutrality was their crime.** "Because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

Dr Newton

OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN

"And what a glorious Father He is! the source of all true fatherhood and motherhood. We have often walked in the fields in the early morning, and have noticed how the rising sun has turned each dewdrop into a glittering gem; one ray of its own bright light making a little sun of each of the million drops that hang from the pendant leaflets and sparkle everywhere. But it is helpful to remember that the glorious orb itself contains infinitely more light than all the dewdrops ever did or ever will reflect. And so of our Heavenly Father: Himself the great Source of all that is noble and true, of all that ever has been loving and trustworthy — each beautiful trait of each beautiful character is but the dim reflection of some ray of His own great perfection. And the sum-total of all human goodness, and tenderness, and love is but as the dewdrops to the sun. How blessed then to confide in the infinite and changeless love of such a Father — **our Father in Heaven.**"

Hudson Taylor

WORDS OF DEEP MYSTERY

“It is God who is working in you, affecting alike your willing and your working; for the sake of His good pleasure.” These are words of deep mystery. They contain matter which has exercised the closest thought of some of the greatest thinkers of the Church . . . “He worketh in us to will.” How is this to be reconciled with the reality, and in that sense the freedom, of the human will? What relation does it bear to human responsibility, and to the call to watch, and pray, and labour? Very soon, over such questions, we have, in the phrase of the Rabbis, to “teach our tongue to say, I do not know”. But the words appear in this context with a purpose perfectly simple and practical, whatever be their more remote and hidden indications.”

H. C. G. Moule

Selected by Leonard Morgan

INVADING THE CITY

More than three years ago I gave three Sunday evening talks on the same theme. I was driven by a divine compulsion as I made them. Using Abraham as an example, I called the series “Looking For a City”. I will not bore you with the details. Summarizing briefly, I traced the urbanization of our culture from the frontier, through ruralization, to the present. I pointed out that this was the path toward loss of virility. It was the road which inevitably led to rot and decay. I affirmed that Jesus would not flee to the suburbs with their lovely flowers and manicured lawns. He would turn back into the city. He was anointed to preach to the poor. My talks fell as flat as a pancake. No one stepped forward to volunteer for the new adventure. It was too radical and revolutionary for those of us who had been reared in middle-class homes.

Oak Hill Chapel is small. We have about a hundred in attendance. As our building filled, we went through all of the institutional phases. We checked on enlargement of our building. We considered trading it for a larger and much more beautiful building in the midst of a stable community. We were challenged to unite our forces with another congregation in an elite residential area. None of these caught fire. It was as if an unseen hand was closing doors to keep us from “tearing down our barns and building greater”. Finally, the congregation took a vote. By a very slim majority we decided to stay where we were and form a support group for an inner city attempt. I had “laid an egg” three years before. Now it had begun to hatch. As usual, God’s incubator was not governed by man’s calendar.

Two of us, a young attorney and myself, began to look for sites. We drove up and down dirty and disreputable streets. We investigated every vacant store building as well as everything else that held any promise. I talked with two Catholic priests. They were favourable and offered to help. We had previously taken two van loads of clothing to Hosea House, their distribution centre for the naked and homeless. We were tempted to purchase a place in use by Grace and Peace Fellowship. They were abandoning it after several years of the same kind of effort in which we would engage. We went there for a basket dinner one Sunday. We analysed their mistakes and resolved to avoid them.

One day as I was cruising the streets, I saw the spot. As Brigham Young, when he surveyed the desert of Utah from the mountain, I said, “This is the place.” It was a former tavern and house of prostitution. Upstairs there had

been fifteen plywood partitioned cribs to which the girls took their customers whom they had solicited in the tavern downstairs. Someone in the community had put the torch to it. It stood a boarded-up, fire-gutted shell for many months. When the "headache ball" was about to swing, a builder examined it, found it to be structurally sound, and started to rehabilitate it.

When I first saw it, there were three government-subsidised apartments above it; but the downstairs was still a shambles. We rented it. Since that time it has been remodeled and fixed up. As I write this, we have met there for five weeks. The girls have made and hung beautiful curtains. Two pots of flowers hang in the windows. A stove, refrigerator, and double sink have been installed. Soon, posters with a Christian message and pictures will adorn the walls to give it a living-room effect. A sign will go up next week: It will read: "The Cornerstone — An Adventure in Christian Fellowship — by Oak Hill Chapel."

We are at last in the agora — the marketplace. The other evening I sat and counted the cars going through the intersection of Utah and Ohio Streets. In forty-five minutes there were a hundred. We are but a short distance from Soulard Market, the oldest outdoor market west of the Mississippi. A few blocks down the street are the old DeMenil and Lemp Homes, old world relics of the past century when Saint Louis was the home of many breweries. They have been swallowed up by Anheuser-Busch, the acrid fumes of whose brewing mash, flavoured by hops, assails our nostrils as we meet.

