

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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HEART TROUBLE?

Heart transplants in Britain are commonplace nowadays and many have cause to be thankful to those clever and courageous surgeons who perform near miracles. There remains in the minds of many however a strange reluctance towards acceptance of heart transplants, as if the heart of man was in some way sacrosanct. In other words it's all right to transplant kidneys, etc, but the heart is God-given. From a physical standpoint the heart is nothing more than a very efficient fleshy pump and I do not suppose God objects to the transplant of it any more than he would to a replacement kidney. The bible certainly has a lot to say about the heart but the references are rarely to the physical pump — they are more concerned with the spiritual seat of all of man's transactions. The spiritual heart of man is a worthy study because if we could influence the hearts of men we would influence their actions. Actions are, first of all, thoughts and thoughts are cradled in the heart. Jesus said, "For out of the heart comes forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings." (Matt. 15: 19) A man is therefore, only as good as his heart.

We read that Joab took three darts and thrust them through the heart of Absalom while he was in the oak tree and killed him (II Sam. 8: 14). This is an example of being stabbed to the heart physically. In Acts 2: 37 we read of other men being stabbed to the heart in a spiritual sense, thus, "Now when they heard this they were pricked in their heart and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, What shall we do?" The preaching was of such a quality that the hearers were utterly stabbed to the heart. Similar preaching will accomplish similar results today and so the preaching should be aimed at the hearts of men. A study of the facets of the human heart should, therefore, be a worthwhile study for preachers. Man has really two hearts because man is really two men — the physical man and the spiritual. Paul could say, "though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." (II Cor. 4: 16).

What then are the main features of the human heart?

(1) Intellect

What man calls the intellect the bible attributes to the heart. With the heart man:
(a) *Imagines* — Away back at the dawn of history God looked down on His creation and must have been very disappointed. Gen. 6: 5 says, "And God saw that the

wickedness of man was great in the earth and that *every imagination of man's heart* was only evil continually."

(b) *Thinks* — "And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, wherefore *think ye* evil in your hearts." (Matt. 9: 4). Simon the sorcerer thought that God's gifts could be bought with money and so earned the stern rebuke of the apostle Paul, who said, "Thou has neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God if perhaps *the thought of thine heart* may be forgiven thee." (Acts 8: 18). From this we learn that oftentimes our hearts are not right in God's sight and we need forgiveness for even the thoughts we think.

(c) *Reasons* — In Mark 2 we read that when Jesus said to the man sick of the palsy, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee," there were "certain of the scribes sitting there reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man speak blasphemies, who can forgive sins but God only? Jesus said, when He perceived it, Why reason ye these things in your hearts . . ."

(c) *Believes* — The heart assimilates all information and knowledge and either accepts it or rejects it, believes or disbelieves. Paul says, "For *with the heart man believes* unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom 10: 10). A distinction is to be drawn between the heart and the lips — it is possible to honour God with our lips but our hearts to be far from Him.

(2) Emotions

Man is an emotional creature as well as an intellectual one. He is subject to all kinds and shades of emotion, as far apart as love is from hatred. All emotion springs from the same source as the intellect, the heart:

(a) *Despises* — When the Ark of the Covenant was coming into the City of David we read that Michal (Saul's daughter) looked through a window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord "and she *despised him in her heart.*" (II Sam. 6: 16).

(b) *Desires* — Paul stated to the Christians in Rome that *his 'heart's desire,'* and prayer to God for Israel was that they might be saved.

(c) *Loves* — When one of the Pharisees tempted Jesus by asking him what the greatest commandment was under Moses' law, Jesus replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind and thy neighbour as thy self." Is a distinction being drawn here between the heart and mind?

(d) *Trusts* — One of Solomon's proverbs and injunctions says, "Trust in the Lord with *all thine heart* and lean not upon thine understanding." (Prov. 3: 5).

(3) Volition

Man is not just a creature of some intellectual power, or a creature given to deep emotional manifestations, but is also a creature of action and movement. The heart is the seat of man's action.

(a) *Intention* — The writer to the Hebrews, while speaking of the scriptures says, "For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and the joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts *and intentions of the heart.*" (Heb. 4: 12).

(b) *Purposes* — The persecuted Christians who had been scattered abroad from Jerusalem had been preaching to the Jews only, but after the conversion of Cornelius and his house, began to preach to the gentiles. Barnabus was sent by the Jerusalem church to investigate and was pleased with all he saw. We are told that he "was glad and exhorted them all, that with *purpose of heart* they would cleave unto

the Lord." (Acts 11: 23). Every man should give to the Lord as *he purposeth in his heart*.

(c) *Obeys* — The apostle Paul complimented the church in Rome thus, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have *obeyed from the heart* that form of doctrine delivered unto you." (Rom. 6: 17).

