

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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EXAMPLES

Things have greatly changed in the classrooms of our schools these days, but when I was at school little boys and girls were to be seen but not heard. In some schools of today the children chat during lessons and call the teacher by his or her first name. I was not long at school before I readily understood what the teacher meant when she said, "I'll make an example of the very next person who talks." Teachers in those days meant what they said and after teacher had "made an example" of somebody the rest of the children were convinced and had no intention of becoming example number two. Examples are very effective — much more effective than mere words and can be for good or ill. An evil example is just as effective for ill as a fine example is for good. Little children naturally depend greatly upon examples being given to them and are inclined to pick up, and copy, the virtues and faults of their parents and those close to them. Their hungry little minds and sharp little eyes are constantly absorbing the vast quantities of information continually bombarding them.

An example could, I suppose, be described as a visual aid — a visual aid that is, to the understanding of some truth or principle. I think that it is an accepted fact that the eye is as good a facility for receiving information as the ear, and perhaps much better than the ear. Thus if a motorist stops and asks me the way to Manchester I would have some difficulty in explaining it to him, but I would have little difficulty in indicating the route on a map. The engineer would be lost without his blue-print, just as the architect would be lost without his plans and elevations. Picture magazines sell well today because the population of today seem to prefer looking at pictures than to reading writing. Thus it has been truly said that although man spends little time reading the writing in the bible, he spends a considerable time critically eyeing up the comings and goings of those who profess to be following the bible, and is quick to express an opinion on what he sees. It is true that God teaches through His word and if we want to learn the truth we must read the writing, but nevertheless God extols the merit of good example, and God's word teems with examples, good ones and bad ones. Some men in God's word left an example to be avoided and some to be emulated.

John in his first epistle shares this view that one illustration is worth a thousand words, when he says, "My little children, let us not love in word; neither in tongue but in deed and in truth." Love, like faith is one of those words which exist only in action, and can only be expressed by and through actions. The young courting couple would doubtless look for some more tangible token of love than mere verbal

statements to each other of "I love you". In the same way we could keep insisting that we love God, but if we live fruitless lives I suppose that there is a good chance that we don't love God at all. As John says a verbal profession falls easily from the lips but if the profession is not matched by deeds, the claim remains empty and hollow. In this particular context actions speak infinitely more forcefully than words. Our love and concern for anyone can really only be expressed in terms of what we are prepared to do for them. Many profess to love their fellow-man but would not lift a little finger to save those starving to death in the less fortunate countries.

The teaching of Jesus was certainly embodied in words — words whereby we might be saved, but Jesus also knew and exploited the power of teaching by example. Indeed Jesus Himself was surely the Great Exemplar. He personally splashed His examples all over the New Testament. He taught not only by word but certainly also by deed, and He loved not only in word but also in deed. Jesus was really the supreme visual aid by which we might understand God. Many of us like illustrated versions of the New Testament and feel, perhaps that the maps, photographs and diagrams greatly assist in getting a grasp of the contents of the book. In a sense we could say that Jesus was God's fully illustrated edition of God's word to man. Jesus illustrated God's writing by His actions and examples.

Most teachers and lecturers recognise this fundamental principle of the art of instruction and welcome the opportunity of walking down from the rostrum and saying, "I shall now demonstrate." I personally know of a house-builder here who does not remonstrate with his men to work harder but he himself leads the way and sets the pace. Truly Jesus was God manifest in the flesh and He personified God in every way. In His words and actions He personified God in His love, gentleness, forbearance, wisdom, compassion and mercy.

This surely was the gist of our Lord's conversation with His disciples in John 14 when He told them of the many mansions in His Father's house and that He would go and prepare a place for them, "And where I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto Him, Lord we know not whither thou goest and how can we know the way. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh to the Father but by me. If ye had known Me ye should have known My Father also: AND FROM HENCEFORTH YE KNOW AND HAVE SEEN HIM. Philip saith unto Him, Lord show us the Father and it sufficeth us. Jesus sayeth unto Him, have I been so long a time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me Philip? HE THAT HATH SEEN ME HATH SEEN THE FATHER." Those who watched what Jesus did and listened to what Jesus said were being shown God. Can such a thing be said of the example *we* give, and in the things *we* say and do?

Even in the oral and verbal teaching of Jesus the lessons were very adequately illustrated by examples. This was especially so in the parables. The intention of the parables was, of course, to conceal the truth from some and reveal it to others and the truth once revealed in the everyday events described in the parables were of such a nature as to remain readily in the mind, and for us to continually draw upon the profound truths contained in the simplicity of the tale. Who could fail to perceive God's brand of love in the parable of the lost sheep, or the wonderful mercy of God in the story of the prodigal son: or the utter contempt of God for the slothful, in the parable of the talents, to mention but three of the Lord's many marvellous parables.

We are not slow to compare the performance of others, or lack of it, with the characters in these parables but I think it was God's intention that we should relate the parables to ourselves. The world at large may not know much about the bible but it knows the drift of the teaching of the main parables and constantly measures us

up, as individuals and churches, to see how we compare. I think it was Mahatma Gandhi who said that the only thing which put him off Christianity was Christians. Do we show the world a good example — do they see any of the attributes of God in us?

