

# *The* **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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## **A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL READERS**

### **THE MERCIES OF GOD RECALLED AND TRUST EXPRESSED**

“But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercies never come to an end: they are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness. ‘The LORD is my portion’ says my soul, ‘therefore I will hope in Him’.” (Lamentations 3:21-24)

**GOD BLESS THY YEAR:  
THY COMING IN, THY GOING OUT,  
THY REST, THY TRAVELLING ABOUT,  
THE ROUGH, THE SMOOTH,  
THE BRIGHT, THE DEAR:  
GOD BLESS THY YEAR.**

## **A GREATER THAN SOLOMON**

Surely Solomon was one of the most outstanding and yet the most tragic of all the characters in the whole of the Old Testament. He was the tenth son of David (the second by Bathsheba) and the third king who reigned for 40 years. He was a shining type of Christ but everyday sensuality brought about his downfall. He began his life with great advantages; he had undisputed possession of David's throne; had immense wealth left by David; divinely-given mental faculties; the love and high aspirations of his subjects. Early in his reign he had a vision of Gibeon, in which the Lord appeared unto him and invited him to ask for whatever he desired. Confessing his weakness and ignorance he said, “Give thy servant an understanding heart.” Because of his wise and pious choice, God promised that he would not only have wisdom but wealth and honour. In the fulfilment of God's promise Solomon's wisdom excelled all the great men of his time as did his material prosperity. He carried out the hopes of his deceased father David, consolidating the kingdom and

engaging in many commercial ventures. As he increased in wealth, fame and honour the love of display and pomp grew upon him and he maintained a most luxurious and extravagant household beyond the resources of his people. Exercising the power of an oriental despot he gave Israel a glory, prestige and splendour unsurpassed in the world's history but it seemed that his rule was more for his personal aggrandisement than for the welfare of the people. Doubtless the artistic and literary gifts of Solomon brought the masses great cultural benefits but the glory of Solomon also brought many groans and tears. The great wealth provided by David for the building of the temple soon disappeared under Solomon's lavish tastes and the people had to bear heavy taxation and poverty for his magnificent whims.

The early years of Solomon, like so many other great men, were very commendable. He had Godly ambition and God-inspired wisdom as an evidence of it. His sacrifices at Gibeon indicate that Solomon desired that religion be associated with all external glory. Solomon's remarkable prayer of dedication also breathes piety and delight in the full recognition of God. Alas Solomon came to the end of his days minus popularity and piety. What a come-down for the world's first great naturalist and writer of 3,000 proverbs and 1005 songs. This man of sagacity beyond compare took his first downward step when, probably for political reasons, he went to Egypt for his queen. A daughter of Pharaoh sitting on David's throne must have shocked God's elect in Israel. With this strange wife came also her strange Gods and a harem of outlandish women. Solomon's wives numbered 700 and concubines 300 and they turned him to idolatry. To give a concession to his wives to worship their strange gods was bad enough but to share in such sacrilegious acts was surely a presagement of his final downfall. The Book of Ecclesiastes surely describes his own dissatisfaction with life itself. All rivers ran into Solomon's sea; wisdom and knowledge; wine and women; wealth and fame; music and song — but he discovered and described how that all was vanity and vexation of spirit. Of Solomon's final end little is known. Whether Solomon repented and returned to God was a subject warmly debated by the early Fathers. Solomon's wisdom did not prevent his folly, or teach him self-control, and his only legacy was a son completely lacking in understanding but ample in foolishness.

Notwithstanding the sad end of Solomon there is no doubting whatever the fact that his wise words and proverbs have been completely unrivalled by any man (apart from Christ) in all time — and that even the best of the Greek philosophers were no match whatever for Solomon. It was when Solomon was at the height of his powers that we read in 1 Kings 10 that "when the Queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord that she came to prove him with hard questions." She travelled probably 1200 miles from south Arabia to see Solomon and brought a vast train of camels loaded with spices, precious stones and very much gold. Who knows what riddles and puzzles and difficult questions she put to Solomon but he was able to explain and answer all that he was asked, so much so that she was aghast at his wide knowledge and deep wisdom. When she saw Solomon's house, and his ascent to the house, and the dress and conditions of even his servants "there was no more spirit in her" and she made the following very remarkable utterance, "It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words until I came, and mine eyes have seen it; and behold the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because

the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgement and justice." And so a heathen queen acknowledges the God of Israel as a result of coming face to face with the wisdom and glory of Solomon.

Little wonder then, that Jesus said to the scribes and Pharisees that the Queen of Sheba would be called as a witness against them on Judgement Day and would condemn them because "she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here." (Matt.12:42). Jesus, as He often does, confirms here the writings of the Old Testament and acknowledges the prodigious wisdom of Solomon. Solomon was great but Jesus was greater: Solomon was glorious but Jesus more glorious: Solomon was wise but Jesus wiser. No man can stand any comparison with Jesus. Solomon built a stone temple so magnificent that it became the focal point of Israel's worship of Jehovah — Jesus built a Spiritual house of living stones. The church which Jesus built was such that even the gates of hell would not prevail against it. Nothing remains of Solomon's temple today but the church continues from age to age. Solomon was David's son — Jesus was David's Lord. After reigning for forty years Solomon died and was buried in the city of David his father — at Jesus's burial place the angel said, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen." In Luke 3 we read that by the age of 12 years Jesus was already '*filled with wisdom*' and the grace of God was upon Him. At that tender age he astonished the doctors in Jerusalem with his answers and understanding. Thereafter Jesus '*increased in wisdom*, in stature and in favour with God and man." Much later, when Jesus returned to His own neighbourhood He taught in the synagogues and astonished His hearers insomuch that they said, "whence hath this man *this wisdom* and these mighty works." They were offended thereby and this caused Jesus to voice the now well-known truth that a prophet is not without honour save in his own country. Clearly in every way Jesus was a greater than Solomon.

