

# *The* **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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## **THE PRESSING INVITATION**

In a month or two we shall be having another General Election, and already all the political parties are squaring up for a bitter and acrimonious contest. Even now, at this early stage, the gloves are off and the skin is flying. Accusations and counter-accusations are being hurled in all directions, with cries of 'dirty tricks', misrepresentation, lies, character assassinations and all the rest of the light banter that characterises General Elections. Predictions are, that certainly on this occasion, pre-electioneering will be particularly dirty with much muck-raking: but what's new?; politics was ever a dirty business, where a lie (not God) was always "a very present help in time of trouble". (Ps. 46:1). It never ceases to amuse to hear M.P.'s complain for five years about the horrible job they've got and then to watch them fight tooth and nail to get back in.

I never hear the word 'election' but think immediately on Peter's words, ". . . **make your calling and election sure**" and it is upon that statement that I propose to offer a few comments. The full quotation is "**Wherefore the rather brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things ye shall never fail; For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.**" (2 Peter 1:10). How do we make our Calling and Election sure? In what sense are men "Called" and "Elected" by God? Evidently there is a difference between being "Called" and "Elected" for they are mentioned separately here and indeed receive separate (but extensive) mention throughout the N.T. These two subjects (Calling and Election) are worthy of notice and can surely take their place with all the other grand N.T. themes (such as Redemption, Restitution, Restoration, Remission, Reconciliation, Regeneration, etc.). This article will have to be confined to our "CALLING", but God Willing, our "ELECTION" will be dealt with on a future occasion.

It is said that men such as Presidents, Prime Ministers, and the like, are "called" to High Office, (in that a vacancy for such men requires to be filled) but they still have to be **chosen** through the ballot box: by election. I suppose most men, and certainly most Americans, would regard the Presidency of the U.S.A. as the highest honour capable of being bestowed upon a human-being; yet there is a "calling" abroad in the world today (and every day) which makes even such a Presidency pale into complete inconsequentiality. I refer, of course, to the "**High Calling of God in Christ Jesus**" (Phil. 3:4).

### CALL UNIVERSAL

God's call comes to **everyone**. This is self evident yet quite an important point to make, for there are some, with a leaning towards the doctrine of 'predestination', who insist that God's call and election is restricted to **particular individuals**, 'chosen' even before they were ever born. However, Jesus instructed His disciples **"to go into all the world"** and preach the gospel to **"every creature"**, Which would seem to be a complete waste of time and energy if God had already earmarked only a few particular individuals as His "chosen". The call is to be extended to **every person** and consequently everyone who hears the call has the real option to accept it. This is God's will, and if every man and woman, in every generation, **does not** receive God's call, then that might certainly suggest a serious dereliction of duty on the part of Christ's servants and evangelists. How each person **responds** to the call is quite another matter, of course, and is a question between themselves and their Maker; but receive the call they must. After all, God's call is to **sinners** and that must surely include **everybody** for **"all have have sinned"**. Jesus said: **"I am not come to CALL the righteous, but sinners to repentance"**. God's promise of salvation is open to Jews and to Gentiles alike: **"even as many as the Lord our God shall CALL."** (Acts 2:39) and later in the chapter (v.47) we read that those initial 3,000 who **obeyed the call** were added to the Church as those who were being saved. The parable dealing with the marriage of the king's son (Matt. 22) describes how those who received the king's invitation **"made light of it"** and quickly returned to their business pursuits. Nothing much has changed and men today are just as dismissive of God's invitation, failing to realise how awesome it is to **"make light of"** or frustrate God's gracious efforts to save them.

### FOLLOW ME

Jesus acquired many of His disciples with the words, **"Follow Me"** and we can construe these words either as an **invitation** or a **command**: much as we might regard **"This do"** in connection with the Lord's Table. How would we regard the words **"Follow Me"** which, after all, comprise essentially the call of Christ? Does it matter whether these constitute an invitation or a command: and is there any important difference? The word "invitation" does not appear in the N.T. but Prof. Barclay says that the Greek (**Kalein**) for 'Called' sometimes means an invitation, as for example in Matt. 22:3 (the parable of the marriage of the king's son) and also when Simon the Pharisee 'invited' Jesus to a meal at His home. If our boss was to invite us out one evening, say for a game of bowls, we could, I suppose, decline the invitation; but if in the morning we are asked to report to his office; that would be a **summons** and not an invitation. If for some reason we were unfortunate enough to be asked by the police to call at Headquarters to "assist them with their enquiries"; would we regard that as an invitation or something slightly stronger? Every year certain select individuals in Edinburgh get an 'invite' from Her Majesty the Queen to her Garden Party at Holyrood Palace and, due to the unlikelihood of any of us ever getting (or wanting) one, we can but speculate as to whether these privileged folk see the matter as being a normal invitation or a royal command.

When Paul received the 'Macedonian Call' (Acts 16:9) i.e. **"Come over into Macedonia and help us"** I'm sure he regarded it as somewhat more than an invitation. Presumably it is all a question of authority: since only those who have authority over us can summon us or command us. Jesus claimed to have **"all authority"** both in heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18) and so while His words, **"Follow Me"** may rightly be regarded as a warm invitation: even a challenge: they rightly may be regarded more as a **summons**: a summons to honour, privilege and service.

