

# *The* SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## CHRIST, YET TO COME ?

A new book, just published by Mr. Bamber Gascoyne and entitled "Christians" is intended to demonstrate the effect that Christianity has had upon the world. Mr Gascoyne is, himself, an unbeliever. The material in the book has been adapted for television and is to be screened over several weeks. The first programme was shown a few evenings ago and was a fair start although it was easy to pick out some inaccuracies in the commentary. One of the items shown on film was the last remaining vestige of what was left of the temple at the destruction of Jerusalem - i.e. 'The Wailing Wall'. 'The 'Wailing Wall', a length of very high stone wall in Jerusalem is certainly thought to be a part of the temple, but the Temple of Herod. After the Jews returned, after the destruction of the city that is, it eventually became a tradition to gather there every Friday for prayer and lamentations for the dispersion and lost glories of Israel. The Jews who resort there certainly do not disguise their feelings and it certainly is well named as 'The Wailing Wall'. Evidently those who lament at the wall are not believers in Christ, as was pointed out by Mr. Gascoyne, and indeed most Jews are still waiting for (if not looking for) the Messiah. To them, Christ has not yet come, and His entry into this world is yet future.

The saddest thing about the 'Wailing Wall' must surely be that it personifies those who do not believe that Christ has come, and the most lamentable thing about it must surely be that Jews are still looking for something which is already well past. One would think that the Jews, who read the scriptures, would be aware of the prophecies in the scriptures concerning Christ and would be persuaded that Christ indeed fulfilled them all. Sidney Collett in his book 'Scripture of Truth' estimates that Jesus fulfilled some three hundred Old Testament prophecies. Certainly the apostle Paul was able to draw heavily upon the Old Testament scriptures to prove the heavenly credentials of Christ for we read, "For he (Paul) mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ" (Acts 18:28).

Let us consider what the Jews, who do not believe that Messiah has yet come, must be looking for. Assuming that they believe the Old Testament scriptures and that these scriptures are yet to be fulfilled - what must they each day be expecting? For what must they be looking? Well, first of all the Messiah for which they are looking will, in terms of lineage, have to be of the seed of Abraham for "In Abraham's seed would all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 18:18; Gen. 12:3). That promise was transferred to Isaac and to Jacob (Gen. 17:19;

Num. 24:17). He must also be of the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10). Where today, or in the future, will the Jews find such an one? I am not sure if a Jew could, today, trace his lineage back as far as Abraham, or prove his pedigree. Also the Christ yet to come would also have to be the Son of David and heir to his throne (Isaiah 9:7; 2 Sam. 7:13). Jesus of Nazareth was all of those things. The early books of the New Testament set out, for all and any to investigate, his ancestry. He was Abraham's seed (Matt. 1:1; Luke 3:34). He was of the seed of Isaac and Jacob (Matt. 1:2; Luke 3:34). He was of the tribe of Judah (Luke 3:33). He was the son of David (Matt. 1:1; Matt. 1:6). Surely the Jews must know that it is now unlikely for a man of such lineage to come round the corner.

If such a man comes round the corner he will have to have had his origins at Bethlehem. In Micah 5:2 the Messiah's birthplace is prophesied thus, "But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting". Not only, then, will the coming one have to have the lineage previously described but he will also have to be born at Bethlehem. Strangely enough, Jesus Christ was born there (Luke 2:4-7). Not only will this child have to be born in Bethlehem but will have, in infancy, to be taken into Egypt" so that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son" (Matt. 2:15; Hosea 11:1; Ex. 4:22-23). When this child, looked for by the Jews, returns from Egypt, he will have to take up residence at Nazareth in order to fulfil "that which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene" (Matt. 2:23; Judg. 13:5; 1 Sam. 1:11). This is to say nothing of the problem of fulfilling "that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama there was a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not". The fulfilment of this scripture is described in Matt. 2:16 as occurring when King Herod slew all the children, two years old and under, both in Bethlehem and all the coasts thereof.

We can perhaps begin to see how difficult it will be for the Jews to see, in the future, these scriptures coming to pass in the person of someone yet to come, but we have not yet really got started on the theme. There is the question of the time of the coming of the Christ. Dan. 9:25 says, "Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto the Messiah, the Prince, shall be seven weeks and threescore and two..." and the same prophet said (2:44) "And in the days of these kings shall God set up a kingdom..." And in the days of what kings? To what kings do the Jews consider the prophet refers?