Certainly the Jews contemporary with Jesus *noticed* His wisdom but would not acknowledge it — it merely provoked them to jealousy. Thus the Queen of Sheba (or Queen of the South) will condemn those of that generation on Judgement Day. She came up out of a dark heathen land, far removed from the oracles of God and on hearing the wisdom of Solomon she praised God. The Jews sought only to denigrate Jesus. The Queen of the South brought gifts and blessings to Solomon. The Jews plotted Christ's death. The Queen of Sheba came to listen attentively to every word from Solomon. The Jews mocked Jesus and accused him of being in league with the devil. The Queen of Sheba came hundreds of miles to seek out Solomon, probably without any invitation. The Jews treated Jesus, who was much greater than Solomon, with disdain or with open hostility, and, as we know, finally impaled Him on the stake at Calvary.

Although this epithet of Jesus regarding the Queen of Sheba and the condemnation her example would bring to the Jews of that generation, it was primarily directed to the Jews of that day, yet the warning is surely applicable to each and every generation. Those who, in whatever generation, turn a deaf ear to the wisdom of Jesus or who turn a blind eye to His claims upon them, will at the Great Assize have to cope with this wonderful standard set by the Queen of the South. Perhaps we too, who have lived in this present generation, will on that same Day, be confronted by witnesses against us consisting of those of other faiths and sects who have showed more zeal for God, and more compassion for the under-privileged, than we have.

## “LET US NOT SLEEP”

As we enter into this year of our Lord 1982, how gratefully ought we to be that He has preserved us unto this day, and it is with humble and grateful heart that I offer the following words of encouragement and comfort. I base my article upon a text taken from 1 Thess. 5 v6 “. . . let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.”

It is a fact that the vast majority of men and women of today do not sleep towards the things of this world, and in this age of high-pressure living, of intense competition, most people are wide-enough awake for their own temporal interests, in fact it has become very largely an age of self-interest. And so it is, partly through our being in the flesh, and partly through our being in a sinful world, that we are all of us apt to sleep concerning the interests of our souls. Nothing so concerns us as our eternal destiny and yet, it would seem, that nothing so little affects us. We work with great zeal and interest for the present world and we play, we toy, with the life to come. News of a disastrous fire at home or abroad can make a great sensation and our thoughts and sympathies go out to those involved, but when told of the fire that shall never be quenched, the figurative fires of hell and damnation, why, it is heard almost without emotion. Then the discovery of oil or gold will affect the markets of the world and cause a great furore, but when we speak of that wonderful city, the beautiful new Jerusalem where, at least figuratively, the very streets are of gold, how coldly men receive it and regard it as though it were some legendary fancy, and as if only the things that are seen are worthy of their notice, yet the scriptures say that “it is the things that are not seen that are eternal.” Thus it is that we sleep when heavenly things are put before us. Alas that it should be so. Even those who have been awakened by the Holy Spirit, by the Gospel which is the power of God unto salvation, awakened unto the real life, and even those who are keen and enthusiastic, their fervour is frequently cooled and they have periods of spiritual slumber. Thus, how earnest, how diligent and watchful ought we to be, and yet how much are we the reverse of all this. Even the great apostle Paul complained that “when he would do good, evil was present with him.” So it is with us that when we would mount up to our highest efforts our wings would seem to be clipped and our efforts are marred by a seeming lack of enthusiasm. It might therefore be profitable to say a little to you, and to myself, concerning the need to give ourselves a hearty shake to awaken us from the slumber which we may have fallen into. I would therefore take by way of illustration some of the others whose histories are recorded in the scriptures, others who have slept to their injury, and perhaps we will take them as warnings to ourselves and “let us not Sleep as do others.”

### Christ's Disciples

First, let us not sleep as did those disciples in the garden of Gethsemane, even whilst their Lord and Master was agonising. Let us not be as those three who were highly privileged and permitted to be so near when Jesus poured out His soul to His Father and when such was His agony of soul that He is described as “sweating great drops of blood.” He found them sleeping, and though He awakened them, they slept again and yet again. Gently Jesus rebuked them “What, could ye not watch with me one hour?” and the scriptures tell us that they slept for sorrow. Perhaps Jesus will make an excuse for us even as He did for them when He said “The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak.” But better still let us endeavour not to need such an apology by avoiding their fault. “Let us not sleep as do others.” But, my dear brethren, are not most of us sleeping as the apostles did? Consider the zeal with which Jesus worked for the salvation of souls. He seemed never to rest. From the beginning of His ministry He was continually toiling, labouring and denying Himself. It was His meat and His drink to do the will of Him that sent Him. Even in

His boyhood remember His answer to His seeking mother "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