A part of our carefully thought-out strategy called for us to infiltrate the area. We wanted to avoid revivals and other hard-core attacks. We distributed a thousand flyers in the vicinity of Oak Hill Chapel informing people of our plans and asking their prayers. We felt we could do no harm by taking them into our confidence. We met together for four months every Sunday afternoon while the place was being rented and readied. The attendance was sporadic. The interest was disappointing. Finally, we were ready to start. We planned to begin with meetings on Saturday evenings. We began with twenty-eight persons. Ten of them were non-members.

Since that time we have started a quilting session on Thursday afternoon, followed by a meeting for teenagers on Thursday evening. Our next venture will be a free blood pressure check-up and a Vacation Bible Study for children. We are surrounded with a swarm of children. They play on the street in front of and to the side of our building. The great majority have had no exposure to any spiritual training. They exist in a world of profanity and abuse. Television is their chief educator. It is obvious that God planted us squarely in their midst. How to reach them for Jesus is our biggest question.

When you move into the inner city, you must be prepared for three attitudes. **Those who are religiously inclined resent you.** You are an intruder upon their turf. Like an old dog who is dying, they snap at the friendly hand extended to help. I have already visited all the churches in the area. One is a Lutheran Church with lovely medieval type facilities. It is Missouri Synod. That means it is exclusive. A few years ago it numbered 450 parishioners. Now it does not register 150 on Sunday. It seeks to eke out its depleting income with rummage sales and fish fries. This is a contrived attempt to get the community to support something in which it does not believe. Men will spend for their stomachs while starving their minds.

The congregation is slowly tending toward the grave. Its Sunday school

attracts five adults who meet in the study. There are six intermediates and four of high school age who come reluctantly. The average age of the communicants is nearly seventy. Many of these are possessed of an irascible German temper. When the congregation uses the new revised hymn book, which contains an occasional new chorus, they deliberately absent themselves. If they happen to be in the auditorium when a song is announced in the new books, they get up and stamp out. They would feel "right at home" with a lot of our members.

You must also be prepared to be coldly ignored. People walk by and pretend you are not there. You give them your most winsome greeting and they plow ahead, acting as if you are a department store dummy. They do not want their little world invaded. **Worst of all are those who take a "wait and see" attitude.** They have seen storefront groups come and go through the years. They have seen them make a big splurge. They have also watched them being hung up to dry after failure. They are not about to be sucked in by a fly-by-night bunch of do-gooders. But just as Jesus had to leave heaven to come and live among us, so we have to move in among those we are trying to reach. We have to share their joys and sorrows. There is no such thing as long-distance help.

(To be concluded next issue.)

W. CARL KETCHERSIDE, Missouri, U.S.A. (Brother Ketcherside is well known, and well loved by many here in Britain. He published 'Mission Messenger' for 37 years, and travels widely, and writes prolifically, in the furtherance of the gospel.)

THE NEED OF PATIENCE

Be patient, be still. In this day and age in which we live it might be with difficulty that we pay heed to this. Nevertheless we are exhorted to do just that (read Romans 15:5, 6). Patience is indeed a fruit of the Spirit and consequently we must endeavour to develop and encourage it, both in self and others. Never forget the source, it comes of God. When we lack patience in full or part, it is the soul that suffers. Our spiritual welfare could well be on the decline! Take care! In the reading we are exhorted to be 'like-minded' one toward another. We have to **be patient**, likewise, one toward another. Practice the art of being patient, it works wonders. Christian love, Christian patience, Christian humility, Christian fellowship go hand in hand, all to the benefit of the soul.

In Christ all things are possible, patience included. When we meet the awkward brother, person, friend remember the source of patience. We are to live as one in fellowship with Christ, for a special reason: that we might with one mind and one voice **glorify God**. Patience, humility and love are essential to the well-being of the Christian. Develop, develop and develop, the art of being patient. Christ is the greatest example of patience (Isa. 53:7; Acts 8:32; Mat. 27).

We see Jesus on his way to the cross, knowing full well the outcome, yet He was patient, and humble, to the will of God.

We are in the race of life. We as Christians must exercise patience with greater care (read Hebrews 12:1). Patience they say is a **virtue**, to the Christian this is indeed true. In patience we may experience more of God's love.

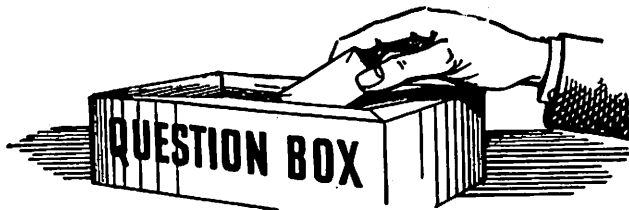
Heb. 6:12 "Be not slothful but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

We notice, an inheritance through faith and patience. The stronger the both, the greater the possibility of the inheritance. A promise of God.