Paul said to Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth but be thou an example of the believers in word, on conversation (conduct), in spirit, in faith, in purity." (1st Tim.4:12). Paul certainly expected Timothy to be a fairly comprehensive example, i.e. in word, conduct, love, spirit, faith and purity. Timothy doubtless met the challenge but how would we have measured up to Paul's requirements? A good example is of inestimable value not only as individuals but as congregations and Paul was happy to record for all time the fact that the congregation at Thessalonica were examples to all of Macedonia and Achaia. He says, "And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit. So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing." (1st Thess. 1:5).

May it be that we shall ponder the kind of example we personally give to the world and the kind of example our congregations give to the brotherhood, and that we shall resolve to embark upon a programme of improvement. Let us endeavour to grow more like unto Jesus and to follow His wonderful example. "For even herunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in His steps." (1st Peter 2:21).

Editor

STUDY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AS HISTORY

5. DECLINE

The fifth period into which the history of the Old Testament has been divided has been called the Decline.

This period has been sub-divided into two epochs:—

(a) Division: The first epoch of the Decline is named the Division from the fact that the typical Kingdom of Israel was divided into two during the first year of the reign of Rehoboam. The tyrannical behaviour of Rehoboam made it easy for Jeroboam to raise rebellion and to set himself as king over the ten tribes which separated from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin (2 Chron. 10: 1-14).

(b) Decay: The second epoch of this period is named Decay because of the corrupt declining conditions which ate away the strength of the nation.

After the division continual wars prevailed between the two parts (2 Chron. 12:15). About three years after the division of the Kingdom, the tribes of Judah followed the tribes of Israel in their idolatrous practices. They soon suffered for their departure from the living and true God. The King of Egypt, Shishak, invaded and desolated their country and threatened utter destruction of their city. Upon their repentance, God stayed the scourge, although by this time they had suffered great loss and were made to pay tribute to the invader (2 Chron. 12:2-12).

The Kingdom of Israel (ten tribes) continued until the days of Hoshea, the nineteenth and last King of this Kingdom. In the ninth year of his reign, the Assyrian King, provoked by an alliance which Hoshea tried to make with Egypt, and

so throw off the Assyrian yoke, marched against Samaria and, after a siege of three years, took the city and carried off the people into Assyria. So ended miserably the ten tribes of Israel as a separate kingdom (2 Kings 17:1-6; Hos. 13:16; Micah 1:6).

The Kingdom of Judah (Judah and Benjamin) ended with the reign of Zedekiah (2 Chron. 36:11). He was a weak and very wicked man. The nation during his reign became very sinful. Jeremiah the prophet was inspired to warn them of the severe punishment which was about to break upon them. Zedekiah sought alliance with neighbouring nations, especially Egypt against Nebuchadnezzar. For this Babylonian monarch marched his army into Judea. In the eleventh year of Zedekiah's reign, on the ninth day of the fourth month, Jerusalem was taken after a siege of sixteen months, with all the horrors of famine (read 2 Kings 25:1-11; 2 Chron. 36:12-20).

The history of Zedekiah was recorded before it happened by Jeremiah and Ezekiel (read Jeremiah 34:3 and Jeremiah 32:4-5, also Ezekiel 12:13).

Zedekiah was the last prince of the House of David to sit on the typical throne of David.

It is worth our while to read and give attention to the following cited scriptures:—
Deut. 17:14-20; Samuel 8:10 and 8:7; and Hosea 13:9-11.

From: 'The Young Christian'.

GLEANINGS

“Let her glean among the sheaves.” Ruth 2:15

Conquering

“What is a victorious life? The world conquers us when we let it hinder us from doing our duty and living Christ-like and God-pleasing lives; when it fills our affection and constitutes our aim; when it lets down its painted phantasms between us and the true realities, the things unseen, and eternal, and universal. We conquer the world when nothing in it will turn our feet one inch from the straight path, when all that is in it will exercise our muscles and build up our character, and when like some Jacob's ladder with its foot upon the earth we climb by its gradual rounds until we reach at last the summit and gaze into the face that is above it, the face of our God. The one is to be beaten by the world; the other is to beat it. And when you put your foot on the animal that is in you, refuse to be deceived by the world's false promises or caught by its glittering baits, will not let its siren voices seduce you into ignoble contempt with its trivialities and transparencies, then you have conquered.”

Dr. Maclaren.

“THINK TRULY, and thy thought shall the world's famine feed.”

“SPEAK TRULY, and thy world shall be a fruitful seed.”

“LIVE TRULY, and thy life shall be a great and noble creed.”

Feeble Saints

“It was an amusing distortion of a good hymn, but there was not a little sound philosophy in it when the old negro preacher sang, “Judge not the Lord by feeble saints.” And yet this is precisely what the great majority of unconverted men are doing all the time. They will not go to the Bible and give heed to what God Himself says. They have no ear for His voice of mercy, that offers them salvation for the taking. They do not pay any attention to the solemn warnings that the Scriptures utter. They judge the Lord by “feeble saints.” They attempt to feed their starving souls on the imperfections of Christians — poor food enough they find it! Christians cannot claim exemption from criticism. They do not expect it. They know that the

eyes of the world are upon them. But they say to believers. "If you would know the truth, go to the Word; go to Him who is the truth; judge not the Lord by feeble saints."