There was no greater zeal than His. His zeal for His church had eaten Him up. He was incessant in toil and suffering and He persevered until His work of salvation was done. But what are we? When we are gathered on the first day of the week to remember the death of our Lord, we see in the emblems on the table our Great Exemplar before us in symbol, His body is broken, His blood is shed; also see Him in the Garden of Gethsemane. His whole life is pictured in that agony in the garden and on the Cross, for in one sense it was all an agony, it was all sweating, for did He not purchase life for us in one sense it was all an agony, it was all sweating, for did He not purchase life for us with the agony of His heart. My Saviour, your Saviour, as I see Him throughout the whole of His ministry (which includes up to the present moment), appears to me on His knees, pleading and before His God agonising, laying out His life; and for what? For the sinful sons of men. But brethren, perhaps I speak a little harshly when I say that the disciples asleep in Gethsemane are a fitting symbol of our usual life. But as compared or should I say contrasted with our Lord and Master, I fear it is so. Where is our compassion for men's souls? Do we ever feel the weight of souls as we ought to feel it? Do we ever sweat or agonise knowing the terrors of God that will come upon the disobedient? Do we ever dwell upon the passing away of an immortal soul to the judgement bar of God. Or do we just say, as I have so often heard said of one who has been suffering the pains of this life, and passed on into the next, they say "It is a blessing he has gone to his rest"; and that is regardless of whether they had been obedient to God's will or not. Why, the pains and sufferings of this life are but nothing compared to the eternal sufferings of those who have received, as their eternal sentence, the words of Jesus "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire in hell, prepared for the Devil and his angels."

Why, if these thoughts really burned into our minds, if they were so real to us as they were to Jesus, could we sleep at nights? and might we even be willing to lay down our lives, if by any means we might save some. Can't we see with the eye of faith, even at this moment, Jesus pleading at the mercy seat in the words recorded in Isaiah 62V1 "For Zion's sake, I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest," and yet, we who are nigh unto Him, and who have been commanded to watch, lie asleep, with but little self-denying activity, and only an occasional prayer, missing opportunities, and sometimes handling slovenly the opportunities we do take up. Oh dear brethren, "Let us not sleep as do others." It is true that most of the so called Christian churches today are to a great extent asleep, but is this not all the more reason that we should be awake, that we should arise and trim our lamps, and go forth to meet the Bridegroom. Brethren, let us from this moment endeavour to serve our Lord and Master more nearly to the example which He Himself has set us in His life and death. Let us not sleep then, as did the disciples in Gethsemane.

### Samson

I think now of Samson. That ancient hero, who whilst *he* slept lost his locks, lost his strength, lost his liberty, lost his eyes, and ultimately lost his life. If we apply his sleeping in respect to ourselves, is it not a sad picture of many professing Christians today? Did we not at one time have men of great stature, of great strength and zeal, men who were "strong in the Lord and the power of His might." Did it not seem as if God had singled out certain ones to be defenders of the faith? To fight the present day Philistines for the Israel of today. Our Israel knew them for they were a tower of strength, and our enemies knew them too. I think of such men as Alexander Campbell, of James Anderson, of David King, of Walter Crosthwaite, and I ask "where are such heroes today?" Surely, if we have them, they are few and far between, or perhaps they have gone to sleep. Maybe they think, and we think, we

have much spiritual goods laid up for many years and are now taking a rest. I suspect, brethren, that present-day affluence has contributed largely to this situation. It is true for many of us that "we have never had it so good" in material things. Alas, such carnal security is undoubtedly a present day Delilah. It gives us many a dainty kiss and lulls us into a state of tranquility which we may even imagine to be the peace of God, whereas, the peace of Satanic enchantment is upon us, and I can see in this the *deadliest* sort of peril. Satan and *his* minions never cease to seek opportunities to devour us and by degrees Satan can steal away our spiritual strength, but, brethren, or spiritual strength lies in our faith, the faith which is the same as of old, the faith which was once and for all time delivered to the saint. So let *our* faith be such that will not shrink or sleep though pressed by many a foe and let us be warned by what happened to such as Samson.

### The Tares and Wheat

And now I would change the picture again. The same subject but in another form. I turn now to our Lord's parable concerning the tares and the wheat. Whilst men slept the enemy came and sowed tares amongst the good wheat. To such as you I need not go into a full explanation of the parable, but suffice to say that when false doctrines and wrongful practices creep into a church, the usual cause has been that the church itself has been asleep. Those who ought to have been watchful have slept and given the enemy ample opportunity of sowing his tares. Now I am not being critical of any particular congregation because I know that up to the present you have been watchful and careful to contend earnestly for the truth, but I, like you, need be reminded of the great necessity to be always on our guard, to be wide awake to the wiles of Satan, who if he finds us sleeping, will destroy that which is dearest to us above anything in this life, namely, the church of the living God. I would repeat the warning that a church that does not carefully guard the truth as it is in Jesus, will become an unsound church, and consequently a degenerate church which will grieve the Holy Spirit and cause him to remove his power. When we live near to Jesus when we uphold the truth in purity, when we become *individually* true and pure, then our watchfulness is profitable, slothfulness is dangerous. Therefore brethren, I again exhort "Let us not sleep as do others," lest in our case too, the enemy come and spoil the harvest by sowing tares amongst the wheat.