### THE GOOD PROFESSION

As any dictionary will tell us, a man's "Calling" is his sphere of employment,

trade or activity. This, I suppose, follows from the fact that (theoretically, at least) a person is 'called' into one trade or another. There are also those who believe that they have embarked upon a "profession" (such as doctors, lawyers, teachers, etc.) and who "profess" to do what they do. In both respects this is also true of God's call. In responding positively to God's call we enter upon the Christian Calling and Profession. Just as Mr. Bush could claim to be called to High Office as President of the U.S.A. so Paul could claim to have been "Called" by God to be an apostle of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:1). The call came not from an electorate but from God, and so Paul entered upon his "Calling" or "Profession", as a servant, or soldier, or apostle of Christ. In an illuminating few verses in 1 Cor. (7:17-24) Paul assures the Corinthians that just as **"the Lord hath called every man"** it matters not whether a man answers the call in a circumcised or uncircumcised condition, nor does it matter as to his trade or calling. Indeed a man should **"abide in the same calling wherein he was called."** It also matters not whether he is a servant (slave) or master. If he is a slave or servant Paul says that God's call makes him a free man: and if he is a master (or free man) God's call makes him a servant or slave: to Jesus Christ that is. Thus we have this illustration of the relationship between a man's "Calling" (or job) and his Christian "Calling" as a follower of Christ. Paul had much to say about the Christian calling and remarked on one occasion (1 Cor. 1:27, about the type of person answering the call) **"Ye see your CALLING, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called."** Presumably it is still true, and always will be, that not many worldly-wise, mighty or noble will enter the Christian Calling, not because they have not heard the call but because they have disdained it. With reference to the Christian "Profession": Timothy is said to have **"professed the good profession"** when "Called" unto eternal life (1 Tim. 6:12) Jesus is described as the High Priest of **"our profession"** (Heb. 3:1) and Paul further exhorts all Christians to **"hold fast"** to the **"profession"** they have taken upon themselves (Heb. 4:14). Such then is the outcome of man's favourable response to God's call; it brings him into the "Christian Calling" and the "God Profession". Now let us look briefly at some of the attributes of this calling.

#### ATTRIBUTES OF GOD'S CALLING

**HIGH Calling.** Paul's avowed purpose in life was to **"press towards the mark for the prize of the HIGH CALLING of God, in Christ Christ."** (Phil. 3:14). 'High' is from the Greek *Ano* and means exalted, above and upward.

**A HOLY Calling.** **"God hath called us with a HOLY CALLING, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace."** (2 Tim. 1:9).

**A HEAVENLY calling.** The writer to the Hebrews speaks thus, **"Wherefore, Holy brethren, partakers of the HEAVENLY CALLING, consider the apostle and High Priest of OUR PROFESSION, Jesus Christ."** (Heb. 3:1).

**A CALLING TO FELLOWSHIP.** Paul assures us that **"God is faithful by whom ye were CALLED, UNTO THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SON, Jesus Christ our Lord."** (1 Cor. 1:9)

**A CALLING TO GRACE.** Paul marvelled that the disciples at Galatia were **"So soon removed from Him that CALLED YOU INTO THE GRACE of Christ . . ."** (Gal. 1:6).

**A CALLING TO HOPE.** Paul says **"There is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in ONE HOPE OF YOUR CALLING."** (Eph. 4:4).

**A CALLING TO GLORY.** Paul exhorts us to **"Walk worthy of God, who hath CALLED US UNTO HIS KINGDOM and GLORY"** (1 Thess. 2:12).

**A CALLING TO PEACE.** **"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts TO WHICH also YE ARE CALLED in one body: and be ye thankful."** (Col. 3:15).

God's Call has many other wonderful facets but these few attributes listed show, perhaps, the majestic scale and scope of the characteristics of His gracious invitation. In 2 Thess. 2:14 Paul also tells us that we are "Called to TRUTH" and informs us as to **HOW** we are called i.e. By **THE GOSPEL**.

### CONCLUSION

Paul often claimed he was called by the **grace of God**, and we know that grace is **unmerited favour**. Certainly man has never manifested any particular merit, virtue or work that might justify or deserve God's favour. It was all a matter of God's graciousness. "**For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God . Not of works lest any man should boast.**" (Eph. 2:8). Notwithstanding impulse of grace behind God's call, man still has to make a response to it. Grace and kindness prompts the call but God requires and expects a reaction to it. Even if we say nothing and ignore the call, we have, in fact, responded and given God our answer.

Perhaps the most chilling words ever to come from Jesus are recorded in Matt. 20:16; 22:14 when he said, "**Many are called but few are chosen.**" This brings us back to the verse with which we began ". . . **Make your calling and election sure.**" Those taking upon themselves the 'Christian Calling' and the 'Good Profession' are required, notwithstanding God's grace, to make their calling sure by **personal effort**. William Barclay (in Daily Bible Study) makes these pertinent remarks:- "It is God's call which gives us entry into the fellowship of His people. Without His grace and His mercy we could do nothing and we could expect nothing. His call is the call to privilege and to fellowship with Himself. But that does not absolve us from every possible effort. Let us take an analogy which, although it is not perfect or complete, will yet help us understand. Suppose a man who is wealthy and kind picks out a poor lad, who would never otherwise have had the chance, and offers him the privilege of a university education. The benefactor is giving the lad something which he never could have achieved for himself; he is setting before him an immense and unexpected opportunity. But the lad can not make any use of that opportunity, and can not enter into it unless he is prepared to work, to study and to toil. The gracious free offer and the personal hard work **have to be combined** before the privilege can become fully effective. It is thus with us and with God. God has called up in His free mercy and unmerited grace; but at the same time we have to bend every effort to toil upwards and onwards on the way."