This man for whom the Jews await will also have to experience a unique birth, i.e. be born of a virgin, so that he might fulfil Isaiah 7:14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign; behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name, Immanuel". This man assuming he fills all the considerable requirements so far, will have to be prophet like unto Moses (Deut. 18:15) but will require to be a priest, and not only a priest, but a priest for ever after the Order of Melchizedek - i.e. without parentage and without beginning or ending. Jesus of Nazareth was born of a virgin (Matt. 1:18) and was a prophet like unto Moses (John 6:14; Acts 3:19-26) and was a priest after The Order of Melchizedek (Heb. 6:20).

It is ironical that this man the Jews are so eagerly awaiting will also have to be rejected by them if the scriptures are to be fulfilled. The Jews will have to reject him and even crucify him. For instance Isaiah 53 describes how unattractive the Messiah will be to the Jews when he does come, e.g. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief and we hid as it were our faces from him; he is despised and we esteemed him not". This same chapter says a whole lot of things concerning what will befall the Messiah and what He will accomplish. He will bear our griefs and carry our sorrows; on Him will God lay the iniquity of us all; He will be afflicted and oppressed and will be silent at His slaughter as a lamb before her shearers is dumb; He will be taken from prison and judgement and make His grave with the wicked and His death with the rich: His soul shall be an offering for sin and He shall bear the iniquity of the world and shall be numbered with the transgressors. Before all this befalls Him he shall have to make a triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem,

not in a Rolls Royce, but upon an ass and a colt the foal of an ass (to fulfil Zech. 9:9). he shall require to be betrayed by a friend" Yea mine own familiar friend" (to fulfil Psalm 41:9): he will have to be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver (an unlikely price of treachery today) to fulfil Zech. 11:12; this same 30 pieces of silver will require later to purchase the Potter's Field (which incidentally is already in existence) and at his trial he will have to be scourged and spat upon and have the hair plucked off his cheeks (to fulfil Isaiah 50:6) he will have to be put to death by crucifixion (to fulfil Zech. 12:10) and that alongside malefactors (to fulfil Isaiah 53:12). He will also have to be given gall and vinegar to drink (to fulfil Psalm 69:21) and have his side pierced (to fulfil Zech. 12:10) but have no bones broken (to fulfil Psalm 34:20; Ex. 12:46) and his executioners will have to gamble for his vesture (to fulfil Psalm 22:18).

We are probably beginning to see somewhat of the kind of man, and the kind of events, the Jews must be expecting if they continue to refuse to believe that Jesus the Christ fulfilled all of those prophecies about 2,000 years ago. Have the Jews any reason to believe that a man is yet to be born who will, or can, fulfil, at this date, all these Old Testament prophecies. In this short article we have but put a scratch on the surface as far as the fulfilment of prophecies are concerned and there are countless others fulfilled by Jesus. Consider the statement made by Isaiah (Chap. 9:6) and decide, (if Jesus did not fulfil it) who ever could or will. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God; the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgement and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this".

My space has more than gone but perhaps enough has been said to illustrate the unlikelyhood of all the Old Testament scriptures concerning Christ being fulfilled in some man yet to be born. Quite apart from anything else he will have to be preceded by no less a figure than John The Baptist so the Jews are not really waiting for one man but for two.

EDITOR

## OPEN LETTER TO ASSOCIATE CHURCHES OF CHRIST

TO restore the New Testament church in worship, organisation, and doctrine has been the distinctive plea of the churches of Christ all over the world. We believe all we need to accomplish that purpose is contained in the Bible. "Seeing His divine power has granted unto us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence" (2 Peter 1:3). That "everything", which is so essential to restoration, is limited to the sphere of the teaching of Christ. "Any one who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God, the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son", (2 Jn.'9). The early reformers, recognising as they did the necessity of preaching the true gospel, sought to speak where the Bible spoke and be silent where the Bible is silent. Peter had impressed this on the first century Christians "Whoever speaks" he said "let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God," (1 Peter 4:11). A curse rests on all who disobey this command, (Gal. 1:6-8). Just as it was with Moses who received a pattern in the mount and was warned, "See He saÿs, 'that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain", Heb. 8:5. So we also have received a pattern for the worship, organisation and doctrine of the Lord's church. We also have a solemn warning to work ONLY by the directions of this blueprint, (Rev. 22:18-19).