### The Foolish Virgins

Again I would change the picture. We are told that while the bridegroom tarried, the virgins who had gone out to meet him slumbered and slept and when the cry was heard "Behold the bridegroom cometh," they were all slumbering, both wise and foolish. My dear brethren, you who have oil in your vessels with your lamps, sleep not as do others lest that cry come upon you unawares. The second verse of the 5th chapter of the Thess. letter tells us "that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." He may come in the heavens with exceeding great power *even* today or He may yet tarry awhile, but suppose He were to come even now, and His holy angels with Him, would you be ready? Let me *press* the question. The Lord may suddenly come. Are you ready to go in with Him to the wedding feast? Happy are those who live continually with Jesus, who have given themselves up to the power of the indwelling Spirit. *Wise* are those who always have an eye open to the coming again of our Lord and may God grant us grace to be ready with our loins girt and our lamps trimmed in the day of His appearing. But "Let us not sleep, as do others," let us not sleep but rather "Be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

Finally, I would say to anyone who has not as yet submitted themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ and obeyed Him in being immersed into His name, I would lovingly warn you that you are in the most *dangerous* sleep of all.

How long have you listened to the appeal of Jesus and how long have you slept without responding? I would give you one last example. When we, my wife and I, lived at Falkirk, the railway line ran at the bottom of our garden. The trains, thundered and clattered past, and as my wife must have her bedroom window open at nights, the noise at first was very disturbing. But as the weeks and months went by, we grew accustomed to the noise and could eventually sleep through it all. Could this be your experience with the word of God? Can you now go to sleep or shut out the sound of that which hit you like a thunderbolt when you first heard it? Have you become *immune* to the loving appeal of our Lord Jesus Christ who sacrificed Himself on Calvary's cross that *you* might be saved from the terrifying consequences of your sins? Take heed of our warnings, awake from your sleep for it is the sleep of death i.e. spiritual death, a sleep which you may not awake from until it is too late: in the words of the poet:

Today a pardoning God  
Will hear the suppliant pray;  
Today a Saviour's cleansing blood  
Will wash thy guilt away.  
But, grace so dearly bought  
If yet thou wilt despise,  
Thy fearful doom with vengeance fraught  
Will fill thee with surprise.

Therefore may I exhort us all, "Let us not sleep as do others."

John McLuckie, Haddington.

## GLEANINGS

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

### He careth for me

"Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you." I Peter 5:7.

"It is a happy way of soothing sorrow when we can feel — "He careth for me." Christian! do not dishonour your religion by always wearing a brow of care; come, cast your burden upon your Lord. You are staggering beneath a weight which your Father would not feel. What seems to you a crushing burden, would be to Him but as the small dust of the balance. Nothing is so sweet as to "Lie passive in God's hands, And know no will but His."

O child of suffering, be thou patient; God has not passed thee over in His providence. He who is the feeder of sparrows, will also furnish you with what you need. Sit not down in despair; hope on, hope ever. Take up the arms of faith against a sea of trouble, and your opposition shall yet end your distresses. There is One who careth for you.

C. H. Spurgeon.

### "As I was — so will I be."

"As I was" — from everlasting,  
God eternal, faithful, true,  
Keeping covenant with thousands,  
So will I be unto you.  
God in Christ who changeth never,  
Speaketh still to you, to me,  
Yesterday, today, forever,  
"As I was — so will I be."

C.G.

### He set a seal upon them

"I believe that when Christ, before and after His Resurrection, treated the Scriptures of the Old Testament as being of Divine authority, He set a seal upon them which I dare not disregard, I believe that Christ was infallible, and that when criticism questions the accuracy of His attitude, it is wrong, whatever its conclusion may be."

Campbell Morgan.

### Two sides to the Gospel

"We cannot be filled until we are first empty. You cannot fill with new wine a vessel which is partly filled already with old wine, until the old wine has been poured out. This, then, is one of those statements which remind us that there has to be a kind of emptying before there can be a filling. There are always two sides to the gospel; there is a pulling down and a raising up. You remember the words of the ancient Simeon concerning our Lord and Saviour when he held Him as an Infant in his arms. He said, 'this child is set for the fall and rising again of many.' The fall comes before the rising again. It is an essential part of the gospel that conviction must always precede conversion; the gospel of Christ condemns before it releases."

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones.

**"Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel."**

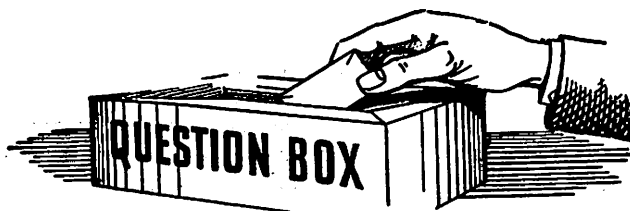
"So He was in Israel, and so He is still. There are schools and systems of interpretation of Scripture; there are schools and systems of philosophy; and of this and that, in which this prophecy uttered by Simeon that day is still being fulfilled. They rise, and they stand, and they fall, just as they receive or reject Immanuel. But our question with this Scripture before us is not about schools and systems of theology and philosophy, but about our own souls. Has Mary's Son, then; has God's Son, been a stumbling stone to me? Or, has He been the one foundation laid in Zion for me? Has He, to my everlasting salvation, and to His everlasting praise, lifted me up from all my falls and made me to stand upon His righteousness as upon a rock? Simeon himself had at one time stumbled and been broken on this child, and on His too great name. But the steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord, and He delighteth in his way. Though he fall he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with His hand. Now, unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy: to the only wise God, our Saviour."

Alexander Whyte.

*"Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,  
Dawn on our darkness, and lend us Thine aid:  
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,  
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid."*

H. Heber.

Selected by Leonard Morgan.