Heb. 10:12 "Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."

A promise for the Christian and the family of God. Be patient, but active glorifying God, as He would have us. We have need of patience.

A. P. Sharp,
Newtongrange.



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

“QUESTION BOX”

“Can you please explain what is meant by being ‘led by the Spirit’ (Rom. 8:14), and how does this apply in the Christian experience?”

This is an important, interesting, and difficult question. At first glance it would seem to be relatively easy to understand what is meant by ‘being led’. Initially we have a mental picture of a person who has sight leading a blind person, or of someone in authority leading others toward a certain objective, but when we ascribe ‘leading’ to the Holy Spirit then we encounter some difficulty.

In the first place, we **must** try to understand what has been revealed about the Godhead, i.e., the Divinity of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. John Says, “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word (Christ), and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one” (1 John 5:7). In practical terms, I would then expect that any revelation emanating from Father, Son, and Holy Spirit would not be in any way contradictory, but absolutely complementary.

Having said that, it becomes basic to understanding of truth that we should not be deluded by modern-day teachers who try to convince us that He, the Holy Spirit, **must** produce **miraculous** manifestations in us to indicate His presence with us. The Bible teaches us that when we are converted, the promise is that the Holy Spirit will **in-dwell** us (see Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:16). He will produce in us the fruits of His own nature, and because of His oneness in the Godhead He will not only be the **recipient** of all truth, but He will be able to guide us through the revealed Word into the truth it contains; this will be possible because if I am a child of God in the N.T. sense, then I become a partaker of the Divine nature (2 Pet. 1:1-4).

If my reasoning up to this point is correct, then there would seem to be no validity for the many denominations we see in the world, nor for the differences in practice which we experience in the Church of Christ. The problem, as I see it, is one which is not brought about by a unified revelation (i.e., by the Persons of the Godhead) but by disparate interpretation. Perhaps we would do better if we fully appropriated Jesus rather than appropriating advanced theological knowledge.

THE BASIS OF SPIRITUAL INTERACTION

One of the most fundamental aspects of growth and knowledge in the life of a Christian is surely the incessant interaction between the Holy Spirit who indwells the person, and the individual spirit of each such person; without such interaction I would contend that it is virtually impossible for the Christian to have the experience of being led by the Spirit. To be 'led' by the Spirit means to be 'borne along' by the Spirit willingly; there must be no resistance on the part of our spirit. The power of the Holy Spirit is illimitable; it is we who place limits on what He can accomplish in our lives. We need to stop seeing the Holy Spirit as someone who gives us periodic spiritual transfusions in the miraculous sense, and see Him rather as one who wants to produce in the life of the Christian those attributes which not only He, but also God and His Christ, would desire. To do this, He must constantly interact with our spirit. Such interaction is vitally necessary for the Christian.

WHERE WILL HE LEAD?

In the early days of our Christian lives, when we are new-born babes in Christ, He will lead us on to the full assurance of faith. Paul, in his letter to the Christians in Rome, says, "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16).

Here is a classic example of the type of spiritual interaction of which I have been speaking. There may be times when **natural** doubt will assail us. I may ask myself, 'How can I be sure that God, who I cannot see, has made me one of His children?' This natural doubt must not be allowed to develop into **spiritual** doubt. I must understand that if I doubt I am responsible for my own doubt. God is sure, and so can we be. Assurance becomes a matter of what I term 'perceptual consciousness'. Let me explain.

The Holy Spirit speaks through the Word, the Bible. It is His sword with which He cuts to the heart. He says through the Word, "believe in Christ, repent of your sins, be immersed into Christ in water confessing His name, and you will receive me into your life as the Holy Guest, the earnest of your salvation". These are His instructions through the Word, and it follows that I shall be conscious as to whether I have obeyed them or not. If I have, and the Holy Spirit has told me through the Word that if I do I shall be saved, and become a child of God, then the Holy Spirit bears witness **with my spirit** that I **am** a child of God. This is not mere textual assurance but Divine assurance, although it must be said that in the Bible Divine assurance comes by the text, which after all is the inspired Word of God. As Paul says, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14).

The Holy Spirit will also lead us away from the flesh, with all of its natural passions and lusts, and into the rarified spiritual state, where we shall be able to bear fruit suitable to our new spiritual life in Christ, and in line with our Divine participation. This demands from us a close, interactive walk with Him. As Paul says, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16). It must surely be the desire of every child of God to grow into Christ-likeness. To leave behind that fleshly nature which produces an arid desert of life, and to press on to those spiritually-watered green pastures where the fruits of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, and all other spiritual virtues flourish. You see, dear brother, sister, it is not that God **forces** us to act like Christians, but He gently

leads us by His Spirit to want to become mature children of His; then we shall be able to echo the words of the hymn-writer,

Make this poor self grow less and less,
Be thou my life and aim,
O' make me daily by thy grace,
More meet to bear thy name.