A Change of Heart

These glimpses of the functions of the heart could well be multiplied but probably suffice to highlight the complexity of the human being. With the heart man imagines; reasons; understands; believes; despises; loves; trusts; desires; purposes; determines; and obeys. Some preachers reach only the intellectual portion of the hearts of men, while other preachers seem to aim only at man's emotions. The gospel, however, in its fulness would seem to be designed to satisfy man's total requirements and appeal as much to his reason as to his desires. The case of Simon the Sorcerer reveals the fact that sometimes the hearts even of those who have obeyed the gospel are not right with God and we must change our hearts. A spiritual heart transplant may be out of the question but James exhorts us to *purify our hearts*. The peace of God must *rule in our hearts*. The Psalmist asked God to create within him *a new heart and a clean heart*. The bible describes some hearts as 'fountains of evil,' some as being proud in heart; depraved in heart, hard of heart; of covetous heart; of being deceitful in heart; of being foolish in heart or of being impenitent of heart. By contrast we read also of the pure in heart, the wise in heart, the tender hearted; the lowly of heart; the renewed in heart; the broken hearted; those with hearts of love to God, penitent hearted, hearts of trust, obedience and zeal; the perfect in heart. The bible also recommends a change of heart where necessary such as that exhibited by King Saul, Solomon and the apostle Paul. Repentance is *a change of heart* — for the better. God searcheth the hearts; what, in our case, does he see? "For as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." (Prov. 23: 7). A person is only as good as their heart but hearts can be changed.

Editor

STUDY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AS HISTORY

3. CONQUEST PERIOD

The Conquest Period of Old Testament History extended from the time of Moses until the anointing of Saul.

The events of this period may be described as:

(1) The Experiences in the Wilderness.

(a) Red Sea.

(b) Mount Nebo — The death of Moses.

(2) The Conquest of Canaan.

(a) Fall of Jericho.

(b) Entry into Canaan.

(3) The Rule of the Judges.

Fifteen Judges — Deborah, Gideon, Samson and Samuel.

The Personalities of this Period include:

(a) Moses (Exodus 3: 10).

(b) Joshua (Joshua 3 ff).

(c) Gideon (Judges 7 ff).

(d) Samuel.

(i) The last Judge.

(ii) Anointed Saul and then David as Kings over Israel. (1 Sam. 10: 1 and 16: 13).

The crossing of the Red Sea is one of the great works of God whose power over all things is shown in this miracle of control of water and winds and clouds.

No wonder this marvellous work of Jehovah is the subject of frequent allusion in the Scriptures of truth.

The Lord God refers to it for the purposes of stimulating His people to gratitude and faithfulness:

'But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by thy name: thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: ... for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.' (Isa. 43:1-3).

In this event saints have found delight in their devotions since here is cause for thanksgiving and praise.

'Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep: that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?' (See Isa. 51:9-11). 'He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as a heap.' (See Psalm 78).

The Holy Spirit by inspired prophets pointed to this event as an assurance of God's gracious acts towards spiritual Israel. (See Isa. 11:15-16).

The sin of resisting God and its condemnation is seen here in the sea, where the voice of truth calls us to consider the judgment of old. (See Psalm 66:5-6; 89:10).

Grounds for trusting in God are found in this memorial of His mighty love. (See Isa. 43:15-19).

From: "The Young Christian."

GLEANINGS

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

PREACHING

"I commend the gathering together of all the words in the New Testament — and of course I mean the Greek New Testament — that refer to the exercise of speech for the impartation of truth. We find eight or ten different Greek words, every one indicating some phase of this work of preaching. There are two however which are supreme. In our translations they are not always made distinct. All the rest are incidental, though valuable, *Euaggelizo* and *kerusso* are the words, which indicate the supreme phases of our preaching, and show us the whole New Testament ideal thereof.

Euaggelizo means to preach the Gospel. The one word is translated by our phrase, "preach the Gospel." Literally it means the proclamation of good news: It is the word from which we derive our words "evangel," "evangelist," and "evangelistic," which come directly by transliteration, rather than by translation, from the Greek word.

If preaching is proclaiming good news, that suggests two things; the need of man,

and the grace of God. Those two things are postulated by the very word that is used to describe preaching from the New Testament standpoint. Proclamation of the good news to men will suggest that men are needing good news. Human need is the background. All the race's sin and sorrow and perplexity are implied. Then, of course, it recognises the whole fact of grace, that stupendous fact of Divine revelation, the grace of God. Preaching as proclaiming good news postulates human need and Divine grace. Whenever we preach, we stand between those two things, between human need and Divine grace. We are the messengers of that grace to that need.

The other word, *kerusso*, is a very interesting term, meaning really a proclamation from a throne. The word is spoken as being delivered by a messenger on behalf of a ruler. Consequently in the use of the word we have two ideas again to note: the authorising Throne, and therefore the consequent claim that the messenger is called upon to make.

Merge these two things very briefly. What is preaching? It has a hundred particulars and varieties and intonations. But here is the unifying thought — Preaching is the declaration of the grace of God to human need on the authority of the Throne of God; and it demands on the part of those who hear that they show obedience to the thing declared.