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Conducted by  
Aif Marsden

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**"In 1 COR. 7:17 Paul uses the expression, 'And so ordain I in all churches.' Could you please explain what he means; and also in other places where he speaks about 'setting things in order'?"**



Some Christians seem to have strange ideas concerning the Verb "to ordain". Perhaps this is because they have heard of, or seen, very grand ordination ceremonies and have concluded that some form of mysticism surrounds such ceremonies. In fact, the idea is perfectly straightforward so far as the Bible is concerned, but there are several variations of application which we shall need to look at.

### Authority

The phraseology used in 1 Cor. 7:17 suggests that Paul had the authority to "ordain" and to "set in order", and this is quite true. Paul had seen the Lord, as he explained to the Corinthian Christians, "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? (1 Cor. 9:1). It is manifestly clear, however, that he had not the additional qualification as revealed in Acts 1:22, namely, he had not "compared with" the original twelve, but it is very clear that Paul was commissioned directly, by the Lord Himself, to be the Apostle to the Gentiles. Concerning the resurrected Christ he said, "After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that I am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am" (Cor. 15:7-10).

So the authority which Paul had was Apostolic, and because of this he could claim the privileges given to the other Apostles by Jesus, "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 18:18).

### 'So Ordain I'

The word rendered "ordain" in 1 Cor. 7:17 is given by the Greek word DIATASSO, and has the general meaning of "to arrange, to appoint, to prescribe". The word is used in Acts 7:44, when Stephen said, "Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen."

One must always view the Apostolic Writings relative to the times in which they were written. The early Christians were bathed in the heady glow of the New Order in Christ. The Lord would soon come again and they would all be transported to Heaven, consequently, the old relationships, verities, and values could be abandoned. It was against this background that Paul had to arrange, to order, to set standards in the various local congregations, even though, it was thought, it might only be for a short period of time.

Therefore, we can understand what he had to arrange in Corinth, for example. Believing husbands were wanting to leave unbelieving wives, and vice versa; Paul had to order them to stay together. Converted slaves were leaving their masters, and Paul had to order them to stay with them, as a matter of fact he said, "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called" (1 Cor. 7:20). He exhorted the unmarried to serve the Lord in the unmarried state, but he left the door open for marriage if that was the desire. He made it clear that to obey God was of more value than endless discussions on circumcision and uncircumcision. He had to arrange that everything should be done decently and in order; that there should be no defilement of the Lord's Table. He had to set in order and correct the tendency to establish parties and factions within the Church. We can enter the very heart of this great Apostle when, after recounting the many things he had suffered at the hands of his tormentors, he ended by saying, "Beside these things that are without that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches" (2 Cor. 11:28). Paul had the

heart of the true shepherd; he didn't want to see the flock dispersed and facing the dangers from all directions. Furthermore, as the Apostle to the Gentiles he had founded most of these churches. Therefore, he had to bring order out of a certain degree of chaos so that Christianity could survive in an alien world.

### 'The Present Distress'

Some have concluded that the arrangements which Paul made for the churches were only for a limited period of time and therefore are not binding on us today, consequently, the "order" or the "prescription" can be changed to suit our needs. I believe that because of this false idea we are now seeing religious groups condoning the possession by nations of nuclear weapons; accepting forms of doctrine on baptism and leadership which are not consistent with Paul's arrangements; surrendering to the completely unscriptural campaign for the admission of women into the so-called priesthood. But we understand, of course, that once the original is thought of as being defective then error can only be compounded. If Paul's arrangements and appointments were only of a temporary nature, then we might be excused for asking ourselves "how temporary is temporary", and where do we look for guidance once the temporary period is over. Are we then left to the capricious whims of men who claim Divine guidance and Spirit motivation? No, we must look to the Bible as the inspired Word of God and realise that only therein shall we find guidance for all time.

"Distress" in 1 Cor. 7:26 has the meaning of "necessity", imposed either by external circumstances or internal pressure. As an example of external circumstances we must realise that the first Christian communities were in an alien world and many of them had needs which could only be met by the sacrifices of their brethren. As an example of internal pressure we can quote Paul, "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:16).

Is there anyone today who would be bold enough to say that distress is not ever-present. We know full well that necessity exists in many parts of the world and can only be relieved by the care and concern of the brethren, or do we fondly imagine that Christians exist only in the affluent Western societies? And when did the internal pressure to preach the Gospel depart from the Church, and by whose decree? No, my dear fellow-christian and friend, the extent and the degree of the problem may vary from age to age, but the fundamental resolution of those problems must be by the Divine arrangements and appointments as revealed in the Word of God, otherwise we are in deep trouble scripturally. We can see the evidence today of what defection from that high standard has left us with, so we need to embrace the fact that what God has 'ordained' by His appointed Messengers, and handed down to use in His Word, is for the well-being of the Church *for all time*, and should be promoted by His Church today whenever and wherever we can. May He grant us the fidelity and courage to do this, for His Name's sake.

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

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

FEBRUARY 1982

7 Lev. 19,18      1 Cor. 13  
14 Neh. 8,5-19    1 Cor 14,1-20  
21 I Sam. 10,1-16   1 Cor 14,21-40  
28 Psalm 18        1 Cor 15,1-19

### Love, The Essential Ingredient

Recent articles in the Scripture Standard make comments on this chapter somewhat redundant. Countless pens have written about it and praised it. Yes, indeed! It certainly is one of the many great chapters of the Bible, and should be learned by heart — in two

senses. I was one of the privileged boys to be compelled to memorise many N.T. passages of priceless worth, notably Matthew chapters 5,6 and 7, but strangely not this one. It has come later into my understanding of christian behaviour. We cannot too often recall it. The basic contradictions of natural human inclinations in the "sermon on the mount," repeated time and again in the other N.T. writings, perhaps need emphasising more than the thoughts about love which seem so obviously true.