THE PROBLEM OF INTERPRETATION

It is in this area that the Christian teacher needs most to be led by the Spirit. David prayed to God, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law . . . Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end . . . Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law" (Ps. 119:18, 33, 34). The authority of God permeates every page of the Bible; it is truly 'God's law'; therefore, the child of God needs to be led and taught by the Spirit.

A simple survey of the doctrines and practices of the Christian religion will show us how deep this problem of interpretation is. We know that God is not the Author of confusion. How can contradictory messages come from the same Persons in the Godhead? Elementary reasoning demands that a unified Godhead should reveal a unified doctrine, and a unified doctrine should produce unified practice. Why do we see such confusion?

Perhaps it is because we do not pray enough before we peruse the Word. James teaches, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all liberally" (James 1:5). It is foolish to attempt to sit down and read and try to understand the Bible as we would any other book. It is God's Word, and we need God's help when we study it, which help He gives through the Holy Spirit.

I have a feeling that many approach the bible and try to make it fit **their own** doctrine. Whose doctrine are we purporting to teach? God's, or our own. God forbid that we should ever use the Word in this way.

In all humility, we should approach the Word asking that the Holy Spirit will guide us. If we are not led of Him then we shall surely go astray.

(All questions, please, to:

Alf Marsden, 20 Costessy Way, Winstanley, Wigan, WN3 6ES.)

A CHAT WITH AN 'OLD PATHER' (Cont.) (6)

(Chat between I. Davidson and the late Tom Nisbet)

IAN: Some people accuse you of being 'anti-American'.

TOM: Yes. So I have heard.

IAN: What would you say in reply to that?

TOM: That is a piece of nonsense. I am not anti-American. Never was anti-American. I will guarantee that nobody gave the Americans a better welcome than I did when we used to have them nearly every Sunday morning at Tranent. What I am "anti" in the Americans I am "anti" in everybody else. I am "anti" when men preach wrong doctrine. That is what I am "anti". I am not anti-American. I love brother Carl Ketcherside very much indeed, and I love brother Otis Gatewood. I have been in contact with Otis Gatewood quite a lot through the Hindley Bible Schools. When we went over to Frankfurt I had conversations with him and I love the man. There is no doubt about that. I

couldn't possibly be anti-Otis Gatewood or anti-Mrs Gatewood. They were delightful folk. Not a bit! I am not anti-American. I like them, but I don't like the **teaching** of some of them.

IAN: Do you think that a lot of them came over here with a superior attitude?

TOM: Yes, I think so, since the war, I think so. They came here thinking that we didn't know. As a matter of fact, brother Carl Ketcherside told me that they were sent over here "as missionaries to a mission field" like we used to send missionaries to Africa and India.

IAN: How would they have treated us if we had gone over to the U.S.A. as "missionaries?"

TOM: I wonder?

IAN: One thing that caused great trouble in this country was the introduction of individual cups. What did you think of that move to introduce individual cups at Hyvots Bank?

TOM: Well, I think it was very underhand to begin with, and I thought it was wrong, entirely wrong. Aye, it was 1956, I am sure, because when they started off at Hyvots Bank they had one cup. Of course, Will Steele was with them from the beginning and he was a believer in only one cup. It was a little later on they started the individual cups. There were, of course, members who left the Hyvots Bank Church over that. It caused the rift. It simply destroyed the fellowship in this country with each other as well as with the Americans.

IAN: Do you remember R. B. Scott writing about "divisions and differences" in **The Scripture Standard**? He gave us the history of that.

TOM: Yes.

IAN: You were present at the debate on 'Individual Cups' between Edward Jess and Jerry Porter. What did you think of that debate?

TOM: Oh, I think it was a great debate. I think Edward Jess excelled himself that day.

IAN: You told me of an interesting incident about your asking a question which was not answered. The question was on the kettle boiling. Just tell me about that.

TOM: Well, of course, that is one of the stereotyped ways of trying to justify 'individual containers.' It is stated 'the cup' in the N.T. means the contents and not the container (by **Metonymy** in the English) and this justifies putting as many 'cups' on the Lord's Table as we like. Brother Porter tried to illustrate this by referring to the fact that when the housewife says, "The Kettle is boiling", she means, not the metal kettle, but is clearly referring to the water in the kettle. Of course the housewife can only say this about **one** kettle. If more than one was envisaged she would have to say, "The kettles are boiling." Thus I asked this question: "Would brother Porter please tell me when the housewife says the kettle is boiling, **how many** kettles are boiling?" He got up, and talk about beating about the bush! He went round and round and never came to that question to answer it. When he sat down I just shook my head because we were only allowed one question and a supplementary. Our Jack was chairman. I just shook my head, and Jack got up and said: "I am afraid, brother Porter, that the questioner is not satisfied." "No", says I, "the questioner is not satisfied." So I got up again. "I will put the

question again and please, brother Porter, don't go in for so much circumlocution. Answer me in plain English. I am going to ask the question in plain English again: "When a kettle is boiling, how many kettles are boiling?" He rose up and said: "One." I said: "Thank you, brother Porter," and sat down. I wanted the audience to hear him admit "one kettle."