So; ". . . **Make your calling and election sure.**" And how are we to do this.? Peter tells in the same verse, viz. ". . . **for if ye DO THESE THINGS ye shall never fall: for so an entrance will be ministered unto you . . . ?**" "Do these things" — What things? The things just mentioned by Peter in the previous verse where he says, "**Add to your faith virtue: and to virtue add knowledge: and to knowledge add temperance: and to temperance add patience: and to patience add godliness: and to godliness add brotherly kindness: and to brotherly kindness add love. For if THESE THINGS be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.**" And so faith plus virtue, plus knowledge, plus temperance, plus patience, plus godliness, plus brotherly kindness, plus love or charity all add up — to a sure-fire way of making our calling and election a certainty.

Jesus calls us o'er the tumult  
Of our life's wild restless sea;  
Day by day His calm voice soundeth,  
Saying, "Christian follow Me."

EDITOR.

## GLEANINGS

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

### CALLED OUT

**"Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light."** (1 Peter 2:9 R.V.).

### MASTER

"Speak to me by name, O Master,  
Let me know it is to me;  
Speak, that I may follow faster,  
With a step, more firm and free,  
Where the Shepherd leads the flock  
In the shadow of the Rock."

### THE OLD CHURCH

Eighteen hundred years ago, the Old Church — which is the Church of Christ, and the only Church approved of God — was planted in Jerusalem. Without the pomp and power of the State — without priests, altars, or vestments — by the Jew charged with blasphemy, and by the Greek counted atheistic; with its members few, poor, and despised, what could this Church accomplish? In the simple majesty of truth it went on from conquest unto conquest, and though opposed by prisons, tortures, and death, everywhere it won its way, till in the remote places it was said, **"Those who have turned the world upside down, have come hither also."**

### SO-CALLED "CHRISTIAN" ENGLAND

But in our day, even in this, so-called Christian England, the Church and cause of Christ do not thus advance — do not even keep pace with the increase in population. How is this? The Faith and Order of the Old Church have been departed from, and numerous churches of human origin, regulated by laws of their own, have taken the place of the One Body of Christ! Now, surely, it is not too much to say, knowing the vast triumphs of the Church, so long as it adhered to the Apostolic Faith and Order, that present want of success, demands enquiry and radical reform. Nor do we, after years of investigation, hesitate to say, that the only effectual and permanent remedy, is an unqualified return to the Old Ways and Right Statutes, marked out, once for all, by the Apostles of Christ."

David King. Baptized and Added 1842.

### THE GOOD WAY

**"Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."** Jer. 6:16.

"There are none, we must all be aware, who bring themselves into so much trouble by want of thinking as the young. From natural high spirits and ignorance of the world, they are always tempted to look only at the present and forget the future. Too often they marry in haste and repent at leisure, and lay up misery for life by wedding an uncongenial partner. Too often they choose in haste a wrong profession or business, and find, after two or three years, that they have made an irretrievable mistake, and, if I may borrow a railway phrase, have got on the wrong line of rails.

### ESAU . . . . . DINAH . . . . . LOT

Esau thought only of present gratification, and sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. Dinah must needs go **"to see the daughters of the land,"** thinking no harm, and ends by losing her own character, and bringing trouble on her father's house (Gen. 34:1-31). Lot thought only of the present advantage of settling in the well-watered valley around Sodom, and forgot the consequences of being mingled with a people

who were “sinners before God exceedingly” (Gen. 13:13). All those found to their cost the folly of not considering, looking forward, and thinking. They sowed to the flesh, and they reaped a harvest of sorrow and disappointment, because they did not stand and see.

J. C. Ryle.

#### WE QUOTE — F. C. DAY

How may I become a member of the Church of Christ? First, I must hear the word of Christ. ‘So belief cometh of hearing and hearing by the word of God.’ (Romans 10:17). I hear through the preacher, the evangelist, the one who tells the glad tidings of life for death, of escape for imprisonment, of a garland for ashes, of the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness: for says Paul, ‘seeing that in the wisdom of God, the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God’s good pleasure, through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe’ (1 Cor. 1:21), and the writer to the Hebrews (II. 6) assures us that ‘without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him.’

#### WE WERE EYE-WITNESSES OF HIS MAJESTY

By a consideration of the signs He did, many of which are recorded for us for that specific purpose, for John writes (20:30,31): ‘Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is Christ, the Son of God: and that believing ye may have life in his name,’ and having that faith confirmed by those who were eye-witnesses, such as Peter: ‘For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye-witnesses of his majesty.’

#### THIS VOICE WE OURSELVES HEARD

‘For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased; and this voice we ourselves heard came out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount. And we have the word of prophecy made more sure: whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the daystar arises in our hearts knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit’ (2 Peter 16-21).”

#### OUR LOINS GIRDED ABOUT WITH TRUTH

“Not only does the truth make us free, but having “our loins girded about with truth,” we are strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

“Strong in the Lord of Hosts  
And in His mighty power,  
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts  
Is more than conqueror.”

Having no other standard than the Bible, we are at liberty to learn, teach and practise whatever the word of God authorises; and we are at liberty to unlearn and discard whatever is unauthorised by the Bible.”