"Of all the arts sagacious dupes invent
To cheat themselves and gain the world's assent,
The worst is: Scripture warped from its intent."

Cowper.

Betraying the Christ

"All our evils are betrayals of Christ, and all our betrayals of Christ are sins against a perfect friendship and an unvaried goodness. We, too, have sat at His table, heard His wisdom, had a place in His heart. It is the constant effort of the love of Christ to get us to say to ourselves the real name of what we are about. "Wherefore art thou come?" Almost all actions have a better and worse side. Prudence is called selfishness; we are clever men of business, he is a rogue. It is, therefore, the office of love to force us to look at the thing as it is. He must begin with rebukes that he may advance to blessing. We can resist His pleadings. It rebukes that he may advance to blessing. We can resist His pleadings. It is easily done. Judas merely held his peace — no more. Silence is sufficient. Non-submission is rebellion. The appeal of Christ's love hardens where it does not soften.

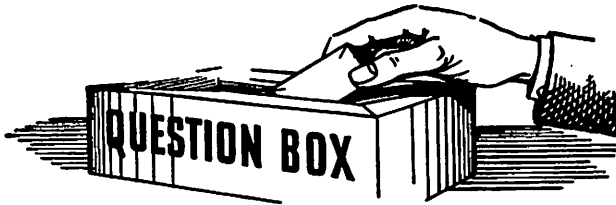
Alex Maclaren

Love

"There are people who carry benedictions wherever they go. Every life they overshadow, even for a moment, receives some blessing from them. The secret is they are filled with love, the love of Christ abiding in them. Love is always self-forgetful, and desires to do good to others; to minister, not to be ministered unto; to help, not to be helped. Love is thoughtful, also, careful never to give pain, to add to another's burdens, to make life harder for another."

"Nature says, "Love thyself"; domestic education says, "Love your family"; the national, "Love your country"; but Christianity says, "Imitate God and love all men."

Bethesda 1907 _____ Selected by Leonard Morgan.



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

In our last issue we began to explain the question of dinosauria and where they fitted into history, with particular reference to the Genesis record. In order to do this, we said that we would need to explain the traditional view of life on earth (as the evolutionist would view it); more

up-to-date scientific views on the history of the universe; and the Christian view of life on earth as given in the Genesis record. We briefly examined the first two last month; we shall now examine the Christian view, correlate as much as we can, and then draw our conclusions.

God the Creator.

Let us say at the outset that fundamental Christian belief *must* begin with an acknowledgement by the individual of the complete sovereignty of God. The creation of the universe, and of the forms of life upon the earth, is shown as a supreme act of God's sovereign will in the Genesis record. The creationist would point out that God does not need millions of years to bring His plans into fruition: His was the voice of command, and the effect was immediate, "God said, Let there be light, and there was light." (Gen. 1:3).

Does the Christian really need a First Cause? Most of us will, no doubt, have heard the argument many times; I have used it myself on a number of occasions when preaching. In the argument, the evolutionist states that protoplasm which existed in the water became amphibious over a great period of time and developed according to the evolutionary time scale. The creationist counters this by posing the question, 'Where did the protoplasm and the water come from in the first place'. He then attempts to demonstrate that there must have been a First Cause which Itself (Himself) was Uncaused. This, ostensibly leads us back to God, because our human nature teaches us that 'Nothing comes out of nothing'. But is there any need for the christian to account for the world being there in order to prove God as Creator? The universe, the world, all that is on the earth, are there because they are part of that Divine Creator whose sovereign will decreed them to be so.

They 'are' because God 'is'. Regarding the creation of man, we can only echo the Psalmist, "It is He that hath made us, and we are His" (Ps. 100:3). The universality of the sovereignty of God extends to *all* His creation; "He is Lord of all."

In view of what we have said, can anyone tell me why the Christian should need to be on the defensive when confronted by the claims of the evolutionist? The theory of evolution has nothing to offer the human race but doubt and confusion. It is *they* who need to explain themselves in the context of the order and consistency of God's creation. But what do we find? Julian Huxley, a leading evolutionist said, 'Darwinism removed the whole idea of God as the Creator of organisms from the sphere of rational discussion. Darwin pointed out that no supernatural designer was needed; since natural selection could account for any known form of life, there was not room for a supernatural agency in its evolution'. Statements like this, I contend, reveal evolutionary thinking in its true nature; God is no longer necessary to them.

The Genesis Record.

The Genesis record seems to support the theory of a pre-Adamic creation. Genesis 1:1. says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth". Unless we believe that God would *create* a waste and void, then verse 2 would seem to suggest that the earth had *become* waste and void; there was darkness, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. Thus, we read of a pre-Adamic creation, and then Genesis records the Week of Creation. This idea of a first creation is supported by the words of Genesis 1:28. After the creation of man, the scripture goes on, "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply; and replenish the earth, and subdue it". Now you can only *replenish* if there has been *something there before*, therefore, this suggests a previous creation, and who would be bold enough to say how long *that* lasted.