I once heard a man at a ministerial conference say: "In the old days preaching was a conflict between the preacher and the crowd. He was in the presence of the crowd to compel the crowd to submission. That day has gone. The preacher's vocation has changed." I wonder! I think, if preaching has failed, or if it is failing, that is why.

The preacher should never address a crowd without remembering that his ultimate citadel is the citadel of the human will. He may travel along the line of the emotions, but he is after the will. He may approach along the line of the intellect, but he is after the will. When preaching becomes merely discussion in the realm of the intellect, or — forgive my use of the word — fooling in the realm of the emotions, and when preaching ends in the intellectual or emotional, it fails. It is successful only when it is able to storm the will, under the will of God. The preacher comes with good news; but he does not come with something to be trifled with. His message has an insistent demand, because he comes from a King...

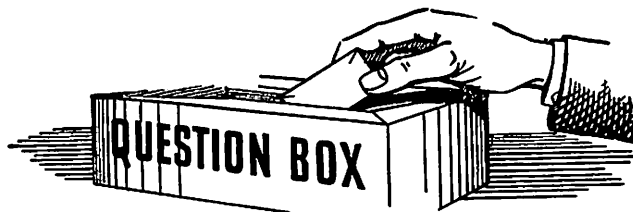
We are facing today the biggest hour the world has ever known for preaching. The miseries of theological controversy that are blighting our age cannot satisfy. The mass of men are waiting for preaching of the New Testament kind, with a great message of grace to meet human need, delivered by men who realize that they represent a Throne, and have the right to claim submission to it."

G. Campbell Morgan.

I cannot lay a plank

George Whitefield, the famous preacher, contemporary of the Wesleys, was an enthusiast. A ship-builder was once asked what he thought of his preaching. "Think!" he replied; "I tell you, my dear sir, every Sunday that I go to my parish church I can build a ship from stem to stern under the sermon; but, under Mr. Whitefield, I cannot lay a single plank!

Selected by Leonard Morgan.



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

“I am a young Christian and have recently been reading the Hebrew letter, but I find some things difficult to understand. Could you please tell me what the two immutable things are which are mentioned in Heb. 6:18?”

There is absolutely no doubt at all in my mind that Christians both young *and* old need to understand the Hebrew letter if they are to understand the superiority of Christ over the Law. If we are to enhance our faith then we *must* understand the significance of the atonement and the intercessory work of the Son of God.

Before we begin, we must explain one or two terms used. When reference is made to the two immutable things, the scripture continues, “in which it was impossible for God to lie.” Now this does not mean that at some time there is the *possibility* that God *will* lie; indeed, we read in Titus, “In hope of eternal life, which God, that *cannot* lie, promised before the world began.” (Titus 1:2). We should rather look upon God as *guaranteeing* the things which He has said.

Immutable has the meaning of ‘changeless.’ When we refer this to the counsel of God, as in Heb: 6:17, it means that those things which God has said, together with the promises He has made, are absolutely and irrevocably changeless.

The two immutable things

We now know that the two things, whatever they are, cannot and will not be changed. If these things are beneficial to the human race, and particularly to Christians, then we should have a strong consolation.

In Heb. 6:13 we read of a promise made to Abraham. This takes us back to the time of Abraham when he was about to offer his only son Isaac. God said, “By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.” (Genesis 22: 16-18).

This question of God’s oath is quite interesting. The writer of Hebrews says, “For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife” (Heb. 6:16). In other words, the oath helped to *show more fully* the irrevocable nature of God’s promise, and because He could find no one greater than Himself, *He interposed Himself* by an oath. That should end all strife on the matter; God’s will must inevitably be done.

The two immutable things, then, are the promise made to Abraham and the oath by which He confirmed it. It seems to me, though, that the question cannot end here.

The ratification

The strong encouragement to hold fast is based on hope which is as “an anchor to the soul.” Hope is not to be viewed as an affair of chance; true hope is the realisation

of final destiny. This hope is based on Jesus, who has been our advance guard into the Holy of Holies and into heaven. To enter the Holy of Holies He must have been a high priest, but He was not as the Levitical priesthood; they, "having infirmity," offered sacrifices for *themselves* as well as for the people. The Son, being sinless, offered *Himself* for the people.

It is my considered opinion that the promise and the oath imply two other changeless things, namely, the eternal kingship and priesthood of the Son. Jesus is both priest and king. The Hebrew letter says, "he was made a high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec" (6:20). Melchisedec was both King (of Salem) and priest of the most high God, and as such he was the type of Christ. "He was without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually" (7:3). This is a negative way of saying that he was eternal; this again is typical of Jesus.