J. Grinstead.

#### MINISTRY OF A TRANSFIGURED CHURCH

“I have not been concerned with the suggestion of new expedients. It has not been my purpose to advocate or defend aggressive and unfamiliar enterprises. My eyes have not been upon the Church’s conduct, but upon her character: not upon her prospectus, but upon her capital: not upon her plan of campaign, but upon her fighting

strength. "Like a mighty army moves the Church of God!" Yes, but does she? Are not her regiments sometimes almost Falstaffian in their bedraggled impotence? How shall she increase her fighting power? How shall she enrich her spirit of discipline? And I have answered, by taking thought of the untrodden heights and the untrodden breadths within her own circle, by claiming her purposed and buried resources in humanity and in God. I am convinced that in these ways we should make undreamt-of additions to the energy and impact of the Church's strength. No Church can walk along these unfrequented paths without acquiring the moments of sacrificial grace: and when the power of the Church becomes awful and sacrificial, when she bears in her body the red "marks of the Lord Jesus", when there is "blood upon the lintel and the two side posts" of her door, you may be assured that the arrested multitude will come together, drawn by the mesmeric gravitation of her own irresistible strength."

J. H. Jowett.

Selected by Leonard Morgan.

### LIFE OF POWER — "WORD OF GOD"

Do you know of any disciple of Christ who was bolder or more courageous than the apostle Paul? Have you ever known one who gave himself more completely to preaching the gospel to those who had not heard it? (Rom. 15:20; 9:1-3; 10:1-3). What a tremendous sense of indebtedness was his (Rom. 1:14), expressed in those challenging words, "**Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel**" (1 Cor. 9:16). How wonderful it would be to have that kind of power!

What were the keys to the apostles Paul's drive and determination? Why would he suffer hardship as he did (2 Tim. 1:12; 2 Cor. 11:23-28) and urge the same upon others (2 Tim. 1:8)? One primary is that he knew with absolute certainty his message was from the Lord. His energetic presentation of the gospel of Christ was motivated not only by his knowledge of the power of that gospel unto salvation (Rom. 1:16) BUT by his knowledge that what he proclaimed was heaven's message for mankind. That realisation had much to do with what he didn't preach as well as what he did preach: "**My speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God**" (1 Cor. 2:4,5).

How fundamental that very fact is for us today. There will be no greater courage, no stronger evangelistic zeal than the strength of the realization that the message is truly the divinely revealed will of the Lord — for us and for all! Ask about keys to power — here they are: "**I know him whom I believed . . . Hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.**" (2 Tim. 1:12,13).

#### "I RECEIVED OF THE LORD"

**Proof of Messiahship.** Saul of Tarsus — disbeliever, persecutor — had for years opposed those who had accepted Jesus as their Christ. Later, as a Christian, he could tell about that awful time: "**Beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and made havoc of it**" (Gal. 1:13); "**I both shut up many of the saints in prisons . . . and when they were put to death I gave my vote against them**" (Acts 26:10). But when conclusive proof of the resurrection of Jesus came to him, his submission of will was total (Acts 9:3-18; 22:6-16).

**A witness for Jesus.** Saul was told by Ananias in Damascus, **The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know his will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from his mouth. For thou shalt be a witness for him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard**" (Acts 22:14,15; note 1:21,22). Following his conversion he went

into Arabia, and after three years went to Jerusalem (Gal. 1:16-18). During this time the will of his Lord was revealed to him, and he could insist, **“For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ”** (Gal. 1:11,12). That is what he meant when he instructed the Church in Corinth about the Lord’s supper, introducing his conclusions with, **“For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you . . .”** (1 Cor. 11:23). The apostle was ever conscious of the fact that he was a messenger for his Lord, that his message was from the Lord.

**Faithful Preaching of the Word.** The apostle Paul knew he was not responsible for the origin of the word of the Lord, but he just as keenly realised that he was responsible for the faithful teaching of that word. The dual principle will affect us in the same way today. Indeed we need to say with the apostle, **“Our exhortation is not of error, nor uncleanness, nor in guile: but even as we have been approved of God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God who proveth our hearts. For neither at any time were we found using words of flattery, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness, God is witness; nor seeking glory of men”** (1 Thess. 2:3-6). Then there is the enlarged possibility of our saying, **“We also thank God without ceasing, that when ye received from us the word, of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe”** (1 Thess. 2:13). **“Preach the word”** is as urgently needed today as it was when the young evangelist Timothy first received that exhortation (2 Tim. 4:2-4).

#### FAITHFUL MEN

**Generation to Generation.** The revealed message for all mankind wasn’t provided only for the first century or for the centuries immediately following. Paul’s generation was being phased out when he wrote to younger Timothy, **“The things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also”** (2 Tim.2:2). What he wrote to the churches of Galatia in the first century has been as true all through the centuries as when first given — and it is as true for us today: **“Though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so say I now again, If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema”** (Gal. 1:8,9). Why is that the case? Because the New Testament is heaven’s revealed message for all mankind for all time.

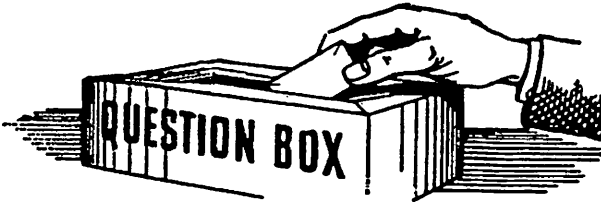
**“Thus Saith the Lord”**, Ours is the day when from our pulpits we are hearing, **“I think . . . I wonder . . . I suppose . . . I’d like to think . . . I don’t see any harm in — . . . It is my persuasion.”** Let our study result in the affirmative, courageous, bold presentation of Biblical truths. Let us read the word of the Lord with the respect of **“Thus saith the Lord.”** Let us know that we are not responsible for what the Bible teaches BUT that we are responsible for how we receive and teach it. Our very characters and our evangelistic zeal depend upon it.