As regards animals, the Genesis record quite categorically states that God *created* 'great whales, and every living creature that moveth'. Life as we know it appeared suddenly and dramatically. We can read that none of our present species of living creatures can be traced back to the periods preceding the appearance of man. The evolutionary theory states that dinosaurs and men could *not* have lived at the same time, but how do we account for the fact that in the Paluxy River bed, near Glen Rose, Texas, dinosaur footprints have been found together with human footprints in rock that has been uncovered there? I understand that pictures of these footprints were published in a publication of the American Museum of Natural History called 'Natural History', and that these human and dinosaur footprints show up quite clearly. According to the evolutionary timetable these tracks must have been made when the rocks were 'young' (and soft) in the Carboniferous Period. But that was 250 million years ago, and yet their timetable says that man came into being only *one* million years ago; this poses the rather interesting question as to how humans could have left footprints when they, the humans, did not exist.

The christian must also believe that the Week of Creation as contained in the Genesis record, was a week of days of twenty-four hours duration. I have read that some evolutionists contend that a Genesis creation day could have been as long as half a million years, but that would surely mean that when Moses speaks about 'the evening and the morning' being a day, then that would mean that the forms of life already created would have been without light for half a million years. Is this a really tenable suggestion? No, I think we are led to the inevitable conclusion that *every day* of creation was a day of 24 hours duration. The Jewish nation kept the Sabbath day holy *because* God had rested on that day from His creative work, and we know that the commemorative Sabbath Day was of normal duration. Indeed, would God have commanded something which *couldn't* be kept.

Some Evolutionary Problems.

It is quite evident that scholarly opinion can be quite wrong; this was illustrated in the case of the so-called Piltdown Man. Human remains were found on Piltdown Common, near Lewes, and brought to scientific notice about the year 1912. The remains consisted of several skull fragments and a tooth, and English paleontologist, Sir Arthur Woodward, gave it the name of Eoanthropus. Controversy raged in the scholarly world for over forty years; some thought this to be the *missing link*, others dated the find at one million years (the so-called dawn of man), others estimated 200,000 years. In order to resolve the controversy, tests were carried out on the remains. These tests revealed that the remains had been artificially treated to simulate primitive man. The fragments, it was found, had been deliberately stained, some with Chromium, others with acid iron sulphate solution. There was no Chromium nor Iron Sulphate in the region of the find. As a matter of fact, the study revealed that the cranium was that of a quite modern human.

As regards Java Man, the findings are still inconclusive. Some anthropologists believe them to be the remains of orangutans, and the man who discovered them is said to believe that they are the remains of gibbons, and not human at all.

Neanderthal Man, found in a number of areas in Europe, is the best preserved by anthropology. But even here there is much difference of opinion regarding classification, and it is argued that even though the finds are primitive, they are nonetheless human, and not the missing evolutionary link.

Conclusion.

So what are we left with? Life on earth is a fact because we can see it. The real evidence is that it came into being suddenly and dramatically; the inconclusive evidence is that it evolved over a period of 500 million years or so. I would want to believe in a conclusive act of God, rather than the inconclusive findings of men.

Man was created to have mastery over all other forms of created life. That man should only have appeared on the scene some 499 million years *after all other forms of life* makes God a liar, and that is unthinkable.

We must try to release our minds from time limitations when we think about God. 'Time', 'beginnings', 'ends', are all by-products of creation, and are man's finite appreciation of the eternal. Everything exists because of the cardinal fact that God *is*. We do not have to account for God, nor is it possible to explain Him in finite terms, but we know that He is not the Author of confusion which we encounter in the evolutionary world. His creation is orderly, precise; and it is only *because* of the orderly precision of God's creativity that man's intellectual ability is able to discover anything at all. To God be the glory.

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

PARABLE OF THE LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD

This parable is recorded only in the Gospel written by Matthew (20:1 1-16) but the incidents leading to it are set in exactly the same circumstances in Mark (10:17-31) and Luke (18:18-30). It is a safe rule in studying the parables of Jesus to find out the setting in which Jesus speaks them, and this rule applies to this parable. Will you take the time to read the parable? By so doing you will get a better idea of what the story is, Or rather, what it is about.

It was certainly meant to be understood by the disciples who heard it. Jesus was too great a teacher to use words which would be wasted upon his audience. Yet it is wonderful how his simple stories have come down to us 2,000 years later with a freshness as though they were intended specifically for us. As we read this story, for instance, we cannot help but realise that if the parable were intended to guide us in "industrial relations" today it could not be more to the point. If relationships between master and servant were meant, we have guidance here to employers and employed in industry, to "bosses" and Trade Unionists. Of course this statement will be derided by both, but the fact remains. "Facts are stubborn things" is a common saying. One M.P. once said in Parliament "You cannot run a country on the Sermon on the Mount." But we are not making much of a job of it without, are we? And that question applies from the Prime Minister to the humblest "back bencher" on the seats of the House of Commons. I am no politician, but I can see a permanence, an "abidingness" in what Jesus taught that lays down principles which outlive the latest declarations of men on topics of the moment. Much of such ridicule is uttered because men feel an uncomfortable application which gives us no peace and will not leaving us alone.

Explanation of points in the parable.

Jesus was always accurate in detail and true to life in his parables. Thus, in this

he includes seemingly trivial customs and practices which the people were perfectly familiar with. Hiring of labourers to work in the vineyard conforms exactly with the practice of those days — unorganised and plentiful — no Labour Exchanges, no “pools” of workmen to draw from, no contracts, no standard wage. Jesus brings out a remarkably merciful provision of the Jewish law in the Old Testament Scriptures: that the workman should be paid his wage for the day’s work before the close of the day, before sunset (Lev. 19:13; Deut. 24:14-15).