The Association Churches of Christ need once again to be reminded of the painful experience of Saul, king of Israel. Who's "yes but I think" attitude brought upon him the

displeasure of God. "I did obey the voice of the Lord", he pleaded passionately to Samuel, even after sparing Agag, the king of Amalek. Noble as his intention was, to sacrifice the best of the spoil to the Lord, he had no authority for what he did. And God answered through Samuel. "Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in OBEYING the voice of the Lord? Behold to OBEY is better than sacrifice and to HEED than the fat of rams. For REBELLION is as the sins of divination, and INSUBORDINATION is as iniquity and idolatry," (1 Sam. 15:22-23). For a more up-dated application I will substitute the word "unity" for "sacrifice". It would then read, "Has the Lord as much delight in unity as in OBEYING the voice of the Lord? Behold to OBEY is better than unity and to HEED than to give God your plans. For REBELLION is as sin of the divination and INSUBORDINATION is as iniquity and idolatry". Jesus Himself said, "IF you abide in MY WORD then truly you are DISCIPLES of MINE" (Jn. 8:31).

The proposed unity plan with the United Reformed Church is documented evidence that the Association Churches of Christ have forsaken the plea "to speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent". It's a sell-out of the idea of restoring the N.T. church in worship, organisation and doctrine. And it will become a positive barrier to true unity (unity on the word of God), because it will create another denomination. If you really desire to please God, you will want to do only His will, (Eph. 5:9-10). That means having authority, from His word for what you are doing. I charge that the "Proposals for Unification" are unscriptural and man-made. Following is a list of some of those man-made teachings contrasted with God's will.

Authority	Scripture	Authority	Scripture
<i>name</i>		<i>name</i>	
Church of Christ	Rom. 16:16	United Reformed Church	None
<i>organisation</i>		<i>organisation</i> (Councils)	
Elders: Deacons: Saints	Phil. 1:1	District: Provincial: General	None
<i>overseer</i>		<i>overseer</i>	
Elders over congregation	1 Pet. 5:1-2	A preacher over congregation	None
<i>priests</i>		<i>priests</i>	
All Christians are	1 Pet. 2:9	A clergy and laity	None
<i>baptism</i>		<i>baptism</i>	
A burial in water	Rom. 6:4	Sprinkling with water	None
<i>baptism</i>		<i>baptism</i>	
Believers baptism	Mark 16:16	Infant sprinkling	None
<i>holy spirit</i>		<i>holy spirit</i>	
H.S. teaches through the word Rev. 2:7		Direct operation of H.S.	None
<i>denominationalism</i>		<i>denominationalism</i>	
Denom' is wrong	1 Cor. 1:10-12	Denom' is right...	None

Jeremiah in ancient time said to the people, "stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is, and WALK IN IT; and you shall find rest for your souls". Let us not be like those stubborn people who answered, "WE WILL NOT WALK IN IT" (Jer. 6:16). If we have not got scripture for what we are doing, we are NOT walking in the ancient paths. We are building on sinking sand. WE ARE NOT OBEYING THE VOICE OF THE LORD. To all the Association Churches of Christ, Christ says, "But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place — unless you repent" (Rev. 2:4-5).

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## ASK

“Leave no unguarded place,  
 No weakness of the soul;  
 Take every virtue, every grace,  
 And fortify the whole:  
 To keep your armour bright,  
 Attend with constant care,  
 Still walking in your captain’s sight,  
 And watching unto prayer”.

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.” Ephesians 3:20

NEHEMIAH ..... A MAN OF GOD

NEHEMIAH..... A MAN OF PRAYER

“Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them”  
 Chapter 4:9

“They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me”  
 Chapter 4:17,18

In previous articles we have drawn attention to the prayers that Nehemiah himself prayed to God. In chapter one the burden of his prayer was a confession of sins: “both I and my father’s house have sinned” verse 6. Then in chapter two this man of God, standing before the king, took time to petition the throne of grace, before answering the question asked of him. “So I prayed to the God of heaven”, verse 4. In chapter four it is no longer, “I and my father’s house”, neither was it the words “So I prayed”. The “I”, had turned to “We”. “Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God”. verse 9.