Talk about strength. Here you have it. Power. Here it is.

C. Rogers.

He who waits to do a great deal of good at once will never do anything. Life is made up of little things. It is very rarely that an occasion is offered for doing a great deal of good. True greatness consists of being great in little things.






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Conducted by  
Alf Marsden

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**“In view of Paul’s words to Timothy in 1 Tim. 4:12, and seeing that young people are better educated and qualified these days, don’t you agree that more young men should be leaders of churches?”**

The sentiments behind this question are not new, nor are they confined to the Church. The idea of older age versus youth, relative to authoritative positions finds its expression in industry, commerce, and in almost any grouping of people we could think of. Furthermore, so far as the Church is concerned, I feel there are serious overtones and broad assumptions inherent in this question, but it has been put to me and I shall have to attempt an answer; whether or not I am in agreement with the latter part of the question will, I hope, be made clear by my answer. But let us first say a word about the overtones and the broad assumptions (that is, of course, if I have interpreted the question aright).

The overtones I detect would seem to suggest a degree of frustration in some minds that older men compromise the leadership in many assemblies, and that the present-day standard of education and training is producing younger men who would seem to be more capable to fill these tasks. In other words, the thought seems to be, why should older men who are ‘past it’ (as the saying goes) still cling on to positions of authority in the Church. As regards my reference to ‘broad assumptions’, we shall need to say something as to whether the educational system of today is producing people who are ‘better educated’ than they used to be. As regards ‘better qualified’, we shall need to explore in what, and for what, are they better qualified.

### EDUCATION

What is it that constitutes an **educated** person? Is it just knowledge gained formally in school, college, or university? Obviously, the learning process is extremely important, and the knowledge gained thereby is absolutely essential if we are to make our way in society, and the area of secular employment; no one would deny that. Equally obvious, in many people’s minds, is the fact that the ability to amass knowledge to a fairly high degree implies a superior sort of intelligence, and that fact also seems to be borne out statistically. So here the argument is developed: we have knowledgeable, intelligent, educated young men in the Church. Aren’t they the ones who should lead us into the 21st century? The argument is very persuasive, and is not entirely misplaced, but there are other factors to consider.

I have formed my own views on what would constitute an ‘educated’ person. He would have an innate intelligence, and he would bring this to bear during the learning process. This would enable him not only to accept facts, but also to **understand** what the facts stated or implied. He would not confine his learning skills solely to places of formal education, but he would understand that learning takes place **in his mind** wherever he might be, so he would learn at home, in his social inter-action with people and, in fact, from any situation in which he became involved. This would give him that essential and invaluable quality called **experience**, and consequently he **should** learn to differentiate between **things** and **people**; by **this** he would understand that even though it is important to get tasks done, it is equally important to have concern for the people who actually **do** the tasks. He becomes truly ‘educated’ in the ‘arena of life’, but the process takes time, and even after all of this, it may very well be that my ‘educated’ person would be devoid of **leadership** qualities.

### LEADERSHIP

Maybe our questioner raises a valid point, i.e., that success in one sphere of life automatically indicates that success will follow in **other** spheres. Some employers take this view; they will interview persons who may have studied to degree level but not in the employers' required disciplines. They will, however, conclude that the proven ability to study to **that level** is sufficient for the applicants to succeed in the disciplines they are being interviewed for. I have seen this theory succeed and fail in practice, and the failure helps no one concerned. It could be argued that the same practice has been adopted in the Church. Men who have been prominent in the discharge of civic duties and in business affairs have been appointed to lead the respective churches to which they have belonged. There have been, I think, two main reasons for this: the motivation of the men themselves, and the **lack** of motivation and inferiority complexes of others. It has to be said, however, that the acceptable performance of civic duties, the entrepreneurial skills of the business man, and the organisational skills of the industrial manager do not necessarily fulfil the criteria for church leadership; they can be helpful, of course, but not definitive.

We need, however, to make one thing crystal clear. There is no such office as '**leader**' of a local church mentioned in the N.T. The ones who exercised oversight and spiritual care in local churches were 'bishops' or 'overseers' (EPISKOPOS, Lit., an overseer). Leadership, shepherding, pastoral care, guidance, are **functions** of the office of bishop or overseer. To refer to 'The Leadership' as the governing body of the local church is, as far as I understand it, an unscriptural term. I mention this not be contentious, but because I believe it to be fundamental in answering the question. It raises the issue of 'qualification', and the scriptural qualifications as laid down by the Holy Spirit in the Word probably do not coincide with the ideas of the questioner. We shall see.

### QUALIFICATION

The verb 'to qualify' does not appear in the N.T., nor does the noun 'qualification', so we shall have to rely on standard definitions. In order to qualify, I must meet conditions of competence laid down; the assessment of my competence will be by examination, observation, or any other criteria which may be required by my assessor. So if I am to be a 'bishop' in the Church I must, with competence, fulfil all the requirements of that office. But 'competence', particularly in its assessment, is highly subjective. If we get overseers with a low degree of competence it is probably because the assessors (in our case church members) expect too little; if, on the other hand, we are constantly looking for the ultra-competent, it is probably because the assessors expect too much. Happily, we are given some guidance in the Bible, and relative to the question I want to look at just one so-called 'qualification'.