We tend to regard “The Law” of Moses in the Old Testament as harsh, merciless, demanding implacable. But sometimes we are shown that it was merciful, considerate, compassionate. Here is one of these latter provisions. Workers in Old Testament times had no guaranteed jobs: all they had to offer was their labour; they were “here today and gone tomorrow.” Wages were not to be held in the hands of their employer until the worker chose to collect them. They needed the money as they worked. Such a merciful provision was commanded by God to be included in His law, it might mean life or death to the poor. And Jesus remembers this.

The Lesson of the Parable.

At least one outstanding lesson is contained in every parable of Jesus. And that lesson is brought out in this parable by Jesus. It is that service to God must be a *will-ing offering* not only of work but of life. Reward is not to be reckoned by what I gain in any way, but in that I am called, permitted to have part in God’s eternal purpose to save, win back to Himself His own creatures who have gone astray from Him, been indifferent to or oppose Him and who, by sin crucified His Son and would not have Him to rule over them. For those who in word, or action, or thought, cried “Crucify Him” Jesus Christ prayed “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” He was delivered to us and we did what we chose with Him, we worked our will upon Him. But because He is the Son of God “He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross . . . Wherefore God highly exalted him and gave him the name above every name . . . the name of Jesus . . .” (Philippians 2:8-11).

He gave us Himself; God gave us His Son. This is the gift which makes all other gifts mean and without value. We have nothing to give Him to enrich Him. He does the giving and it is ours to receive: sufficient enrichment and reward throughout eternity. “The *wages* of sin is death, but the *free gift* Of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ . . .” (Romans 6:23).

But a gift does not become mine until and unless I accept it. And how do I accept Jesus Christ as God’s gift to me? God tells me in His work, the Bible, the Scriptures: we can tell you from this Book how to *Begin* the new life of service to God and of rejoicing in the salvation which Jesus Christ gives us by His death and resurrection. We ask you to read the Gospel written by John, chapter 3, verses 1 to 21. There Jesus tells a Jewish teacher how to *begin* this new life Christ offers. As with the natural life we begin by birth, so we begin the spiritual life by a birth, a *new birth*. We believe that Jesus clearly shows Nicodemus that this new spiritual birth is baptism, immersion in water. We are aware that this is regarded as a highly controversial belief, based upon the obvious meaning of the plain words of Jesus. God willing, in an article to follow in this paper we shall try to justify this conviction.

CARLTON MELLING.

ADHERING TO A PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

When Socrates, the Greek, who lived about 400 B.C., was charged with corrupting the youth of his day, and condemned to death, his friends were amazed at his attitude toward the sentence. He refused means of escape by bribery, common then as now, and steadfastly maintained that as he was a law-abiding citizen he would abide the decision made by a lawful court. He was really not guilty of any serious offence except that of making people think by his questioning method of teaching, what we today term the Socratic method. However, making people think can be a serious offence to a conservative establishment such as that which wanted him out of their way. They had not really wanted his death, and had hoped that he would take advantage of an opportunity to "skip town" as we would say in our modern slang. But this he would not do, and his friends could not understand his lack of fear of death as the hour of his execution by drinking the poison hemlock drew near. They wept and mourned when they thought of losing such a very dear friend as he had been to them. His philosophy of life was expressed like this: **I THINK THAT A MAN'S DUTY IS ONE OF TWO THINGS, EITHER TO BE TAUGHT OR TO FIND OUT WHERE THE TRUTH IS, OR IF HE CANNOT, AT LEAST TO TAKE THE BEST POSSIBLE HUMAN DOCTRINE AND THE HARDEST TO DISPROVE, AND TO RIDE ON THIS LIKE A RAFT OVER THE WATERS OF LIFE AND TAKE THE RISK; UNLESS HE COULD HAVE A MORE SEAWORTHY VESSEL TO CARRY HIM MORE SAFELY AND WITH LESS DANGER, SOME DIVINE DOCTRINE TO BRING HIM THROUGH.**

From this statement one can see that Socrates did not take any of life without questioning. By his questioning and dialogue with his friends he would establish the foundation on which his life's actions should be built. His searching questions sorted out the wheat from the chaff, or to put it another way he kept testing the materials of his thinking and throwing away that which would not stand the very closest of examinations.

THE WHOLE REASON FOR INTRODUCING THE SUBJECT OF THIS ARTICLE WITH THE PHILOSOPHY OF A MAN WHO LIVED 400 YEARS BEFORE CHRIST IS THAT HIS REASONING IS BASICALLY SOUND. His questioning brought out the final thought that the inner man, the mind, the soul of you will, is more important than the body. Our thinking, he says, is corrupted by the appetites of the body, thus preventing our seeing clearly and without bias when we must provide for the claims of the body. Therefore, his reasoning was with his friends: **I can rejoice now that I shall be released from this body, and the inner man shall have achieved immortality. Why should I be in tears with you, my friends? Why should I strive to hang on to that which has constantly kept me from achieving the highest possible gain? My body must return to dust, that is an inescapable fact. But my reasoning has brought me to the conclusion that death of the body is not the end of me, but rather the beginning of that which is better.**

We on this side of the cross have a far surer base on which to build than had Socrates 400 years before Christ came fulfilling the prophecies of the ages: **LIFE AND IMMORTALITY HAS BEEN BROUGHT TO LIGHT THROUGH THE GOSPEL (2 Tim. 1:10)** and because this is so Paul urged Timothy (and us) to hold fast the form of sound words . . . in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 1:13).