IAN: How long did you work for the Old Paths Committee?

TOM: Five years. Some folk thought I could not last that.

IAN: It's now defunct, of course.

TOM: Yes, there is nobody now, but there were some who folk thought I could only last six months or so, but I lasted five years. I think I could have lasted even a while longer, but I stopped it because Annie's health was going. I think Annie felt the strain more than me. She was not used to travelling about, but she was a great help in the travelling about, I'm telling you.

IAN: I will ask you some general questions now Tom just before we try and sum up. Who was, perhaps, the finest preacher you ever heard?

TOM: I would say Walter Crosthwaite. I think he was the finest preacher I ever heard, with Jimmy Hoggan as a second.

IAN: You have read a lot of books in your day. What writers, if any, have influenced your thinking?

TOM: A book that influenced me very much and spurred me on to spiritual things when I was very young was a book called **David Jones of Madagascar**. Hayes was the author, I think I read that when I was very young and it fairly inspired me. David Jones was a Welshman and he was at a meeting where they were calling for volunteers to go to Madagascar as missionaries. That bit in Isaiah was quoted. He stood up and said: "Here am I, send me." That aye appealed to me. I never forgot it. I have often referred to it, and the contents of that book, in public addresses.

IAN: Any other books at all?

TOM: **An Outline of My Life** by James Anderson has been a great inspiration to me. As for knowledge of the Scripture and technical questions regarding it, Alexander Campbell's **Christian System** has been a great help to me. It was in my knapsack wherever I went during the First World War. In fact, Jack has that book yet, and if anybody sees it he will see on the flyleaf: "No. 50 General Hospital" — the unit I was with in Salonika.

IAN: What do you think of Alexander Campbell?

TOM: O, I think he was a marvellous man.

IAN: My grandfather, of course, was proud to be 'a Campbellite.'

TOM: Yes, he told Carl Ketcherside that. He was indeed 'a Campbellite' and he had a photograph on his wall of Alexander Campbell. Yes, I admired Alexander Campbell. I never knew really what he belonged to. I am only beginning to know that now. I think he was more associated with "the Disciples."

IAN: Of course. I am a great student of Alexander Campbell. I read an awful lot of Alexander Campbell.

TOM: I think **The Christian System** is the only book of his I have read.

IAN: I am reading Dr Richardson's biography of Campbell just now. He spent

three hundred days in Glasgow attending Glasgow University. The independent movement amongst the Churches, featuring Greville Ewing, the Haldanes, etc., they had an influence on his thinking. And when he got to America he discovered that his father was thinking on the same lines as he. In many ways that started the Restoration Movement in the United States. So really the Restoration Movement began over here, I suppose.

TOM: Of course it did. Dearie me, there were Churches in this country in the **seventeenth century** — for example, Tottlebank. There were Churches in the Carlisle area and the north of the Lake District even before Tottlebank, because when that Church was instituted elders from Carlisle and other places came down to assist them. I have the minute. In the Nottingham area it was very early started there. I forget the man's name now. It started there, and there were brethren up here in Scotland. The Haldane brothers sowed the seed too, you know.

(to be continued)

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Aug. 3	Ex. 2:1-22	Acts 7: 1-29
Aug. 10	11 Chron. 24: 1, 2 & 15-25	Acts 7:30-60
Aug. 17	11 Kings 17: 21-41	Acts 8: 1-25
Aug. 24	Isaiah 53	Acts 8: 26-40
Aug. 31	1 Samuel 16: 1-13	Acts 9: 1-22

STEPHEN'S APOLOGIA

Stephen was a Hellenist Jew. He was one of the seven chosen to "serve tables" (Acts 6:2). Luke described him as "a man full of the Holy Spirit" (6:5).

The charge against Stephen was two-fold — blasphemy against God, because he affirmed that Jesus had come to abolish the Temple and all that it stood for, and against Moses, because he affirmed similarly that Jesus had come to abrogate the customs laid down for Israel to keep in Moses' law (6:11-14). His defence before the Jewish Sanhedrin is revealed in chapter seven.