That is, we can so easily understand that kindness is better than cruelty, but "turning the other cheek" is just what we can so easily understand that kindness is better than cruelty, but "turning the other cheek" is just what we will not do without conscious effort. This latter reaction ought to develop in every christian so as to become as natural as was the Saviour's prayer for forgiveness for His tormentors. It is bound up together with love. Love is a natural human instinct through ties of family, national and even class, but unselfish and universal application of it is what is required of followers of HIM WHO GAVE HIMSELF UP FOR US. Paul points the lesson plainly when he writes "peradventure for a good man someone would even dare to die" (Rom.5,7). Our sentiments rule our behaviour often rather than our love does, and demands limits to love's exercise. When we read again "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness so MUST the Son of Man be," we see the supreme application of God's love, the obligation of love towards the unlovable, and then the willingness of the Son to fulfill it (Matt. 26,39; Mark 14,36; Luke 22,42). For whom was it exercised and with what expectation of response? Was ever love like this? Here is the offer of eternal bliss in place of eternal ruin! Nevertheless we have to recognise that exercise of love is not always pleasant because true love has to punish sin. Sin brings harm. Love cannot do harm.

### Use of Spiritual Gifts

The distribution of miraculous gifts was for the good of the church that many should have them, and desire them, subject to their proper use to build up the church. So limitation was essential, and the public use of ecstatic expression in the assembly could be worse than useless. This could only be allowed if interpretation (also miraculous) was immediately available. Whereas at Pentecost the gift enabled the message of the gospel to be understood in foreign languages, and Paul and others were thus enabled to declare the truth without misunderstanding or prior knowledge to foreign languages, other utterances in foreign speech were not necessarily for open expression whatever the speaker might think.

Barclay wisely I think uses the word "forthtelling" in place of "prophecy" as it cannot mean simply telling the future but stands for miraculous revelation and ability to teach what could only be revealed through divine inspiration. The church was built upon the apostles and prophets, and the latter must have been numerous to cover the almost unnumberable assemblies started in regions as far away as India and Ireland. Until the Scriptures were written and made available as widely, christians must have depended upon personal revelation. We must consider the great task of copying the original writings, and translating them into the languages of that time. Many translations were made from earliest times and this has enabled scholars to make research for confirmation of words and phrases differing from one another in the oldest manuscripts and versions. The New Testament grew thus into the form and condition in which we now enjoy it through the arduous and painstaking labours of a great many earnest and dedicated souls whose pens of comparatively primitive character copied and copied the precious words of God. This work is still going on today as more dialects come to

light and more less civilized folk need to study to show themselves approved unto God and capable to continue the work of proclaiming the good tidings worth more than life itself. Paul's emphasis upon using plain speech applies to today's preachers and teachers. Hhurried or muddled efforts do no good. Too much noise in worship is not helpful. Singing for show cannot please God. Truth is solemn not uproarious.

### Gospel Truth The Substance

To the question "What is the good news?" Paul tells us in brief in chapter 15. The vital truth is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, that He was raised from the dead. It was necessary that there should be absolutely reliable witnesses to this fact because He ascended to heaven in the same body in which He lived and died and was buried. All Jerusalem knew how He had lived, and all Jerusalem knew the body left the tomb.

The alternative to these truths was that His disciples had stolen the body while the guards slept on duty & but were not executed. Those who were closest to Him preached the facts so fully and with such divine power that there could be no mistake. We have the four gospels testifying to the truth, and in addition here in a letter written to a new church in order to correct error and establish faith, we have a summary of the appearances so many and various, and crowned as it were by the testimony of a life changed from black to white by a direct heavenly visitation. It is somewhat like the present day testimony of eighteen centuries of history added to the SACRED WRITINGS. The Jewish State exists only to prove the truth of the Bible, manifesting the obstinate unbelief of the nation which rejects its promised Messiah. They were instrumental in beginning the church which accepted and upheld the claims of the apostles and prophets, and in spite of apostasy and ruinous division has

brought eternal salvation to multiplied thousands of believers. Their testimony holds good through changed lives, changed worldly standards, rise and fall of kingdoms, civilising of peoples wherever the holy influence of the life of Jesus has gone. To us it seems strange that some members of the Corinthian church should doubt a resurrection. There is immediate joy when forgiveness of sins is assured but we do wonder how suffering BELIEVERS could think that satisfying without a future condition of heavenly life as redeemed souls freed from life's penalty of death. Paul writes accordingly that we should be pitied if this were the end.

### Unknown Tongues

Our readers will know that the worthy translators of the Authorised Version added the word "unknown" to help us understand what was meant, and it is obvious from the context that they were right. If the "tongue" (language) had been known the passage would be unexplainable. I have supposed generally that it is a mistake to think that ecstatic speaking is referred to in this chapter (14 — and of course 12), but I now conclude that newly born christians out of heathen wickedness were overcome to such an extent with exuberant joy that they burst into ecstatic utterances either in a foreign language or meaningless sounds. Either of these can fit into the apostle's instructions. Both however, had to be indulged in privately unless they could be interpreted into plain understandable speech. Modern exhibition of this human faculty are in line with past and present heathen "oracles," and seem to be of devilish rather than holy origin. I am not justifying the A.V. against later translators for truly translators do not interpret but those remarkably dedicated and honest men under King James used italics to indicate their departure from "translation."