Mankind in general is more concerned about the care of the body than it is about the nurture of the "inner man." In the midst of this kind of thinking the apostle Paul could say in all honesty and truth concerning himself that "though our outward man

perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4:16). But this was true for Paul because of his line of thinking which governed his activities: WHILE WE LOOK NOT AT THE THINGS THAT ARE SEEN, BUT AT THE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT SEEN, FOR THE THINGS WHICH ARE SEEN ARE TEMPORAL; BUT THE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT SEEN ARE ETERNAL" (2 Cor. 4:18).

There is every reason to agree with the scripture of Phil. 3:21 which speaks of *our vile body* (better translated as *the body of our humiliation*) for it surely does humiliate us no matter how well we may care for it. Spend a fortune on it if you will, but it cannot continue its beauty forever. Eventually it must return to the dust from whence it came.

YET, IN SPITE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THIS, MANKIND PLUNGES HEEDLESSLY ON IN THE ACTIVITIES WHICH ARE OBVIOUSLY DESIGNED TO FURTHER THE CARE AND COMFORT OF THE BODY. WHETHER WE THINK OF POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT, OR WHETHER WE THINK OF MODERN ADVERTISING, OR WHETHER WE BECOME ENAMORED OF THE LATEST DESIGN IN MODERN TRANSPORTATION, it is all concerned with the comfort and care of THE BODY. The little phrases we use in talking about these things tell what we really think about it all: "the rat race," "back on the treadmill," "back to the salt-mines!" What a package of truth is given in Ecclesiastes 8:8, "There is no man hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death; and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it."

Mankind has changed little over the centuries. Therefore, we should go back to some truth spoken by a prophet 700 years before Christ came. Does it still have relevance in our day? Isaiah 8:5-8 tells us: "The Lord spoke also unto me (Isaiah) again, saying, Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son; now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks: and he shall pass through Judah; and he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel."

The period following the reign of Solomon was the beginning of the end. The people of God were divided into a northern and a southern kingdom, Israel and Judah. Depending upon political alliances to stave off the enemy in the East, Israel was in grave danger. Judah was not exempt from punishment for the armies of Assyria like a flood would nearly drown them, but Israel was to fall. History of the time tells what happened, a sad tale indeed, and all because they would not drink of the *waters of Shiloah that go softly*. This was a stream of pure water in Jerusalem which ran constantly the year round, but the prophet uses it as a figure of speech in which the waters that go softly represents the grace of God always available (see also Isa. 55:1). As God's flock they could not drink from an agitated water. Sheep perish if not provided with "still waters" (Psalm 23). And this being so Israel and Judah were suffering because they were not concerned about the most important thing of all — spiritual salvation!

We need to ask ourselves as professing Christians: "Where are our priorities? How consistent are we as Christians? Do we really accept the statement that "our citizenship is in heaven?" If we do not drink of the "waters of Shiloah that go softly" we too will perish as surely as did the careless ones of so long ago. Surely with a better and more seaworthy vessel, a "DIVINE DOCTRINE," we should be able to reach our true destination with equanimity. Have we any really good reason for doubts and fears?

Sent to the 'S.S.' by Earl B. Severson, Burnaby, B.C., Canada.

“DO-GOODERS”

It is a pity when people use slick derogatory phrases, not thinking of the harm they might do. The other day a speaker told a gathering of social workers that their job should not be regarded as just another bit of work by “woolly do-gooders.”

It was plain enough what was meant in that case. But the term “do-gooders” is an unfortunate one, too often used nowadays. In fact, it has somehow become almost a dirty word — like “intellectual,” “cultural” and (at least until recently) “peace-lover.” In this sense, strangely enough, it can be traced back to a bishop, of all people; Bishop Mandell Creighton, who once wrote that “no people do so much harm as those who go about doing good.”

Just what he meant by that, or in what context the words were uttered, is now forgotten; and it is impossible to ask him, because he died in 1901. But the label “do-gooders” has stuck with unfortunate results. Of course, there are a few people here and there whose overpowering and self-esteeming benevolence becomes irritating after a time. But they are such rare exceptions that it is wrong indeed to make a sweeping generalisation about all who try to help their fellow men and women, with sincerity and often at considerable sacrifice.

Incidentally, “do-gooders” is an escape route — an “alibi,” in modern jargon — for those who are always ready to pass by on the other side — the “I’m all right, Jack” brigade. We would do well to forget the term “do-gooder,” and instead remember the lines of the great John Wesley:

Do all the good you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.

And to remember, too, some of the simplest and most moving words ever uttered; Peter’s summing-up of the life of Christ: He went about doing good.