The overseer must not be a novice. (1 Tim. 3:6). He must not be a new convert because, as Paul puts it, "**lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil**". Pride in personal achievement is not one of the best traits in someone who is purporting to lead the church. It indicates a lack of experience, and it can obscure the real needs of those who actually need our help and encouragement in meeting and over-coming the problems which they may be experiencing. The underlying and basic biblical principle is that they who have suffered are best able to succour those who are suffering; experiences gained and shared can be to our spiritual profit, and can also assist in avoiding the many pitfalls in life. But experience on its own, important though it is, cannot supply the complete answer; it must be allied to something else.

### TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Local churches have shown a marked reluctance to train and develop the talent which they have; it must also be said with some force that those who **have** talents

which can be developed have also shown a marked reluctance to put themselves forward for service. It should come as no surprise to anyone that the 'people problems' can be just as devastating to church members as they can be to those outside the church; they can also be just as complex. Many church 'leaders' attempt to tackle complex personal problems by advice-giving, counselling, etc.; this in areas in which they are neither experienced or skilled. In my considered opinion — and probably many will disagree — every church of reasonable numerical strength should have a trained Counsellor; if that can be a member of the Oversight, so much the better. Overseers no matter what other qualities and achievements they may have, should be trained in the techniques of Leadership; contrary to popular belief, leaders are made not born.

So what are my conclusions in answer to the question? I believe that older men should **know** when to step down and hand over the reins to younger men, but they should have seen to it that younger men have been properly trained and developed. Younger men should realise the limitations of their skills and subject themselves to development, and also learn from their experiences and the experiences of others. By doing these things, I believe a 'continuity of competence' will be achieved, and the Church will be able to progress confidently into any century if the Lord should tarry.

(All questions, please, to Alf Marsden,  
20 Costessy Way, Winstanley, Wigan, WN3 6ES).

## ARE YOU FAITHFUL

A truck was parked beside the highway at the top of a hill. At first the movement was imperceptible, but gradually the speed increased until the truck was rushing downhill at such a high rate of speed that there was no hope of ever stopping it. Of course the truck became a twisted mass of wreckage — a complete loss to its owner.

Those who fall away from Christ are very much like that truck. At first their weakness isn't noticeable as they gradually drift away from the One who owns them, but soon they are rushing headlong towards complete wreckage — a complete loss to Christ, his kingdom, and themselves.

Most apostates began their downtrend by forsaking the so-called "unnecessary services" of the church. After all, we've worked hard today." "Things are so hectic when we work and have to get the children ready too," or is it, "This wheat must be planted. God expects me to care for my family."

I wonder what those apostates who have died and are now with the rich men in Hades, are thinking? Do they realise they should have done something about their hectic lives so they could have assembled with the Church every time it assembled.? Does the wheat planter understand that if his wheat planting kept him from Bible Study he was planting too many acres of wheat?

The devil knows that when the Christian allows **anything** to weaken him, to the point of forsaking the assemblies of the church, prayer, and Bible study, it will not be long until the soul is his.

Some of us, who are members of the Lord's body, are playing into the hands of the devil by missing the worship services on Sunday evening, the Sunday morning and Wednesday evening Bible studies.

If we find it unnecessary to attend and take part in all the services of the Church we are on the way downhill. However, unlike a truck, we can stop before we reach the bottom. We can confess our sins and ask God for forgiveness and go back to the top of the hill.

Why don't we put God first in our lives? If we do all our needs will be supplied.

Jesus spoke to "men of little faith" and said,

**Do not be anxious then, saying, what shall we eat? or, what shall we drink? or,**

with what shall we clothe ourselves? . . . for your Heavenly Father knows that you need these things. *But seek first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you* (Matt. 6:31-33).

Do we believe the word of God? if so, then why don't we?

. . . repent of this wickedness of ours, and pray the Lord that if possible, the intention of our heart may be forgiven us (Acts 8:22).

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all our unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

L. W. Greene.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

Apr. 5	Isaiah 34:	Rev. 18:21 - 19:10
Apr. 12	Psalms 2:	Rev. 19:11-21
Apr. 19	Daniel 12:	Rev. 20:
Apr. 26	Isa 65:13-25	Rev. 21:

### THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB

Marriage is common to all societies. The language used here would be understood by Christians everywhere. It is interesting to note the people of God will determine the garment worn by the bride: ". . . for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints" (19:8). The saints constitute not only the bride, but the guests of the bride: "**Blessed are they who are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb**" (19:9). What a feast that will be!

We read ". . . for the marriage of the Lamb is come and the wife has made herself ready" (19:7). Having recently married, I know somewhat of the work that is involved in a bride preparing for her wedding. Every detail is considered and nothing is left to chance. I get out of this that heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. A big question is, dear reader: Are our garments spotless, are they white as snow, for this happy and wonderful event?

### THE RIDER ON THE WHITE HORSE

This picture of Jesus depicts Him in victory. So in the great spiritual conflict He will triumph over all His enemies. If we follow Him then we are on the winning side! Sometimes we might wonder about this when we see all the evil and injustice in the world. But we need have no doubts or fears.

The titles of Jesus are striking here — "**Faithful and True**"; "**The Word of God**"; "**King of Kings and Lord of Lords**"; "**Faithful and True**" is to do with His character and means. Trustworthy and Genuine, or Real. "**Word of God.**" In the Greek, "Word" is Logos and God is Theos. That is how we get our English word 'theology'. We hear a lot of questions today such as: What is your theology on the second coming? or, What is your theology on salvation? or, What is your theology on the millennium? In response, the Christian could say that his theology is not a set of propositions, but a Person: and the last picture is of His riding a white horse. (That should throw a lot of so-called theologians!). Brethren, let us ever remember, we are not saved by theological deductions, but by a Saviour.