We must fully understand the offices of king and priest, and realise that these are not two independent offices. Jesus has power and authority to save those for whom He died; the nature of His throne emphasises not only His authority, but also the efficacy of his priestly office; it is "a throne of grace." (Read Heb: 4:14-16). We see in Jesus, then, our Saviour and our Intercessor. Not only did He offer Himself to relieve us of our sin, but "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." The Writer to the Hebrews challenges the traditional Jewish belief, namely, that the Law was perfect; "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the Law) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order (rank) of Melchisedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron." (7:11). The law was imperfect because it had no power to cleanse, sanctify, and bring people to God; a change was needed, and so the writer goes on, "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change of law also" (7:12). As Paul puts it in his Roman letter, "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." The new law was to be after the new creation; the old law was weak through the flesh and could never achieve that which Christ achieved by His expiatory sacrifice through the priesthood which He Himself enjoyed.

Conclusion

There is obviously much more which could be said relative to this subject, but it seems important to me that we should understand that the promise which God made to Abraham so long ago, and which he confirmed by an oath or guarantee of Himself, that these two unchanging things should find their true expression in the unchanging Christ of God, Jesus our king and great high priest. As Paul taught the Corinthians, "I came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (1 Cor: 2:1,2). Further to this, I would advise a detailed study of the Hebrew and Roman letters.

PEACE LIKE A RIVER

"O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! Then had thy peace been as a river and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." Isaiah 48: 18.

"Billows of sin have flooded my soul,

Now I have wonderful peace.

The Great Physician has now made me whole,

And I have wonderful peace.

Of all the characters contained in the Word of God there is one who could have sung such words as these. That person is known to us as Mary Magdalene. That billows of sin had flooded her soul, is revealed in the words "out of whom the Lord cast seven devils." She was utterly depraved, her life completely in Satan's power. Of such a one Paul could say, "She who liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth."

Then, one day, she met Jesus, the Great Physician, who, seeing her plight, and being fully aware of the kind of person she could be, spoke the powerful words which drove out the demons within, and gave her to know the power and peace of God's refining grace. What a wonderful change took place! She who was once a slave to sin became a follower of Jesus and gave herself fully to His service.

"Jesus has paid the price on the tree.

And has brought wonderful peace.

Now then at last from my burden I'm free,

And I have wonderful peace.

Isaiah wrote, "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him and by His stripes we are healed."

Paul, long years afterwards could say, "He is our peace . . . He obtained peace by the blood of His cross."

No merit of our own could obtain such a peace. The goodness of man cannot blot out sin. It required the life of an innocent victim. This is clearly revealed in the Bible that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission." So, Jesus took our place and willingly offered Himself as a sacrifice for sin. "He who knew no sin became sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Jesus died that all might be saved from sin and its consequences. This does not mean that all are saved but that "He is the author of eternal salvation to those who put their trust in Him."

What a wonderful thing peace of mind is, and this the child of God has through the precious blood of the Lord Jesus which cleanses from all sin, so that there "remaineth no more conscience of Sin." Burdens are lifted, blind eyes made to see, there's a wonder working power in the blood of Calvary.

"The grace of Jesus now freely flows,

And there is wonderful peace;

Joy and contentment that He only knows

Who has this wonderful peace.

Peace is ours through God's unmerited favour. How often grace and peace are linked together by Paul, and by them comes joy and contentment. The beauty of God's gifts is that they never fail, that means, never dry up, never run out of supplies. All that this world offers is only temporary, only for a time, and these are the things which are seen now, but will one day pass away for ever. Only the things which are unseen give hope to those who see them by the eye of faith. These are the eternal things of God, promised by our Heavenly Father, to those whose minds are not set on earthly things, but who seek the things which are above. These help to cheer and uplift us when everything else fails.

What was it that caused the early Christians to go, to their death with songs of joy and praise to God on their lips? That made Paul and Silas to sing at midnight in a Philippian jail? Was it not that Jesus was alive within them by His Spirit and they had a wonderful peace in their hearts.

Christians to-day can have the same experience, though not called upon to face a cruel physical death to show their faith in Jesus, they may still "present their bodies a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God." They may present to the world, a

living testimony of the saving power of Jesus in lives that are dedicated to His service. When life's difficulties, trials and problems are faced and overcome by unflinching faith and confidence in a Jesus who is alive in each and every heart, filled with the Peace that passeth all understanding and a joy and contentment that can only be realised by resting in the everlasting arms.

"Peace, wonderful peace,
Peace, wonderful peace;
Peace like a river now flows in my soul
I have wonderful peace.

TOM KEMP. HINDLEY.

Let's Debate the Identity of the New Testament Church!

I never was much of a debater. I never seemed to think fast on my feet and everyone agreed that when the argument went my way, I lacked the "killer instinct."

A number of years ago, I was pressed into a small discussion with a J. W. (Jehovah's Witness). They had some "leaners" and we had some, and being unable to resolve the doctrinal differences, we were called in to "help out."

The ground rules were easy enough. Tuesday nights were selected (7-10 p.m.) and each of us chairing the affair on alternate weeks. This would continue for four weeks.