— Selected.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

July 6	Job 14	Phil. 1,15-30
July 13	Psalms 2	Phil. 2,1-18
July 20	Isaiah 38	Phil. 2,19-30
July 27	Isaiah 43,1-13	Phil. 3,1-16

THE PRISONER’S LETTERS

There is difference among scholars but we are assuming that the letters to Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse and Philemon were written during the two

years mentioned by Luke in Acts 28, 30 & 31. Paul’s own record is in Phil. 1,12-21 and meets us here and there in the letters. We learn somewhat about his life and habits. It would seem that he had privileges partly on account of his citizenship and partly doubtless by favour of Julius, whose respect he had gained during the voyage. From his letter to the Roman church we know he had many friends in the city. That he was able to hire his house indicates help financially in which at some time the Philippian church shared (Phil. 4,18).

What continuous company he had which might be difficult to bear at times.

A guard was chained to him always. This may at first have been hard to bear but he would soon gain the confidence and respect of the rough soldiery. Continuous company has been used at times to break a prisoner's morale, but with Paul the opposite was the case. He had numerous visitors but there would be occasional loneliness while companions were away on messages. Luke and Aristarchus had been with him through the shipwreck, and doubtless remained with him all the time, the latter in fact being also a prisoner. There would be constant thought and prayer, audible and inaudible, public and private. We do not pray enough together. But imagine what long effort must have been exercised. Where did Tychicus get the parchment or the papyrus, the quill or metal stylus, the ink? How could it be stored or packed. How could it be laid out for the writing? What table was used, or had it to be on the floor? When we consider the contents of the letters, they must have taken days, weeks or months to get written, and how were they stored or packed for transport — what weighty or bulky packages did they make?

Would there not be danger by robbers or storms? God's hand was in all this, and inspired by His Holy Spirit not only the thoughts and words but the courage and unselfish efforts of so many to carry messages and letters from church to church throughout the known world of that time. In this way the New Testament came to be collected. We know that Tychicus and Onesimus journeyed together to Colosse with the letter to the church there and the private letter to Philemon, who was probably an elder there. Indeed he may have given accommodation for the meetings. Apparently Epaphroditus travelled alone with the letter to Philippi although the others could have been with him part of their way through to Asia Minor. It is not

known at what time in the two year period the letters were written. That to Philippi might be late in the time in view of "as soon as I shall know how it will go with me" (2,23). The same idea is present however in Philemon verse 22. Tychicus certainly took the letter to Ephesus and could have done so on the same journey, Colosse being about 100 miles inland from Ephesus.

We have to account also for the "letter from Laodicea." It is not unreasonable to suppose that & addressed in our translations to Ephesus was a circular intended for all the churches in the province of Asia, which would include Hierapolis and Laodicea and the other churches addressed by the Holy Spirit in "Revelation." Whereas the district had been evangelised by Paul himself during his work in Ephesus (Acts 19,10), churches were familiar to Peter (I Peter 1,1) and ultimately it seems certain that the apostle John spent his late years there. Wherever our messengers travelled they would find groups of Christians. Though a small minority may be in a heathen world they would know one another and be kept in touch.

CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIP

We gather from these letters the fact that Christianity brought an entirely new relationship into the world, and it does now wherever it is honestly accepted. The relationship was so utterly foreign to a heathen population as to bring the comment "How these Christians love one another." The moral uplift was so striking that it brought enmity and persecution in most areas especially where as in Ephesus where it affected adversely business, popular religion or persistent Judaism. There is accordingly in all the letters an insistence upon behaviour consistent with apostolic teaching and example. The removal of the barrier between Gentile and Jew is also emphasised as being the special service of Paul himself under divine revelation. The dreadful darkness of the heathen world is

pictured and the change into the light of the gospel shown as a translation from one kingdom into another which is dominated by Christ Who holds the supreme position past, present and future. There is a specially happy relationship manifested in the letter we are reading this month. We look back to the riverside where prayer was wont to be made, and the business woman who kindly welcomed and entertained Paul and Silas, and find that the gospel introduced in such difficult circumstances resulted in close fellowship and friendship. Suffering for the same cause draws people together and, there indeed the love of Jesus bore the fruit of love for one another immediately in the most practical way (4,16). We view the same happy result in the case of Onesimus and Philemon, and in the striking courtesy of the apostle. Did he intend Philemon to send Onesimus back to Rome, or has he just service in the church in general? I do not know. Tychicus could indeed explain this question there and then. We may assume that the relationship of slaves and masters was resolved rather as circumstances allowed rather than by any immediate "revolution." It is resolved in this case by verse 15, and in both Ephesians and Colossians the duties of each is given. Slaves do not instruct masters what they must do neither do slaves tell masters what they must do but each takes to heart what the Lord requires of them.

The Supreme Sacrifice

As a statement of truth we have a summary of what it cost the Son of God Who became the Son of Man in Phil.2,6-8 to be the one sacrifice for sins for ever. We note its introduction in verse 1 as an appeal for a certain attitude of mind required to rejoice the apostle's heart and issuing in complete unselfishness. So this humiliation of Jesus is our example for our humiliation, our willingness to endure suffering for the sake of others.

R. B. Scott

THE OTHER MAN'S SHOES

Pray, don't find fault with the man who limps

Or stumbles across the road,
Unless you have worn the shoes he wears,

Or struggle beneath his load.
There may be tacks in his shoes that hurt,

Though they may be hidden from view;
Or the burden he bears, if placed on your back,

Might cause you to stumble, too.