F. F. Bruce (with whom I have

been corresponding recently) said this among other things of Stephen's argument: "So far as the charge of blasphemy against Moses is concerned . . . such a charge, Stephen suggests in irony, comes well from the offspring of those who, on the testimony of their own sacred scriptures, so persistently opposed Moses both in Egypt and in the wilderness, refusing to recognise in him their divinely appointed judge and deliverer, and calling for his supersession by a captain who would lead them back to Egypt. Moses was but the first of many spokesmen of God who had to endure similar opposition from Israel, and this pattern of behaviour had now reproduced itself definitively in the national rejection of Jesus, the final prophet to whom Moses and his successors had pointed forward."

Stephen's reply concluded with the denunciation of his judges. His language was strong. It could not have failed to provoke their anger.

We should note here that Stephen accused them and their fathers of resisting the Holy Spirit (7:51). He said: "Was there ever a prophet your

fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered Him — you have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it” (7:52-53, N.I.V.) This statement is proof positive that the Holy Spirit spoke through the prophets. The apostle Peter once wrote: “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation, for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:20-21).

Stephen saw the Sanhedrin’s hostility. Realizing the certainty of an unfavourable verdict, he appealed from their judgment to that of the heavenly court. He saw “the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God” (7:56). Alexander Campbell wrote: “This vision to the soul of Stephen greatly strengthened him, and while his adversaries could not see it, they were permitted to go through with their diabolical plot. Stephen did not die with a lie upon his tongue, therefore this is the testimony of a martyr to the resurrection and ascension of Jesus.”

Stephen’s sentence was executed by stoning, in accordance with the ancient law against the blasphemer. The question naturally arises how Stephen’s death could have been executed without reference to the Roman governor if capital jurisdiction was withheld from the Jewish authorities. One writer has said: “The most probable account of the matter is that during the closing part of Pilate’s administration, especially when he was resident in Caesarea, the Jewish rulers knew that they could take certain discreet liberties.”

PHILIP

Philip, like Stephen, was appointed as one of the original seven deacons (Acts 6:5). Now, in chapter 8, we read of his work as an evangelist — a designation given to him by Luke (Acts 21:8).

Philip’s activity was as the result of presecution. We read: “Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them” (8:4-5).

The mention of Samaria reminds us of Jesus’s words to His apostles: “But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). We are also reminded of Jesus’s visit there during His ministry (John 4:1-42).

The hatred and hostility then between the Jews and Samaritans are common knowledge. That the gospel of Jesus brought them together should give us tremendous encouragement today. Yes, there is an answer to Lebanon. Yes, there is an answer to Northern Ireland. The answer is a person — Jesus Christ.

We read of one Simon (also known as Simon Magus). This convert tried to buy the power of the Holy Spirit which had come from the apostles’ hands. Obviously, to him the gifts of the Spirit were a superior kind of magic. Mention of Simon brings to mind all sorts of thoughts on Gnosticism. You see, the church fathers regarded Simon as the father of Gnosticism. We must remember that the church’s struggle with gnostic teaching was the fiercest that she has ever endured. The apostle John’s writings especially address themselves to

this philosophy. An interview I had last year with the U.K. gnostic "expert", Professor R. McL. Wilson of St. Andrews, was most enlightening and helpful.

The one-on-one situation between Philip and the God-fearing eunuch (from the kingdom of Meroe on the Upper Nile) shows the value to God of even one soul. Jesus Himself spoke of this (Matthew 16:26). In the account we read of the angel, the Spirit and Philip. Why was Philip called upon to deliver the saving message to this devout man? Why did the angel or the Spirit not encounter him? The answer is very simple. God's message then, as now, was with earthen vessels (2 Corinthians 4:7). Philip was the nearest "earthen vessel" to do God's work.

SAUL'S CONVERSION

Saul was born in Tarsus, the principal city of Cilicia. He himself said on one occasion that he was "a citizen of no mean city" (Acts 21:39). Saul was of the tribe of Benjamin (Philippians 3:5). It is, therefore, probable that he was named after Israel's first king who was also of that tribe.

Saul was "a Hebrew of the Hebrews: as touching the law, a Pharisee" (Philippians 3:5; 2 Corinthians 11:22). He studied for the rabbinate under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3), who was the most distinguished disciple of Hillel. Zealotry was a mark of Saul's work (Galatians 1:14).

At first, Saul persecuted the early church (Acts 8:3; Galatians 1:13; 1 Corinthians 15:9). The tolerance of Gamaliel his teacher was not matched by his pupil Saul (Acts 5:33-40). We are left to wonder why.

Three times in Acts we read of

Saul's conversion — once in the third person and twice in his own words (Acts 9:1-21; 22:1-16; 26:1-23). The importance of the event should not be underestimated.