The first meeting went well. I led the discussion on the subject of "authority" and what constituted it. My opponent was an older man, kind in his ways and sincere in his presentation. At the end of the first discussion, he requested the right to suggest a topic for the following week when he would lead the debate.

"Let's debate the Identity of the New Testament Church," he said.

I couldn't believe it! I was dumbfounded but recovered in time to accept the suggestion.

"Why wait until next week?" I thought. I was ready right then, with 52 scriptures put to memory on that very subject. For once I would be ready. I would finally be able to crush an opponent and drive my points home as nails in the coffin of his false teaching.

Yet during the week that followed I couldn't help but wonder if there were some points that I had bypassed — overlooked.

The following Tuesday saw him lead in the discussion. Each of his first three points consumed exactly 15 minutes each. He reserved a full 45 minutes for the fourth and final identifying mark.

"The New Testament church was a praying church." This was his first point. I was taken totally by surprise. He used numerous scriptures to support that simple premise.

"The New Testament church was a generous church," and he continued to show how that "J. W.'s" extend themselves in sacrificing. He also cited a number of examples from the word.

"The New Testament church was a suffering church." He mentioned the suffering of his own people in modern times. He compared it to the first century, when the church was called a "sect." Again scriptures were called to support that mark of identity.

"Mr. Exum," he turned and looked into my eyes. "The New Testament church was a soul-winning church!" He finished with another flurry of scriptures and said kindly, "Your turn, preacher."

I began with a strong biblical appeal, "A.D. 33," "Jerusalem," with "Christ the head, the founder and foundation." I continued to show the laws of entrance, the rules for worship, the non-denominational quality of our appeal. When the session was over, I felt like the general who won the battle but lost the war. I had the scriptural statistics, yet he had the part that seemed more spiritual — more important at the time. I had the Biblical history, yet he seemed to offer the virtues to which the small audience related. I had the book but somehow, he seemed to end up with the people.

He taught me a vital lesson that night — one that I have never forgotten. People are more concerned about what Christ will and can do for them now, than all the identifying marks of historical quality that one may quote.

Anyone who belittles these true marks of identities, needs to study his Bible and grow in faith. One who goes without them — goes without truth for they link us to the pattern.

The mistake is made on the assumption that because these identities are located in scripture, written on our blackboards, painted on charts and preached from our pulpits — that this makes us — them!

Without the genuine death to sin, the surrender of self, the life of godliness, the spirit contrite, these scriptural identities will mean little to the world and eventually, nothing to our children.

A cake "half baked — not turned" is not worth the eating.

The spirit of the restoration — may it not be a movement, but a daily quest in the life of every follower of Jesus.

From "*Firm Foundation*". Jack Exum.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

MAY 1980

May 4 Prov. 3,1-20 Ephesians 1,15 to 2,10
 May 11 2 Chron.6,1-21 Ephesians 2,11-22
 May 18 Isaiah 25 Ephesians 3
 May 25 Psalm 68,1-20 Ephesians 4,1-16

PRAISE (Eph. 1,3)

This is embodied in one sentence extending from verses 3 to 14. The apostle brings before his readers God's purposes past, present and future, and they include US. The extent of His love for mankind is such that we shall share His glory. The glory is all His but His purpose through the ages is to bring a lovely family into it. This He planned to do through Christ as promised in the scriptures to the Jews, and He accomplished it by the shedding of the blood of Christ as the means of redemp-

tion — buying us back from our sinfulness and disobedience. The revelation was made to Paul and the other apostles and prophets first, but it was extended to the Gentiles through the preaching of the gospel. The appointment and work of Christ however includes every created thing and every power. God is going to bring all things into harmony through Christ, consummating the ages in such a way that all will be "to the praise of His glory." Note the repetition of this phrase in verses 6,12 and 14. The redeemed and adopted people will contribute to that glory for it is the glory acquired by the exercise of "grace abounding." Our share is that we should be holy and without blemish before Him in love (4). How is that possible? Only the blood can cleanse (I John 1,9), and continuous contrition and sanctified effort is needed, and even that is God's work (Phil. 2,12; Eph. 2,10). "Blessed be God, our God"! (Hymn 53, Christian Hymnary: 4,C.ofC. Wigan: 85, in 1908 Book — the best yet!).

Gratitude (Eph. 1,16).

We can imagine the feelings of concern and love welling up in the apostle's heart as he thinks of the members of the Ephesian church (and the other Asian churches in which he was vitally interested — 2 Cor.11,28) and their elders, to whom he had given so earnest a farewell and warning. His love for them inspires his prayer for their spiritual growth and enlightenment and their knowledge of God's greatness and power. Hence he refers to the Almighty power which raised Jesus from death, and sets Him above every earthly and heavenly unseen spiritual authority now and forever. It also made Him the head of the church. Here Paul states the function of the church in glowing terms — the body, the visible earthly representation of her Lord. Certainly ideally there is nothing greater on earth than the church. However, far from this she has been we remember the infant church defeated an empire and changed history.