R. B. Scott

Private Mail Bag,  
Orouba Village,  
Via Kira Airstrip,  
Morobe Province,  
Papua New Guinea.

Dear Brother Editor,

We have just recently received the June issue of the *Scripture Standard* and I feel that I must comment on the subject of whether or not the Church should be involved in giving help to hospitals and I assume from the letters already written that this would include medical help as a whole.

Jesus knew the value of healing men's bodies and teaching the Word at the same time. He also illustrates very clearly in Mathew 25: 33-40 that he expects us as Christians to be involved with people's every need.

We read in James 2: 14-17 that faith without works is dead. What kind of work did James have in mind? The same as Jesus referred to in Mathew 25. See also James 4: 17.

My husband Reg and I are known to many of the older brethren as we worshipped with the Kentish Town congregation for many years in the late 1940's. We have been missionaries in Papua New Guinea for the past nine years, the last seven of these have been spent in a very remote mountainous area where there are no roads. For the first two years we walked for two and a half days to get to this village from the nearest airstrip, but Reg being an engineer organised the people to build an airstrip on the only available site on top of a mountain five miles from our village. This was done by voluntary labour but the materials were paid for with help from British, American and Australian congregations. This was a great help to our work and a boon to the people who until then had been locked in this valley. Was this wrong to use church funds in this way?

I am a trained nurse and midwife and when we came here there was absolutely no medical help in an area of 100 square miles and the nearest hospital is one hundred miles away by air in Lae. What

should I have done, refused to give medical help and teach bible classes only? or do what I believe God wanted me to do and treat all of the sick who came to me. To do this I needed supplies and we were very grateful to the City Beach congregation in Perth, W.A. who send hundreds of dollars worth of medicines for me to use. Since then we have received funds from Britain and America. Should we have used this money to buy bibles and teaching materials. Were we wrong to buy medical supplies. The Papua New Guinea Government also supply many of our needs but not all.

The reason I have been prompted to send this letter is that this Saturday afternoon, just two hours ago there was a knock at the door and when I answered it I found a father, mother, teenage son and twelve year old boy there. The younger had been hurt by a falling tree and had a badly lacerated leg which required 16 sutures. Should I have turned these people away saying "Sorry I am busy preparing for my teenage girls class"? No! I invited them in and when I had cleaned and stitched the leg, Reg and I talked to them about Jesus and His saving grace. The suture material and dressings, also the disposable syringes and needles were all donated by my brethren.

We thank God for congregations overseas who have helped to support this work of bringing the Good News to the Waria Tribe in his remote valley. We have four congregations widely scattered with a total of 217 christians of which very few have fallen away. We have several families where the grandparents, parents and teenage children are christians. We are now in the process of building a more permanent church building as all of our former buildings were made of entirely bush materials and the insects start eating it as soon as it is erected. (our house is built the same way) Reg is cutting timber in the bush with the use of an Alaskan Mill attached to a chain saw. Without the help of our overseas brethren we could not do this. Is this wrong?

Reg and I believe that the Lord led us to this place. We came without any financial support at all and the Lord has blessed us abundantly.

In His service,

RUTH COLES.

P.S. We have bought hundreds of New Testaments in Melanesian Pidgin and Guhu Samane. We are fortunate that this is one of the few tribes who have had the New Testament translated by S.I.L. into the tribal language. It took the translators 19 years to do it.

### VISIT TO INDIA

Dear Brethren,

My wife Gretchen and I are making arrangements to go to India for the months of January and February. We should be flying out at the beginning of January and returning at the end of February.

We hope to visit the hospital in Madras, where Carole hopes to work and gain experience in tropical medicine and then visit the home for the children of lepers in Chittoor which is about fifty miles from Madras, where Carole hopes to eventually work with these children.

Afterwards we intend to visit and possibly work with several brethren with whom we are in correspondence, working from the south up towards the north. At Nellore there is Brother Paul Suban a convert from the Muslim religion who has been responsible for establishing many new congregations. Then there are the Churches and Homes in the region of Rajahmundry and Kakinada where much work is going on. Then further north there is the work in Visakahapatnam where the family of Brother Isaac Chukka are doing much work for the Lord. Brother Isaac Chukka was for many years a qualified Lutheran pastor. When he learnt the truth concerning baptism he sacrificed his income, pension and manse in order to go the way of the Lord and has since with his family suffered many hardships. Yet they still persevere full of faith preaching the word and strengthening those who are converted who in turn preach to others.

He wishes to take us to show us the results of much of his labour in the west Godavari district. Afterwards we hope to spend most of February in the area around Lucknow working with brother Masih.

Please pray for us and for the brethren we meet that the Lord will bless our labours together and strengthen us all.

ALLAN ASHURST.