Nehemiah started alone, but he did not leave it there, he took the matter to the throne of grace, and pleaded his cause with his God. Things are bound to happen, when you have the creator of heaven and earth on your side. We also need to remember this valuable lesson: one with God is a majority. This man of prayer, this man of God, became a man of passion ... the wall of Jerusalem broken down ... the gates burned with fire ... day and night these facts burned into his own soul. Man of passion become men of purpose, men of purpose become men of one thing. The burning desire of the Lord Jesus was to do the will of His Father. No one, not even the Devil could deter the Lord from completing the task He had undertaken. He came to die for the sin of the world, and die He did, at “the place, which is called Calvary” Luke 23:33. The apostle Paul also was a man of one thing, a man of passion, a man of purpose did he not say: “for to me to live is Christ” Philippians 1:21. Again, “Brethren I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto these things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” Philippians 3:13-14.

Shall we allow the searchlight of God to examine our own position, as we consider the examples of the Lord Jesus, the apostle Paul, and Nehemiah. We have a need to re-capture our first love, the days and time when we were on fire for God. When we too, prayed to our Father earnestly, when we had a passion to save the lost, when we had a purpose in life, the extension of His kingdom, and the deepening of our spiritual lives.

Note what happened in Nehemiah’s case, he seems to be alone, then he turns to God, then if you turn to Chapter 2 verse 12, you have these words, “I and some few men with me”, then his attention was turned to the Jews, to the priests, to the nobles, to the rulers, then to the rest that did the work. “Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach” See verses 16-17 “Then I told them

of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work" Chapter 2:18.

Shall we stay for a few moments in chapter three for one or two lessons. Have you heard before of Eliashib the high priest, the sons of Hassenaah, Meremoth, Meshullam, the Tekoites, Melatiah, Jadon, Uzziel, Rephaiah, Malchijah, Shallum, Hanun, Rehum, Bavai, Ezer, Jedaiah, Binnui? These are some of the men who re-built the wall of Jerusalem. Unknown, no doubt to millions of men who have lived since the days of Nehemiah, but whose names are written in God's most precious word. Take courage my brother, my sister, you may not be important to those in the world, your name in all probability will not find its way in Who's Who", nor I suppose will it be submitted for inclusion in the honours list. Don't worry though, remember the most important thing is having your name written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Take note also, you matter to God, He has a great work for you to do ... why not do it with all your might, We made our Prayer unto our God, and set a Watch Nehemiah 4:9.

May I quote Campbell Morgan on the above statement:- "That is ever the true attitude of those who are called upon to work for God in face of danger. AS the work proceeded, the opposition of the enemies of the people, which first expressed itself in derision, passed to anger mingled with contempt. Nehemiah was conscious of the menace of this attitude to the work he had in hand, and lifted his heart in prayer to his God. An illuminative sentence in the narrative at this point shows how completely Nehemiah had captured and inspired the people. It declares that "The people had a mind to work". Thus the work went forward, until the wall was raised to half its height. At this point the opposition became more fierce, and a determined attempt was made by conspiracy to stay its progress. With immediateness, and a keen sense of the necessity created by this fact, Nehemiah says, "We made our prayer unto our God and set a watch". In this method there was neither foolish independence of God, nor foolhardy neglect of human responsibility and precaution. Everything was done to insure that two-fold attitude of complete faith in God, and determined dependence upon personal effort, which always makes for success. How often God's workers fail for lack of one or the other of these important elements!"

**Building and Battle..... By Sword and Trowel**

After Simon Peter had made that wonderful confession "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God". Jesus answered and said unto him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