Quickened (Eph. 2,1)

Without new life there could be no fulfilment of the church's function. We may miss part of the force of these passages if we forget the division of the human race which is foremost in the apostle's mind, and in those times. There had been an overflow from Jewish Scriptures into pagan philosophy, but Gentiles had no conception of one God, creator, a just and righteous divine authority. Thus the wonder of God having thought for Gentiles had a tremendous impact upon a Jew like Paul. Peter also had to be brought to understand "the wideness of God's mercy" by a process of persuasion through providential and direct inspiration from God (Acts 10 & 11, 1-18), and Paul by traumatic experience (Acts 9). So what a wonderful thing that from an imprisoned Jew in Roman hands came a letter to Gentiles who had begun a new life amidst a people sunk in idolatrous worship. Living as most of us do in a

society whose morals have been modified by a diluted form of Christianity, we can scarcely imagine the fight they were in. We noted in chapter 1, the use of "we" and "ye" (verses 11 to 14). Here in chapter 2 Paul identifies himself in "desires of the flesh and mind" (verses 3 to 6) with Gentile Christians, as needing the same "quickening," and expresses the outcome so beautifully in verses 10 & 19.

Unification (Eph. 2,16)

Here is emphasised the contrast between Jew and Gentile, not to blacken the Gentiles but to show the greatness of the work of Christ in removing the barrier between those who had been so greatly privileged, and the "outsiders." The latter must remember what a gap there was so that they appreciate their changed state, and the greatness of Christ. The darkness of being "without God" must now appear to them, and the high position occupied by the church. They now share fully in that institution, which is pictured as a building for God to dwell in. Previously their holy places held idols, now *they* form the Temple and God is there. This change could only take place by the grace of God. They had done nothing to make or deserve it. Now they are "fellow-heirs, fellow-members of the body, fellow-partakers of the promise" — as fully privileged as those who were formerly so. Paul glories in his ministry because of this very service he particularly rendered being chosen for the purpose and enduring much suffering for it, chosen to preach "the unsearchable riches of Christ." What greater honour could he have? His beloved brethren might feel he ought not to suffer for them but he assures them they should glory in it. (3,13). Their sharing in the blessing brings glory to God for His wisdom (3,10). A section of the letter ends with the ascription of praise after his prayer for strength through the indwelling of Christ Whose love surpasses human knowledge, and

yet must be learned in some measure by the weakest saint. The poet has caught the idea — "it passeth knowledge that dear love of Thine, my Saviour Jesus..." (164 Christian Hymnary). The whole letter has earned the title "Queen of the Epistles" and in this earlier part we have all the truths concerning God and the Church set forth in God-honouring terms. It is closely related to Colossians which would appear to have been sent with or at similar time by the same trusted messenger, Tychicus. Onesimus travelled with him (Philemon 10-12).

Foundation & Building (Eph. 4,1-16)

Peace has been made between Jew and Gentile. It binds them together in the church but it can continue only if they walk together in "lowliness, meekness, longsuffering and forbearance." It will require individual effort. Unity has been provided for by seven points which all have agreed and possess. The final binding link is ONE FATHER which would surely keep a family together. But there are also gifts common to all members. They were provided by miraculous intervention of Christ, the Lord and Master, through the Holy Spirit. The church did not just have a foundation it has functions to operate and provision for building it up and maintaining operations. Initially Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists and Pastors and Teachers were provided. These set up the building and prepared it for its work. A revelation of gospel truth and apostolic instruction has been provided in the New Testament to stabilise and instruct the members so that they need not drift, and each one so guided and doing his or her part contributes to the maintenance and growth of the church.

R. B. SCOTT

A BURDEN OR A BLESSING?

Bill Swetmon

"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27). The Jews thought of the Sabbath as only something done by men for God. Because of this legalistic misconception, Sabbath keeping became a task rather than a blessing, and God was viewed as a taskmaster, like the gods of the pagans.

Jesus corrected this misconception by pointing out the fact that the Sabbath was really something done by God for men. It was not intended to be a burdensome obligation, but rather it was to be a beautiful privilege.

Isn't it possible that we make the same mistake regarding God's commands for us today? Many Christians view God's laws through legalistic spectacles. Instead of considering them to be glorious blessings, they are grievous obligations imposed by a tyrannical God.

We rarely hear the word privilege used in the church. We hear other words such as duty, responsibility, obligation, sacrifice, spoken in a virtuous and even martyred tone of voice, but rarely the word privilege. Perhaps this explains why so many Christians find no happiness in religion. God's commands have become burdens imposed on them which they would rather do without.

The strength of any congregation will always be in proportion to the commitment of her members. Christians become committed when they stop taking religion for granted and recover a sense of privilege in serving God out of love.

"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous."