Don't be harsh with the man who sins;
Don't pelt him with words or stones,
Unless you're sure, yes, doubly sure
That you have no sins of your own:
For you know, perhaps, if the tempter's voice.

Should whisper so softly to you
As it did to him when he went astray,
It would cause you to stagger too.

Don't sneer at the man who's down today
Unless you have felt the blow
That caused his fall; or have trod the way

That only the fallen know.
You may be strong, but still the blows
That were his, if dealt to you
In the selfsame way, might bring you down.
Or cause you to stagger too.

Selected.

TRACTS FOR MUSLIMS

Manchester: Brother Allan Ashurst writes to say that he and brother Sahid Faruh and brother Mohammed Sharax are anxious to bring the gospel to Muslims and have produced some leaflets mainly with Muslims in mind.

These, fairly simple leaflets in English, Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Bengalie, Hebrew and Somali might, it is felt, be useful in areas of large Muslim communities.

Costs to any interested assemblies, and further details can readily be supplied by brother Allan Ashurst, 60 Kenwood Road, Stretford, Manchester, whose initiative in this is only to be commended.

Editor.

ZAMBIAN REPORT

Zambian calls for missionaries

Daniel Zulu works as a Zambian Court Official. His latest posting is to the Court at Kawambwa in Zambia's Luapula Province. He is an enthusiastic preacher and his visitation to people and places had been widespread in this remote province. Zulu writes that Zambia still has great need for missionaries of Churches of Christ. He appeals for a minimum of 32 missionaries to come to Zambia — one missionary for each district of the country. Preferably, Zulu would like more than one missionary per district. Zulu concludes: "Let the American and British Churches of Christ know that we still need their help for at least 50 years to come and thank you". So Zulu appreciates the work of the Woodhall Missionary family!

Baptisms

The congregation at Kamatipa was organised in 1917. The river continues to be used for Baptisms. Recently, there have been six Baptisms. Kamatipa is a shanty town north of Kitwe.

At Zambezi, in North-western Province, the congregation established in 1979, is building a new meeting place close to the palace of the Chieftainess. Recently, there have been five Baptisms.

Leadership training

At Kamatipa a week's teaching was given recently on how to preach. At Kandabwe, again near Kitwe, making disciples was the theme of a week's teaching and brought forth some penetrating questions from church leaders — for example, was Nicodemus a chief?

Chester and Angela Woodhall

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

New Wellington Street, Blackburn: We rejoice that on Tuesday, April 15th, Mrs. Muriel Whittaker made the good confession and was baptised the same evening. Our new sister has attended the gospel meetings for a number of years, first at Hamilton Street and more recently at New Wellington Street. She has listened intently and has come to the Lord through conviction. Because of this we know that she will be a faithful follower of Jesus and we pray that she may be responsible for leading others to Christ. May God bless her and keep her in His love. — Harry N. Holden.

OBITUARY

Hindley. Once again our membership has been depleted by the passing to a higher life of our dear sister Mary Jacks. She was present at the Breaking of Bread and the Gospel meeting on Lord's Day, April 20th and it came as a great shock to us to hear that shortly after reaching home her daughter found her, dead in her chair.

Although enduring spells of ill health she was to be found present at the meeting, sometimes have to be taken home again. She was very prompt to say "thank you" when being served or helped in any way, and was also sympathetic to others in distress. Her seat will be empty and she will be missed.

To her sorrowing family we tender our loving sympathy, commending them to a Father in Heaven who can give lasting relief.

One by one our loved ones leave us,

One by one they pass away.

To a land of cloudless sunshine,

Where there is unending day.

May their faithfulness direct us,

To the Lord they loved so well.

And encourage us to follow,

In His steps with Him to dwell. T. Kemp

Slamannan, Scotland APPEAL

It is with reluctance and prayerful consideration that the congregation here wish to make an appeal.

We are appealing to our brethren in various churches for financial help to assist us in raising enough money to make our Meeting House wind and water tight etc. This past Winter has played havoc with it.

The brethren here would much like to be in a position to meet the cost of the work entailed but at present finds this impossible. We ourselves are doing whatever work that lies within our power.

All donations will be most gratefully welcomed and acknowledged by our treasurer, John Wilson sr., 2 Gowanlea Drive, Slamannan, Stirlingshire.

Trust the churches will rally to our support.

Yours in The Master's name
Mary S. Neilson, Secretary.
John Wilson, Treasurer.
George Sneddon, Elder.

DEADLINE

Brethren still send items for inclusion well after the deadline date for printing. Please try and give me any material by the 10th of any month at latest. There is no cost involved in the inclusion of any item (Brethren still write asking for a note of the cost of including some statement or advertisement). No charge whatsoever. — Ed.

THANKS

Burn's Street, Ilkeston: The church wishes to express their sincere thanks to the churches who so willingly donated cash in answer to their appeal and to say that the account is now closed. — W. S. Bradley, Sec.

TRACTS

'Twenty Questions on Churches of Christ.' This is a well prepared leaflet, one of the few produced in Britain. Supplies are available from stock at £1.50 per hundred (postage extra). All orders to: John Partington, 86 Lord Street, Hindley, Wigan, Lancs.

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