"**King of Kings and Lord of Lords.**" What a title! It asserts Jesus' authority and power. He simply rules over all.

### THE MILLENNIUM

There is a strong view among many that Jesus will one day return to earth and reign in Jerusalem for literally one thousand years. (I heard it expressed often when I was in Jerusalem two years ago). A careful study of the whole of Revelation ch. 20 will, I believe, lead to a different conclusion.

Robert H. Mounce has written: "The length of the martyrs' reign is a thousand years. It is this number which gives rise to the term millennium (from the Latin mille, thousand and annus, year). Only in Revelation 20: 1-10 do we find any N.T. teaching about the millennium. The origin of the idea seems to stem from the eschatological expectations of

late apocalyptic Judaism." Adam Clarke has commented: "I am satisfied that this period (a thousand years) should not be taken literally. It may signify that there shall be a long and undisturbed state of Christianity; and so universally shall the Gospel spirit prevail, that it will appear as if Christ reigned upon earth; which will in effect be the case, because His Spirit shall rule in the hearts of men; and in this time the martyrs are represented as living again; their testimony being revived and the truth for which they died, and which was confirmed by their blood, being now everywhere prevalent. As to the term thousand years, it is a mystic number among the Jews."

W. Carl Ketcherside has said: "We view the millennium as a period of free circulation of the truth throughout the earth. It is not inaugurated by a literal resurrection of any from the grave, but by the rising of a cause which had been buried beneath a mixture of unholy superstition and tradition. It will continue while freedom of thought and speech are allowed by nations no longer under the deception of an apostate hierarchy. It will be concluded when men no longer cherish these ideals and again will allow the forces of evil to throttle them. Then will be resurrected the deceptive spirit which for 'a little season' will lead the nations of the earth into captivity."

The best treatment I have read on the Millennium is the booklet by David King entitled: "**The Resurrection of Saints and Sinners at the Coming of the Lord and the Metaphorical Resurrections of the Millennium**." David King was one of the great scholars of the Restoration Movement in the U.K. I would recommend all his writings to anyone.

#### THE LAST JUDGMENT

God is a God of justice. There is a day of reckoning coming when everyone will be judged according to their works (20:13). What matters of course, dear reader, is that our name is found in the Lamb's book of life (20:12). "**And whosoever was found not written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire**"

(20:15). I wish to point out that every name in this book is written in red — in the blood of Jesus Himself.

Jesus, during His ministry, spoke of this great judgment (Matthew 25:31-46). He likened the division of mankind before His throne to that of the separation of sheep and goats. On the subject of heaven He said: "**Then shall the King say to them on his right hand, Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world . . .**" (verse 34). And of hell He declared: "**Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand. Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels . . .**" (verse 41). The former is joy everlasting and the latter is everlasting punishment.

Dear reader, in the last day you will either find yourself on the right side or the left side of Jesus' throne. (There is no half-way house). You yourself will determine where you stand. The important thing is that you are in Him now so that he will welcome you in eternity. Please note carefully from that passage in Matthew that service to the needy is the criterion laid down by Jesus. William Barclay has written: "That which settles a man's destiny is his reaction towards the hungry and the poor and the imprisoned and the lonely. In them, a man must see God, and by serving them he must serve God".

#### THE NEW JERUSALEM

We read: "**And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband**" (21:2). The apostle Paul wrote in the Galatian letter: "**For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and answers to Jerusalem which is now in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all**" (4:25,26). So let it be emphasised that there is an earthly Jerusalem and a heavenly Jerusalem.

John goes on to describe the glories

of the heavenly city. C. S. Lewis once remarked: "All the scriptural imagery (harps, crowns, gold, etc.) is, of course, a merely symbolic attempt to express the inexpressible . . . Gold is mentioned to suggest the timelessness of Heaven (gold does not rust) and the preciousness of it."

Today we read a great deal about the inner-city problems — crime, deprivation, homelessness, drug-abuse, etc.

In the new Jerusalem it will be a city free from all such problems: or, in other words, it will be a city without sin. "And there shall be in no wise enter into anything that defiles, neither whatsoever works abomination, or makes a lie: but they who are written in the Lamb's book of life" (21:27). Personally I look forward to visiting it for ever.

Ian S. Davidson, Motherwell.

### TREASURER'S REPORT

I am pleased to submit the following Balance Sheet for 1991. It gives the basic information on what has been received and how we used it.

We receive a good service from our printer with delivery at the beginning of each month. He increased his cost to us with the September issue and at the same time the Postal rates were increased. As our finances were very low I took the decision to increase all our subscription rates to those currently shown on the back page of the magazine. We last increased prices in June 1987. It is obvious from the Balance Sheet that the Subscription rate does not reflect the real cost of producing the magazine. We are indebted to those who make gifts to the magazine to keep it in print — many thanks.

In November the Royal Bank of Scotland closed the branch that held our accounts. As part of the move to the new branch I took the opportunity to open an interest bearing current account. In future reports I shall be referring to this account in which all our funds are held.

During the year we printed Reading Cards for 1992; a few still remain if you need any. Copies of the last three years issues of the Scripture Standard have been made into hard back bound volumes; these have all been sold. Reading Cards and Bound Volumes are all sold at cost and are not a liability to the magazine funds. The cost of Reading Cards for 1991 as well as 1992 are shown in this Balance Sheet.

I would like to remind you again to check the top line of your address label on the wrapper. If it reads 'DEC 91' you have not yet paid for this year.

Thank you again for your support and encouragement.