1 John 5:3.

From: "Firm Foundation."

The great-beacon light God sets in all.
The conscience of each bosom.

Robt. Browning.

PROGRESS — 1980's

Dear brother Editor,

With regard to your editorial in the February S.S., I thought you would like to know what we have found out about the alleged numbers of Mormons, at any rate in England.

Our local newspaper carried an article about the Mormon area or district around here, which has four Mormon church buildings and claims a membership of 16,000. If this were true, each of these four church buildings would have a congregation of 4,000 each Sunday, which from the size of them is a physical impossibility. Probably if they gathered 200 each, they would be lucky for these parts.

Obviously there is something about the way these Mormons count that is very different from ours. I wonder if it is to do with the way they "baptise for the dead." They are known to search out people's ancestors for this purpose, and it could be they add their names to the local register! One very seldom meets a Mormon when knocking on doors, or at work, though one does encounter plenty of J.W.s.

Then if we consider the budget of twenty million dollars in 1960 that you quote for them. If the average American salary was, say, \$1,000 in 1960 and so Mormons tithed themselves at \$100 per annum, this would surely mean that only 200,000 Mormons had joined in this scheme. Even adding some more for the women and children without salaries, this is nowhere near the three million claimed by them as members. The "fast offering" leads to an even lower conclusion!

Presumably Mormons know that people like to join large organisations, and this is their way of promoting themselves.

No doubt you will be glad to hear that the tract "What the Artist left out" brought two ladies to our church meeting one Sunday, after I left it in their letterbox.

The Baptists are certainly growing in this town and now have about 900 members in several buildings. Only one of these congregations does much advertising that I have ever seen — preaching in the open air every Saturday and leaflets advertising their Christmas services. I think it is quite possible that the church of Christ here has distributed far more literature than all these Baptists put together since 1961 when we started.

However, it is so much easier for any seeker to find their way to these 900 Baptists than to ourselves, who at present number only nine. (At the beginning of last year we were only three, all women). People who contemplate coming out of the world these days, seem to want to join a large group to give them moral support, and it is more important to them than the doctrine. Even former members of churches of Christ have done this here, and we know of two-thirds more lapsed members than actually meet together.

Although we do tend to collect some people disillusioned with the denominations, or maybe we should say they have learnt better, yet in cases where we have taken the initiative, it is only to see good potential members made by us for the denominations. I call to mind a lady who found a card left by me in a bus depot. She enrolled for a correspondence course, then enrolled her husband who was in prison at the time, and he enrolled four other prisoners. However, this couple then joined the Baptists, because they were near to where the family lived.

Lack of numbers is really a problem to many of us. However, I thought you would like to know the Mormons are not good at arithmetic!

Yours in the Lord,
ROSE E PAYNE

The church is the only conscience a government has. When a church is silent, the State can have no conscience.

Edward G. Grant.

YOU ARE A MINISTER

I enjoy reading *Peanuts*. I guess it's because I've always been able to identify with Charlie Brown.

Well anyway, the other day I was resting at home in my reclining chair reading my favourite cartoon. In this particular strip Lucy dashes into the living room and demands that Linus change T.V. channels. She then threatens him with her fist if he doesn't.

"What makes you think you can walk right in here and take over?" Linus asks.

"These five fingers" Lucy replies. "Individually they're nothing. But when I curl them together like this into a single unit they form a weapon that is terrible to behold."

Immediately Linus jumps up and shouts, "Which channel do you want?"

Turning away and pausing for a second Linus looks at his fingers and says, "Why can't you guys get organized like that?"

What a message that is to the Lord's Church? If we could only get organized like that! If we could only work together!

The Bible refers to the church as the Body of Christ. Every member of the Body has a function. Every member is a minister. Every member has a special gift designed to build up the body (Eph. 4:11-12).

The Body of Christ is a organism. It is to run smoothly with every member doing its job. That includes you!

From "*Firm Foundation*." Charles Sattenfield.

WORKING FOR THE DEVIL

A mill, manufacturing goods during World War II, put the following sign over the gate: "When you take it easy, you are working for Hitler."

No-one could have successfully denied this. Applying the same principle to the church the sign might read: "When you stay away from the meetings of the church, you are working for the devil." Matthew 12:30 reads: "He that is

not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad."

The devil has some workers among the children of God! You may not believe this is true, but a little serious thinking will convince you.

STARVING IN KAMPUCHEA

Readers may be pleased to hear that as a result of my appeal through the columns of the 'S.S.' for aid to the starving men, women and children in Kampuchea, I have been able to pass on to the Relief Fund (set up by U.N.I.C.E.F.) approximately £500. One congregation in Scotland sent as much as £250 and I had a substantial contribution from as far away as Canada. Thanks again to all the brethren contributing. The cause is a very worthy one.

Editor.

Every man, however good, has a yet better man within him. When the outer man is unfaithful to his deeper convictions, the hidden man whispers a protest. The name of the whisper in the soul is conscience.