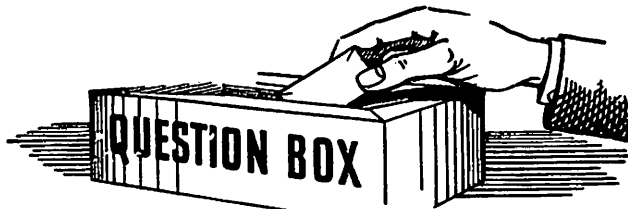
And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it". Matt. 16:16-18. Building - "I will build", Battle - "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it". God's people are at war, we are called upon to fight against those forces that hinder the building of the Lord's church. Would it be true to say that we have failed the Lord in this glorious task of being used by Him as living stones, and have neglected to put on the whole armour of God to help us in our fight against evil. The mission of the Lord Jesus was to build ... to battle ... having the trowel in one hand and the sword in the other ... ever building and always at war. Note the builders in chapter three of Nehemiah's account of the re-building of the walls of Jerusalem, "they builded the sheep gate" ... 'next unto him builded the men of Jericho" ... "But the fish gate did the sons of Hassenaah build" ... "And next unto them" ... "And next unto them" ... "And next unto him", ... "After him" ... "Afterhim" ... "After them" ... Each had a work to do, and did it no doubt to the best of their ability, what a lesson for you and me ..." you in your small corner, and I in mine".

Paul said: "For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" 1 Corinthians 3:9. Again in 2 Corinthians 6:1 "We then, as workers together with him". As God's children we are called upon to build ... to do battle, let us not fail the Lord, let us make our prayer unto our God, and set a watch. Our building and battle will call for self-surrender, self-denial, self-sacrifice, sharing the work and sufferings of our Lord, I wonder whether we have forgotten this aspect of our work.

Shall we have a period of self-examination - confession - and re-dedication, so that we may become men of prayer, men of passion, men of purpose, men of one thing, seeking to do the will of our heavenly Father. Let us make our prayer unto our God, and set a watch.

May the Lord's richest blessing be your portion.

LEONARD MORGAN




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Conducted by  
Alf Marsden

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**"WHEN the apostle Paul wrote to the Galatian christians he exhorted them, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). What are the christian characteristics which should be evident in "bearing one another's burdens"?"**

The Scripture in Galatians 6 seems to be contradictory unless we understand it properly. A little later in that chapter Paul goes on to say, "For every man shall bear his own burden" (v.5). This obviously refers to the burden of sin which everyone does have to bear until that individual places himself unreservedly in the hands of Jesus Christ and lets him bear the burden of sin. It seems that this great fact influences Paul so much that he seems to be saying, "Now as Christ has borne our burden of sin, let each one of us bear the burdens of our fellow-christians".

It takes a special type of person to bear other people's burdens. It took a special Person to be our Saviour and bear the burden of sins; it will also take a special type of christian who is prepared to follow the example of Jesus and attempt to bear the burdens of his fellow-christians. Do such christians exist? Perhaps if we look at the characteristics which they should display shall find out.

#### Concern for the Individual

Sometimes we seem to forget that people are individuals, and that the Church is made up of individual christians. The Lord never made that mistake. When he started his mission he went around selecting individuals. His choice was so diverse that we today, with our sophisticated methods of selection, would never have chosen the people that he chose; but he knew that each individual was unique and had a role to fulfil which could not be fulfilled by anyone else.

Furthermore, the Lord could have impressed the world by working miracles on the grand scale. You remember in the Garden that he said that he could call twelve legions of angels if he so desired, but he had concern for the individual who had his ear cut off by the sword of Peter, and he healed him. On many other occasions, too many to enumerate here, he searched out individuals who were in need and helped them in a way which was good for each one. Nor did it matter to him from which social strata they came; he healed the lepers, the outcasts, the beggars, slaves; in fact, he realised that every individual had needs, some more urgent than others.

What about our concern for our fellow-christians as individuals? Do we sometimes see them as people who can be used and manipulated to further our own ends? Or do we see them as people who have unique problems; who sometimes may need our help and understanding; who have fears, hopes, and aspirations, as we have? What I am suggesting is that we take the message that Paul gave to the Philippians, "in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better

than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. 2:3-4). If we could apply this teaching then we should have concern for the individual.

#### Concern for the Group

The realisation of the corporate nature of the individual assembly must never escape our notice. The community, acting in unison, can achieve things which individuals acting on their own could never achieve. It is important, then, that we should be concerned for the group as well as for the individual.

Both Jesus and Paul recognised the strengths in groups (and also the weaknesses). Jesus taught his disciples as a group; he had compassion on the multitudes because he saw them as sheep without a shepherd. He recognised that the Church, though made up of individuals, was yet a building which could function as a building.

So Paul, when he gave that wonderful teaching about the members of the body (1 Cor. 12), recognised the imperative fact that the body should act in unison (Read Eph. 4). Furthermore, when he wanted corporate action he always called for it, as in the case of the incestuous brother (1 Cor. 5).