### WATCH YOUR TONGUE

IT is possible to betray the cause of Christ by talking too freely in public and in private about congregations and individuals. Those most interested in correcting the mistakes are not those who talk most loudly about them. Be careful not to say anything that would injure the cause of give advantage to the enemy. *Gospel Advocate.*

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Manchester.** Several weeks ago we in conjunction with the brethren at Hindley made arrangements for the baptism of a Muslim family. When their Muslim friends learnt of their intentions, they harrassed our friends to such a degree that they called the baptism off. However they maintained contact with us and continued to learn about Jesus so that their faith and love for Jesus overcame their fear and they decided to go ahead and be baptised regardless of what might happen to them.

So it was our joy along with many brethren from the Wigan area to witness the baptism of the father, Mohammed Shaffi and his three teenage children, Thomas, Julie and Sheila, on Saturday the 21st of November at Longshoot Church of Christ, Scholes, Wigan.

We are grateful to the brethren at Scholes for their hospitality and to those

brothers and sisters who took the trouble to come along and witness the baptism.

Thomas Shaffi is the childhood friend of a Pakistani believer at whose house for some time we have been having Bible studies. This friend Jacob Masih, though not yet baptised himself, has with great zeal been showing his Muslim acquaintances of whom there are many, that Mohammed cannot be a prophet and the Koran cannot be the word of God. He then directs their attention to Jesus and asks for my assistance. He brought the Shaffi family to me to learn more about Jesus and baptism. So often are people brought to Jesus in ways that we do not expect. It brings forcefully to my mind two passages of scripture one is that the gospel is indeed the power of God to salvation (Romans 1-16) and the other is John Chapter 3 verse 8 which in the revised version reads "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and wither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

The Muslim world is so full of bitterness intrigue and distrust that the joy of those who are redeemed out of this darkness and translated into the kingdom of the sun of his love, is indeed tremendous.

Please rejoice with the Shaffi family in their new found joy and pray for their continued growth in Christ Jesus.

ALLAN ASHURST.

**Slamannan District** — On Saturday 5th December, another Mutual Benefit Meeting was held, this time at Motherwell. Brother Ian Davidson occupied the Chair and the two speakers were Jim Sinclair (sen.) and John Kneller (both speakers from Tranent). The subject was an investigation into whether someone coming to us from a denomination and claiming that they had been baptised for the remission of sins would have to be immersed before entry to the church of Christ. The speakers dealt very ably with the sub-

ject and there followed the usual hours general discussion from the hall. Such was the interest engendered that some who wanted to contribute had difficulty in doing so before the time was up. As usual, a whole lot more emerged from the subject than was anticipated. God willing, the next meeting will be held at Wallacestone on 6th March when the chairman will be brother Joe Malcolm; the speakers will be Mark Plain (sen) and Harry McGinn. The subject will be 'The qualifications of elders and are they responsible for discipline in the church.'

H. Davidson.

## OBITUARY

**Peterhead, Scotland.** After a period of illness, and a life of service, brother Jim Buchan ended his pilgrimage here and went home. He had been a faithful soldier of the cross for many years, and his loyalty to Jesus was evident to all who knew him. His life was his testimony to his trust in the Master, and although he is missed in the assembly, we rejoice with great joy that he is now 'at home' with the Lord — he had walked in the 'Old Paths' and found rest to his soul.

His dear wife, our sister Katie has been a source of encouragement to us all by her love and care of Jim during his illness, and even moreso by her gracious life and example since Jim's death.

Jim graduated to glory on July 28th and it was the writer's privilege to conduct the funeral service. The meeting-place was full to capacity as brethren in Christ, and friends of the family, came to pay their last respects to this great man of God.

We commend our sister Katie, and her family, to the God of all consolation. We rejoice that though unseen, Jim is not unknown, and we look forward to the time when there will be no more parting. "Precious to the Lord, is the death of one of his saints."

M. Gaunt

**ASSISTANCE OFFERED**

Brother Kim Boland writes to me to say that around March/April he is hoping to have a week free and if he could be used in any way by any of the churches in this area, they should contact him and something could, perhaps, be worked out. Any churches holding a Mission may care to bear this in mind. Kim can be contacted at 18 Logan Road, Bishopston, Bristol. BS7.

Ed.

**EDITOR'S ADDRESS**

Occasionally I get communications scantily addressed — one recently being addressed "Scripture Standard, Pathhead." Such material usually reaches me because we have an excellent postal service in Britain but we should not unnecessarily tax their ingenuity. Please address all communications to "James R. Gardiner, 87 Main Street, Pathhead, Midlothian. EH 37. 5PT."

Ed.

\* \* \*

GET a new vision on the pattern of God's plan. Pray that you may see things as if were from His point of view. God's love still stands when all other things have fallen, and the victory of Jesus Christ is the greatest reality.

**YOUTH AND THE CHURCH**

It is true that among many young people today there is a real groping after the essential things of Christianity and a real scorn of the inessential. One sixth form boy said to the writer: "Our church is just a social club. I can go to one sort of entertainment every night in the week, but I don't think that's what the church is for. There's nothing to challenge us or call out the best in us." (J. W. Harmer).

**WISDOM LET LOOSE**

From various sources

\*\*\*Face the sun and the shadows fall behind.

\*\*\*A single fact is worth a shipload of argument.

\*\*\*An ounce of performance is worth a ton of complaint.

\*\*\*If you don't appreciate yourself no one will appreciate you.

\*\*\*Pray for success certainly, but do not fail to supplement your prayers by efforts to deserve it.

THE Bible tells us to love our enemies and to love our neighbours, they are often the same people.

IT is more blessed to give than to receive, but most of us are content to let the other fellow have the greater blessing.

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