#### BALANCE SHEET 1991

Income		Expenditure	
1/1/91 Current A/c	£151.55	Printing 12 Issues	£3536.00
1/1/91 Deposit A/c	118.40	Bound Volumes	203.20
	269.95	Reading Cards 2 yrs	94.20
		Postage	567.59
			4400.99
Subscriptions	2417.27	31/12/91 Current A/c	560.65
Gifts	2221.57	31/12/91 Deposit A/c	0.00
Bank Interest	52.85		560.65
	4691.69		
	£4961.64		£4961.64

J. K. Kneller, Treasurer.

I have examined books, receipts, etc. and find them to be correct and in good order.

J. H. Currie, Auditor. 23rd January, 1992.

**CHRISTIAN LITERATURE FUND**

A charitable fund has been created by the generous endowment of Brother Tom Blackmore of Weston-super-Mare, under a Deed of Gift. Its purpose is set out below. There will be an annual distribution of the interest accruing from the invested capital and we invite applications from Churches of Christ for grants from the fund. Grants will be subject to the extent of finances presently available and subject also to the fund's specific purpose which is the provision of Bibles and gospel literature. Applicants are invited to state the use to which the grant will be applied. (The Fund is also open to receive legacies or gifts.).

**The Purpose of the Fund**

"To provide Bibles, tracts and other religious literature to persons or churches in this country and abroad so as to provide the spiritual teachings of the Church of Christ and maintain the doctrines upon which it rests and the observancies that seek to promote and manifest it thereby benefitting the advancement of religion as a whole."

Please write in the first place to:

The Trustees,  
The Thomas Blackmore  
Literature Fund,  
21 Stonleigh Crescent,  
Knowle, Bristol. BS4 2RF.

pray that their life together will be happy and a blessing in all they do.

Mrs. Dorothy Proud (sec).

**NIGERIAN BIBLE APPEAL**

The work of sending Bibles, tracts and Christian literature to Nigeria is still continuing, when we have the funds. We are still receiving requests for these materials and therefore would be very grateful for any donation, no matter how small, to this work.

We have had many letters of thanks from those who have already received Bibles, tracts, magazines or books and we would like to thank anyone who has helped in the past.

If you are able to contribute to this work, which has now run out of funds, could you please make any cheques payable to 'Church of Christ, Stretford' and send to me at the address below. Any type of Christian literature would also be very welcome, whether old or new.

Mrs. M. I. Purcell,  
3 Dale Avenue,  
Bramhall,  
Stockport,  
Cheshire.  
SK7 2JP.  
Telephone : 061 439 1758.

**NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES**

**Kentish Town, London:** We are happy to report that Oda Boru Edao (Abraham) was baptised into Christ on January, 5th. He is keen to know more and we pray that he and we, will grow in knowledge and wisdom as we study and work together. He is a young Russian who has been attending for a few months: he is hoping his wife can join him soon. Sister Kim Kirkham was married to Patrick Kealey on January 4th. We extend to them our congratulations and good wishes. We

**COMING EVENTS**

**Kirkcaldy Annual Social**  
Saturday, 11th April, 1992  
at 3.30 p.m.

Speaker: John Mooney  
Ruth Moyes, Sec.

**Fellowship Weekend**

Longshoot, Wigan, Friday, 1st May - Monday, 4th May, 1992. For details of Programme and Booking Information please contact Bob Marsden (0942 212198) or Doug Melling (0942 53020) or Alf Marsden (0942 223694).

**TRANENT SOCIAL**

Saturday, 14th March, 1992 at 4.00 p.m.  
 In Loch Centre, Tranent  
 Speakers: Robert Hughes, Kirkcaldy  
 Harry McGinn, New Cumnock  
 Chairman: John Colgan

**NEW CUMNOCK SOCIAL**

Saturday, 3rd May, 1992  
 at 3.00 p.m.  
 Speakers:  
 Ian Davidson, Motherwell  
 Dean English, Livingstone

**GHANA REPORT**

I arrived in London on Saturday, 21st January to a wonderfully happy reunion with Ann and Martin. They took me to their home in Wigan before I returned to Fife. It has been good to meet brethren here and to discuss the Church in Ghana with Bro. Graeme Pearson who has been conscientiously devoting himself to this work, maintaining records, correspondence, etc.

I very much appreciate the sacrificial donations of our brethren for the Lord's Church in Ghana. I feel the responsibility very much indeed of using this wisely and effectively, and have been continually praying for wisdom and guidance. I am also careful to allocate funds as requested by the donors.

We have been helping with medical expenses, from malaria to a snake bite, and this is something I am anxious to continue.

There is the all important extension of the Lord's Church. We spent £140 on parts for an existing public address system, and this has been put to very good use. We also bought three fluorescent tubes for evening open air preaching with this P.A. system, which

is followed by personal study with the contacts made. This has not only resulted in new converts to existing congregations, but can also be the means of starting new churches. This, activity is being increasingly used, and I have received an encouraging letter from Adu Sarfo confirming this.

As there is a possibility of some congregations losing the use of premises for worship, with no available alternative, I am anxious to have the building of their meeting places completed as soon as possible.

I would therefore be grateful to receive funds, particularly for the extension of the gospel message and the building of meeting places. Crossed cheques should be made payable to "Graeme Pearson, Ghana Appeal" and sent to:- 13 Fairways, Dunfermline, Fife. KY12 0DU.

I left Ghana greatly encouraged by the accelerated progress of the Lord's Church in that country, due to the enthusiasm of brethren there, and the continued donation of funds to support their labours.

Bill Cook.

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