Now what about our own communities? Would you think I was stretching a point if I said that we tend to form cliques? I know that we are exhorted to have love for all the brethren, and we piously affirm that we have, and maybe we think and believe that we have, but it is also true to say that we choose special friends in the community and devote more time and energy towards them at the expense of others. In a situation like this, full integration of the group is not possible and consequently the work of the assembly is ineffective. The damage done by cliques is legendary. The Lord never tolerated this and neither should we. Maybe we shall have to devote more attention to loving the unloveable, then perhaps we shall see that they have burdens which we are capable of lightening.

#### Approachability

How many times have you heard the expression, 'I don't seem to be able to get near that person'? This is probably because some of us are exceptionally good at erecting barriers around ourselves. I have always understood that barriers are to keep people out, so in fact, if we are christians, and we are unapproachable, then in a very real sense we are keeping our fellow-christians out of our lives.

What are the signs of unapproachability? Well, you perhaps know them as well as I do. The forbidding and seemingly unsympathetic manner; always being busy with things instead of people; going off in another direction when we know that someone is trying to catch our

eye; the aloof posture which some people find really frightening. These, and others, make people afraid to approach us. The tragedy is that we do this quite deliberately with one end in view - to keep people out of our lives.

Did we learn this from the Lord? No, he was always available to those who needed him. Perhaps from Paul? No, he had the cares of all the churches on him as well as his own personal problems. We know, of course, that unapproachability is not a christian virtue. It should not be evident in us. How can we hope to bear each other's burdens if we deny them the approach so that they can tell us those burdens which they stagger under?

#### Loyalty

Have you ever had fellow-christians speak with you face to face in the most pleasant manner, and then go to someone else and tear you to pieces? You have? Isn't it depressing. The Bible says that such a person is double-tongued. Such a person is also disloyal. How can we ever progress if we practice this sort of thing.

Can we find an occasion when Jesus was disloyal to his Father or to his mission? No, he was always intent on doing those things that were expected of him. So too was Paul and his fellow-apostles, especially when they had seen the Lord risen from the dead.



What about our loyalty to our fellow-Christians? Can they trust us to be at hand when needed. Will we be loyal to all those promises we have made to the Lord? And what about our leaders? If they are ruling well then they have a right to expect from us the loyalty which is their due. The age-old cry still comes to us, 'Yes, we are our brother's keeper'. Loyalty to the Lord, his Cause, and to our brethren must be in evidence if we are to share the burdens of others.

### Setting a Good Example

Christians have always said that the best way to preach the gospel is to live it out in our lives. In fact we are saying that our example is more potent than our word many times. The apostle Paul said on more than one occasion, "Be ye imitators of me". Now he could only say that if he was sure that he was, by example, imitating the Lord. There is no particular virtue in imitating Paul if Paul was not, by example, showing us the Lord.

How do we set a good example in burden-bearing? By displaying the characteristics which we have mentioned. By having concern for the individual and the group; by being approachable; by being loyal; by being impartial. If we can work at these Christian characteristics and master them, then we shall have gone a long way to obeying the Pauline injunction, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ".

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

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

OCTOBER 1977

2-Isaiah 52	Romans 1:1-17
9-Jeremiah 6:16-30	Romans 1:18-32
16-2 Samuel 12:1-14	Romans 2:1-16
23-Jeremiah 4:1-18	Romans 2:17-29
30-Psalms 151	Romans 3:1-18

### LETTER TO THE WORLD'S CENTRE

Considering the world-embracing programme set before the apostles by the Lord, it is not surprising that we should have a letter addressed to Christians in this important place (read Matt. 28:18; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; John 10:16; Acts 1:8; 10:35). Certainly Jews from Rome were present at Pentecost (Acts 2:10) and doubtless some of these would begin the Christian life and way in their homes, helped by some of the early prophets apostolically empowered (Eph. 2:20; 3:11; 1 Cor. 12:28 etc). These might well be scarce so far from Jerusalem. Hence we have Paul's concern to impart some spiritual gift for encouragement and edification. It is good to bear in mind the place in the history of Acts when the letter was written. We place it in Corinth (read Acts 19:21; 20:3). Paul's burning desire to spread the wonderful news of the gospel would put Rome in the Programme as a centre.