Friedrich H. A. Von Humboldt.

ZAMBIAN REPORT

Two new congregations have been organized during our leave. Chisebwe has visited the new Solwezi Road congregation and Mwansa has been encouraging the new congregation at Kalulushi. These are two of the Zambian ministers who have been taking the lead — and there are others.

Great demand for Christian cassettes

When we went on leave, Eric Schoeman (Kitwe) and S. Chisebwe (Mufulira) took over our cassettes and established two Christian cassette

libraries. We have been surprised at the popularity of borrowing and listening to these cassettes. Brother Schoeman has done up to nine cassette presentations to individuals and groups in one week — and this is in addition to individuals borrowing cassettes for private listening. One presentation was to the students at Kitwe Teacher Training College. Teaching cassettes can be sent direct to S. Chisebwe, P.O. Box 1137, Mufulira, Zambia and Eric Shoeman, P.O. Box 1250, Kitwe.

Bible filmstrips

Brother Daniel Zulu (Mululira) has worked hard in our absence at showing Bible filmstrips. Some repairs are now required to the equipment and then Zulu will be showing the filmstrips again. Zulu is at present on a tour of duty in Luapula Province and this should be of assistance to the fledgling congregations in Luapula. Zulu was given excellent training as an evangelist by Keith Besson (former missionary).

Church building crisis

Kitwe City Council has allocated a building site to Chimwemwe congregation after a nine year wait. The Council require payment of a plot premium of about four thousand dollars within two months or the site is forfeited. The Zambian Christians are trying to practice self reliance and finding great difficulty in putting together the funds.

Baptisms

There have been 13 baptisms at Garneton, 32 baptisms at Kalulushi and 10 baptisms at 14 mile village, Mufulira.

Special meetings

There have been special meetings for preaching and teaching, including camp meetings at Mufulira, Ndola and Luanshya. Five meetings are so far planned for 1980.

Chester & Angela Woodhall.

A BUSINESSMAN'S PRAYER

Help me, Oh Lord, to remember that three feet make one yard, 16 ounces one pound, four quarts one gallon, and 60 minutes one hour. Help me to do business on the square. Make me sympathetic with the fellow who has broken in the struggle. Keep me from taking an unfair advantage of the weak, or from selling my self-respect for a profit.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Bedminster, Bristol. We rejoice to report the baptism of Lily Hardman, the sister of Kathleen Hurcombe. To God be the praise.

L. Daniell.

Reading. We rejoice to announce that on Sunday, 2nd March, Dierdre Haddaway, the wife of Brother Winston Haddaway, made the good confession and was baptised the same day. Membership here has now risen from 3 to 10 in less than a year.

(Miss) R. M. Payne.

The Slamanna District, Scotland. On Saturday 15th March the quarterly Mutual Benefit Meeting was held, on this occasion at Haddington. The subject for discussion was the attitudes involved when a lapsed member of the church returns. The speakers were brother D. Chalmers, Dalmellington, and brother J. Sinclair (Sen.) from Tranent. There was a large attendance and much interest was engendered especially at the period of question and comment. As usual a lot more emerged from the subject than perhaps most had anticipated. The next such meeting is convened for May, at Motherwell and the subject will be related to Marriage and Divorce.

COMING EVENTS

Longshoot, Wigan. The church at Longshoot, Wigan hope to hold a Ladies Day on May 10th, 1980, God willing, and the first meeting will take place at 10.45 a.m. Coffee will be served at 10.15 a.m. and the last meeting of the day will be at 6 p.m.

We look forward to a day of fellowship with sisters and any friends who can make the journey to be with us. A note of the numbers coming would be helpful if sent by the end of March. Any interested should contact Sister N. Layland, 10 Carr Lane, Worsley Mesnes, Wigan, Lancs. Phone Wigan 31983.

Buckie, Scotland. God willing the church at Buckie hopes to hold a SOCIAL gathering on June 7th, 1980 in the Buckie meetinghouse. Tea at 3.45 p.m.

The speaker on this occasion will be Jack Parker, Wigan. A warm welcome to all who can join us in happy Christian fellowship. Singing items will be greatly appreciated.

Contact brother John Geddes, Elm-bank, Ianstown, Buckie. Tel. 0542-33793.

Brighton. The church at Oxford Street, Brighton, hope (D.V.) to hold their anniversary meetings on Saturday and Sunday, 12th and 13th April, 1980.

Tea on Saturday at 5 p.m. Evening rally at 6.30 p.m.

Breaking of bread on Sunday 11 a.m. A warm welcome to all.

EVANGELIST WANTED

The Slamannan District Churches of Christ require an evangelist and all interested brethren should apply in writing to the District Secretary, Hugh Davidson, 21 Glen Lyon, St. Leonards, East Kilbride, Scotland, G74 2JJ.

TRACTS

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

The wicked flee when no man pursueth.

Prov. 28:1.

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