Consider the world as it then was. Basically, it was divided into two — Jewish and Gentile. There was bitter hatred between them. Cornelius Tacitus, the Roman historian, called Jews "the vilest of people." Cicero said that the Jewish religion was "a barbarous superstition." A lot of Jews regarded Gentiles as "created by God to be fuel for the fires of hell." William Barclay has written: "Clearly, one thing was necessary — a man who could somehow form a bridge between the Jewish and the Greek worlds. Obviously, such a man would be hard to find; such a man would be unique; and yet, in the providence of God, the hour produced the man — and that man was Paul." F. F. Bruce has said: "No single event, apart from the Christ-event itself, has proved so determinant for the course of Christian history as the conversion and commissioning of Paul."

Scotland's great bard, Robbie Burns, once wrote: "The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men Gang aft agley." The statement well sums up Saul's journey to Damascus. He went to continue his persecution of the followers of Christ; he ended up as one of the persecuted: indeed, as an apostle of the Christ. The best laid schemes of God do not go astray, but always come to fruition. Saul (later Paul) was to be that "chosen vessel unto God, to bear His name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel . . ." (9:15).

IAN S. DAVIDSON,
MOTHERWELL.

OBITUARY

Dennyloanhead, Scotland

It is with deep regret that we report the passing of our much beloved sister Mary Marr, on Monday, 19th May, at Falkirk Infirmary, at the age of 94 years. Her family moved from Clarkston to Dennyloanhead, around 1908, (the year when the meeting-house of the church was built). She was baptised the same year and remained in the Lord until He called her home (leaving a fine example to all). Confessing her Lord to all who knew her, teaching children in the Sunday School in her younger life, and being always in her place at the meetings, she certainly was faithful. We commend her loved ones, and others who mourn, to our Heavenly Father's care. The funeral was conducted by bro. Alex. Brown. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

JOSEPH M. MALCOLM (Sec.)

Buckie, Scotland

On Wednesday, 14th May the Lord called our dear sister Meta Reid to rest. She was 62 years, and was the only daughter of our late brother and sister Samuel Reid. Meta became a Christian very early in life and has remained faithful to the end. Her great joy was to meet with her brethren as often as she could (although she did not enjoy the best of health).

We shall miss her but our loss is surely heaven's gain. The funeral was from the Meeting House on Friday, 16th May. We commend her brother, and his wife, and family, to the peace and comfort only to be found in the Lord.

JOHN GEDDES (Sec.)

Reading

In May, Miss Dorothy Gardner was taken to be with her Lord. She had only been a Christian for about three years, but had previously spent many years caring for members of her family. She was contacted by door to door work and became a faithful and helpful member in spite of the disabilities of age.

In June, we also lost Mrs Mona Baton. She was baptised in Hereford in the late 1950's and had attended our meetings since the start of the church in Reading in 1961. In later years she had many problems, but was always anxious to speak to people about the Gospel. She was expecting to go home from hospital on 12th June, but instead was called to a heavenly home.

Miss R. M. PAYNE (Sec.)

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Buckie, Scotland: The Buckie Church held its annual social on 31st May. Brethren from many churches gathered with us to enjoy a great time of fellowship. Bro. John Morgan, from Hindley, was our speaker, giving us an inspiring address and much food for thought. We also thank the brethren for the singing items. Bro. William Pirie was chairman. We would like to thank all the brethren for making our social such a great success.

JOHN GEDDES.

Motherwell, Scotland: The quarterly Mutual Benefit Meeting, of the Slammannan District was held at the Motherwell Meeting House on Saturday, 10th May when the question under discussion was "What is the difference between 'Soul' and 'Spirit'?" Brother Leslie Purcell

occupied the chair and the speakers were John Colgan, Tranent, and Graeme Pearson, Motherwell. Both speakers dealt with the composition of man "body, soul and spirit" and a lively discussion ensued. The meeting was greatly enjoyed and we look forward to the next one when, God willing, the subject will be "Does the bible teach degrees of punishment and reward" — i.e. "more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah" and "He that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly."

H. DAVIDSON.

COMING EVENTS

Special Saturday Meetings

On August 23rd; 30th and September 6th, God Willing, at 6.30 p.m., in Motherwell Meeting-place.

Talks on (1) The Holy Spirit; (2) The Gift of the Holy Spirit; (3) The Gifts of The Holy Spirit. By Ian Davidson, Motherwell.

These meetings are for earnest students of God's Word. Plan to attend.

Special Meeting

Saturday, 16th August, 1986, 6.30 p.m., in the Coronation Hall, Ulverston.

Speaker: Willie Black (Dallmellington). All welcome.

THE TWO COVENANTS CONTRASTED

Old Covenant

Included one nation (Eph 2:12).
Dedicated by blood of animals (Heb. 9:19).
A law in the flesh (Gen. 17:13).
A priesthood of men (Heb. 7:11).
Sacrifices often offered (Heb. 10:11).
Circumcision in the flesh (Eph. 2:11).