### A Lost World

When Noah came out of the ark his first thought was to offer sacrifice as thanks-giving to God. His immediate descendants must have well known the true God and His laws for conduct. We remember "Noah walked with God" (Gen. 6:9), and understood right and wrong. So not only were His eternal power and Godhead known from His works (1:20) but worship of the true God was inculcated for generations, and the sacrifices offered to Him. However we read of a rapid development of disobedience to God, Who bade them "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth" (Gen. 9:1). They wanted however to stay together and build a mighty tower so that they could forward their scheme for greatness. Thus they would oppose God's plan for spreading out into the world, but God decided otherwise (Gen. 11:8). We read of Cain's descendants acquiring skills after he built his city Enoch, and the story of Lamech's two wives and his proud and wicked spirit follows (Gen. 4:19). Is it significant also that after the flood mankind combined to build Babel, and Nimrod was a "mighty one"? When men get power they combine against God. Pride in their wisdom leads to sin, and not able to face a righteous God mankind falls to giving worship to animals and idols, which in turn lead to such things as child sacrifice and prostitution of a vile kind. We fail to realise what kind of a world Jesus came into. It is probably true to

say that the only place in that world where any high moral standards held sway was in the Jewish nation, and there how little "circumcision of the heart" was practised! (Rom. 2:29). But do not let us forget Joseph (Matt. 1:19). Zacharias and Elizabeth (Luke 1:6), Simeon and Anna (Luke 2:25 & 36). These represent a tiny minority of true Israelites as a few Romans like Seneca represent a still tinier minority of Gentiles with any conscience regarding morals. Degrading practices were the common life of those in high places - such as Nero and Tiberias. The pleasures of rich and poor are set out truthfully in the concluding verses of chapter 1.

### The Jewish Influence

Application of Moses' law to individual and national life necessarily raised standards of morals. Whatever faults the Jews had there was with them basically the appreciation of ONE GOD perfect and holy - demanding good behaviour. Historically it is remarkable that when God permitted the restoration of Palestine to His people under Persian rule, a State having a measure of independence and a central point of worship came into being, and through many and awful struggles it was able to survive the many efforts to destroy it. The domination of Rome took away some semblance of that independence but gave it a place quite unique in the civilised world of the time. The scattered nation was represented in all the important cities, Jews occupied important places in the institutions of learning, and they were given freedom of religion. Travel was made possible by the power of Rome all over the world. Perhaps it was natural for the Jews to adopt an attitude of lofty contempt for Gentiles, regarding them as outside the possibility of God's favour. The Gentiles responded with hatred and contempt for the Jews. Paul in standing for Christ had experienced the bigotry, conceit and hatred of his own people and searchingly in chapter 2 exposes their self-righteousness. However they prided themselves on possessing the word of God. The extent to which they practised it condemned them, and put them with the Gentiles in disobedience. They had the priceless privilege and came so far short that they brought shame upon God by their failure (2:24). We cannot but recognise that the same is true of the churches claiming to represent Jesus. Over the centuries apostasy has characterised the main bodies in that they became the tools of the rich and

powerful. For centuries "darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people" because the word of God was hidden by those who lived in many cases luxuriously upon those they kept in ignorance. The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers (of the church) took counsel against the holy religion of Christ with the result that two great revolutions convulsed Europe - France and Russia. Even today that religion through misunderstanding is being blasphemed because so many of its professors are not "practicers". With the Reformation came much enlightenment as translations of the hidden Word were made, and more people learned to read and write. The responsibility of mankind becomes greater as the light of the Word spreads. To-day we view a widening of the consciousness of man's responsibility to man in communism, socialism and the welfare state but all of these turn away from God and "there is not fear of God before their eyes". Therefore "destruction and misery are in their ways" for without God there is no remedy for sin. Wherever the teaching of Jesus is practised there is blessing but while it remains merely material welfare it must fail. "The gospel - and that alone - is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth". The wisdom and power of man before the flood, after the flood and now is powerless against the forces and deceit of the Evil One. "O Jesus Christ grow Thou in me, and all things else recede! My heart be daily nearer Thee, from sin be daily freed".