Circumcision by hands (Eph. 2:11).
Circumcision a seal (Rom. 4:11).
Sins remembered yearly (Heb. 10:3).
Not perfect (Heb. 8:8).
Could not give inheritance (Gal. 3:18).
Ministration of death (2 Cor. 3:7).
Yoke of bondage (Gal. 5:1).
Written on tables of stone (2 Cor. 3:6).
Purged the flesh (Heb. 9:13).
The letter that killeth (2 Cor. 3:6).

New Covenant

Includes all nations (Mark 16:15).
Dedicated by blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:19).
A law in the mind and heart (Heb. 8:10).
The priesthood of Christ (Heb. 7:28; 8:10).
Christ offered once for all (Heb. 9:28).
Circumcision in the heart (Rom. 2:29).
Circumcision without hands (Col. 2:11).
Holy Spirit seals (Eph. 1:11, 13).
No more remembrance of sins (Heb. 10:17).
Perfect law (Jas. 1:25).
Able to give inheritance (Acts 20:32).
Law of Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2).
Liberty-made free (Gal. 5:1).
On the heart (Heb. 8:10).
Purged the conscience (Heb. 9:14).
The Spirit that gives life (2 Cor. 3:6).

"THE ABSENTEE'S ALPHABET"

begins:
"I'd like to go to church but . . ."
A is for Auntie, who will come to tea,
B is for bed, which won't release me.
C is for car — "we need the fresh air".
D is for dinner that Mum must

prepare.

E is for enthusiasm, which I haven't got,

F is for foursome, which golfs quite a lot.

G is for garden, much "nearer God's heart".

H is for husband, who won't play his part.

I for intruders who sit in my pew,

J for the jealousy shown by a few.

K is for knitting, which Mum likes so much,

L the old language, it's so out of touch.

M is for money, they always want more,

N for new tunes that I've not heard before.

O is for overtime, double on Sunday,
P the preparing I must do for Monday.

Q for queer noises which come from the choir,

R for the rector, he ought to retire.

S is for sermons, as dull as can be,

T for the telly I really must see.

U for unfriendliness I always find,

V for the voice of the woman behind.

W for weather, too much rain or snow,

X is for extras, too busy to go.

Y for young rowdies who sit at the back,

Z is for zeal — and that's just what I lack.

On the Old Clock of Chester Cathedral there is a rhyme that goes as follows:

When as a child I loved and wept,
time crept.

When as a youth I dreamed, and talked,
time walked.

When I became a full grown man,
time ran.

And later as I older grew, time flew.
Soon I shall find when travelling
on, time gone.

Will Christ have saved my soul by then?

Amen.

CONSCIENCE

Conscience is like a sundial. During the hours of daylight, and so long as the sun is shining, the dial will have a correct recording of the time; but when the sun is not shining, or when the light comes upon it from a lantern or from the moon at night, its record may be completely inaccurate. So it is with conscience. So long as the light of God's Word shines upon us and directs our decisions the voice of conscience is both correct and helpful; but when it is illuminated by the light of our own imagination, or by the opinions of others, it will not only fail to give the true direction, but it will make the error all the greater because it claims to speak with authority. A fallible guide, who may lead us astray through wrong information, is worse than no guide at all.

THINGS YOU WON'T REGRET

Doing a kind act.

Keeping your temper under insult.

Refusing to listen to malicious gossips.

Not posting that cutting, unkind letter.

Getting up every time you fall.

Trying always to better your best.

Holding to your righteous purpose in spite of opposition.

Keeping faith with yourself at any cost, and holding fast to your ideals.

WHY NO HONEY?

Some swarms of special honey-bees were imported into the island of Barbados in the West Indies. At first the bees went diligently to work gathering

honey for the coming winter. But when those bees found that winter did not come, for they were in a land of perpetual summer, they ceased to gather honey; instead, they spent most of their time flying around, and ultimately became a nuisance instead of an asset.

Is it not a fact that some Christians are like that? Surrounded by so many blessings they idle away their lives, when they should be busy gathering the sweetness of gospel truth that they might give this to a hungry world.

COURAGE

Lord Nelson refused to put on a cloak to cover up the stars on his uniform, though they made him a mark for the French sharp-shooters. So let us refuse to hide our loyalty to Christ by the cloak of silence, even when by speaking we may become a mark of ridicule.

THE REASON

An actor was once asked by a preacher how the acting of fiction could influence people so much more than the preaching of facts. The actor replied, "I preach fiction as though it were truth. You preach truth as though it were fiction."

GEMS FROM HENDRY CLAY TRUMBULL

No man is really ready to live until he is ready to die.

A truth is no less a truth because cannot explain it.

It takes but very little time to commit a sin, but a long while to get rid of its consequences.

A child is never spoiled by a mother's love, but many a child is spoiled by a mother's un wisdom.

A readiness and desire to serve are the proofs of true affection.

It is not more evidence of the truth of Christianity that men need, but more willingness to accept the evidence they have.

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