R. B. SCOTT

### ABOUT THE READINGS

OUR design in suggesting readings for Lord's Day mornings is not to impose upon the independence of the assemblies but to encourage and in a measure systematise the public reading of the scriptures. Certainly we have every scriptural reason for making such reading an essential part of the worship of the assembly. Some of us who take part in the "platform" duties sometimes think how direct words of Scripture can and must be more effective than much of our effort to explain it! So we hold the conviction that when the saints meet an essential to their edification must be intelligent reading of the Word. While this has often been the first platform effort of the young brethren, it must not be thought of as second class duty. It can only edify the assembly but give incentive to the reader to understand. It is possible

to read without understanding which is worse than useless. Hence we supply readings cards for anticipatory reading and study for readers and for all.

In planning passages for 1977 we failed to note that Romans had been read as recently as 1976. For 1978 accordingly we begin with Galatians which has not been planned as a whole since 1963, Hebrews not since 1969 and return to a gospel (John's) which has not been planned since 1970. R. B. SCOTT.

### THE BIBLE ... A MIRACLE

The Bible itself is a standing and astonishing miracle. Written, fragment by fragment, throughout the course of fifteen centuries, under different states of society, and in different languages, by persons of the most opposite tempers, talents, and conditions, learned and unlearned, prince and peasant, bond and free; cast into every form of instructive composition and good writing, history, prophecy, poetry, allegory, emblematic representation, judicious interpretation, literal statement, precept, example, proverbs, disquisition, epistle, sermon, prayer - in short, all rational shapes of human discourse; and treating, moreover, of subjects not obvious, but most difficult. Its authors are not found, like other writers, contradicting one another upon the most ordinary matters of fact and opinion, but are at harmony upon the whole of their sublime and momentous scheme.

### CHANGE OF SECRETARY

Adam Street, Ilkinston: Bro. John H. Diggley, is now secretary of the above congregation and all communications should be sent to him at 17 Lockton Avenue, Heanor, Derby.

### COMING EVENTS

Kentish Town: Anniversary Meetings on Saturday, October 8th, with Bro. L. Daniell 3 p.m. and 6.30 p.m. Tea between sessions A Cordial Invitation to ALL

Special Meetings with Bro. Steve Kearney from Dublin. Wednesday to Sunday, October 12 to 16th Weekdays 7.30 p.m. Sunday 6.30 p.m.

### CHURCH ETIQUETTE

- 1 Come early. Rushing into the building at the last minute disrupts the service.
- 2 Take a place toward the front of the auditorium. Leave the rear seats for those who may be late and for visitors. This is a common courtesy.
- 3 Be devout - the church building is not a place of amusement. You come to worship God, not to whisper, nor lounge, or sleep; God's house deserves utmost respect.
- 4 Always remember that strangers are guests of the church members. Treat them with the same courtesy you would if they should visit your home.
- 5 Never rush for the door after the dismissal as though the house were on fire. Remain to speak and be spoken to.

THE twenty-four billion dollars spent to put a man on the moon is the same amount spent by Americans on alcoholic beverages every year. Think about it.

## OBITUARY

Hayfield Road, Kirkcaldy: The church here suffered a great loss with the passing of our oldest elder, Bro. John Moyes, who passed to his rest on the 18th July.

The service was conducted by Bro. J. Davidson, his fellow elder, and everyone was sustained by his inspiring quotation: ... 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord' (Matt. 25:21).

Bro. John was well known throughout the movement, firstly as a member of the church at Coaltown of Balgonie, then later numbering himself among the congregation at Rose Street (now Hayfield Road) where he served as an elder for many years.

To his widow and family - we pray that the Everlasting Arms will be around, beneath and above them and we commend them to our Heavenly Father's care.

Yet rejoice! They sorrow not without hope, and find comfort in the thought... 'Asleep in Jesus, Blessed sleep' A. Roberts (Sec. 3)

## Infallibly Safe

Can men lead the people astray by insisting upon their adhering strictly to the law of God, uniting upon it, living in peace and love? Let the Lord reign. Let His law be the supreme authority. The Bible is right if anything is right. All led by it are led rightly; all under its influence are under proper influence; all opposed to it are wrong — all the way wrong.

If the man who honestly reads the Bible to know his duty or the will of God, and does it to the best of his ability, praying daily for divine aid, both in understanding and doing, is not safe, no man in this world is safe.

— Benjamin Franklin.

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