

# *The* **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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## **LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU**

The congregations using R. B. Scott's "Scripture Readings" have been reading through John's gospel, and noticing how John, more than any other of the gospel writers emphasises the former glory of Jesus.

I had a letter, just this morning, from a regular correspondent (a Christadelphian) who describes Jesus as "a man and never to be any more than a man", and so it might be useful to consider briefly the pre-existence of Jesus.

Surely one of the first passages of scripture which come to mind, when considering this subject, is Paul's recommendation to the Phillippians (2:5) "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man: He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Christ being in the form of God (or "being originally God" R.V.) thought it not robbery (or "counted it not a prize" R.V.) to be on an equality with God, but demeaned Himself from all this to come to the earth. This tells us something of the pedigree of Jesus, but there is much more.

In the discourse (John 6) between Christ and His disciples, He accused some of following Him merely for the 'loaves and fishes' which they had lately enjoyed. This prompted Jesus to urge them to "labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which endureth unto everlasting life." When His auditors asked how they should go about this task, Jesus explained that they must believe on Him whom God had sent. When they demanded a sign from Jesus in proof of His being God's Messenger, and insinuated that Moses had performed better miracles (in that Moses fed millions every day for years with 'bread from heaven' - not just a 'one off' feeding of 5,000) Jesus explained that the manna which Moses provided was not the true bread from heaven but that He (Jesus) was, and added, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. And this is the will of Him that sent Me: that everyone that believeth on Me hath Everlasting Life. Your fathers did eat manna from heaven and are dead. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever." The Jews (including many of His own disciples) were most displeased with this claim (that He came down from heaven). They said, "Is not this Joseph's son, whose father and mother we know. This is a hard saying: who can receive it." When Jesus heard their murmuring, He suggested that they might believe His claim: once they had seen Him ascend to heaven, the place from which He had come. Sad to relate, "From that time many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him" and the Jews "sought to kill Him".

I suppose that if in Christ's very presence some disciples found His sayings "too hard" to accept, there is reason to believe that men may find it even harder today.

And so we have Christ's claim that He was the true bread and that He had come down from heaven itself, as God's last messenger, with God's last words to man. Jesus predicted here that He would ascend to the very place from which He came: which He later did, when He went back to the right hand of God.

### PRE-EXISTENCE OF CHRIST AT CREATION

At the creation of the Universe, we read in Genesis (1:26) that on the sixth day of creation God said, "Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowls of the air, and over all the earth". The 'Amplified Bible' interpolates "(Father, Son and Holy Spirit)" behind each pronoun in the above verse, and thus endorses the common view that God, Christ and the Holy Spirit were the agency of all creation.

Certainly Jesus claimed to have had fellowship with God prior to any form of creation. Jesus prayed (John 17) "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with thine self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." Thus Jesus shared glory with God even before the world was made.

In Col. 1:16 we read of Paul's inspired estimate of the lowly Nazarene, when He describes Him as, "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature; for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church ..." There are those who would say that these words apply to God, not to Christ, but are thwarted by the fact that the person thus described is also "head of the body, the church" and that certainly is Christ. We should think more highly than we do of 'the church' when we contemplate the accomplishments of its illustrious Head (as described here by Paul). Image of the invisible God, creator of all things in heaven or in the earth, visible and invisible, thrones, dominions, principalities, powers: and by Him all things consist. And this Man is also Head of the church.

John concurs with this evaluation and indeed opens his written gospel (not with a genealogy) but with a majestic statement of Christ's creative role. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the word was God. (2) The same was in the beginning with God. (3) All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life and the life was the Light of Men." Again, attempts are made to show that (v.3) applies to God and not to Christ but these are, of course, quite futile for John also says, at (v.14) that "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us". Jesus was Creator.

### JESUS, ABRAHAM AND ANGELS

When the Jews accused Jesus of being "A Samaritan and hast a devil" they reckoned to have found proof of the fact when they heard Jesus declare that if a man kept His (Christ's) words he would never die. They cited the case of Abraham: that he was dead. "Art thou greater than our Father Abraham, which is dead, and the prophets are dead. Whom makest Thou thyself?" Jesus replied, "Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it and was glad." "Then said the Jews unto Him, Thou art not fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham." Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." "Then took they up stones to cast at Him." Faced with a man barely 30 years of age, who claimed to have existed prior to Abraham, and that Abraham was glad to see Christ's day; I suppose their stoning of Christ for blasphemy was predictable. "Before Abraham was, I AM", said Jesus, and the phrase "I am" takes our minds back to the account in the Exodus (3:13-14). Moses, in the event of being asked by the Jews for the name of God, asked

God what he should say in such circumstances. Indeed what name could we give to God? God instructed Moses that, in the event of such an enquiry, to tell the people that "I AM" was God's name. "I AM that I AM." Thus there may be a special significance in Christ's words, "Before Abraham was, I am". "I am" is, of course, always the present tense and accords with the eternal nature of deity. Later, God advised Moses that it would be sufficient, for general purposes, to describe God as "the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." (v.15).

In passing, we note Christ's affinity with another Old Testament figure: mentioned much less-often than Moses, or Abraham, but perhaps much more mysterious than either — Melchisedec. The writer to the Hebrews tells us that Jesus was our great High Priest, after the order of Melchisedec, and goes on to explain that 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." (Heb. 7:3) Further testimony to the pre-existence of Christ.

Paul, in his first letter to Timothy, (3:16) declares. "And without controversy great is the mystery of Godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit; seen of angels, preached unto the gentiles; believed on in the world, received up into glory." "Godliness" in this verse refers to the system of faith given to the world through Jesus, and Paul describes it, and its outworkings as "a great mystery" and about that, says Paul, there is no argument. The first item in the list (in the mystery) is the fact that "God" was manifest in the flesh. E.M. Zerr says, on this passage, (referring to this word 'God') — "We should bear in mind that the word God is a family name, and that each member of the Deity or Godhead is entitled to the name. Hence the present passage means 'God, the Son' for it was He who was on the earth in the flesh." The R.V. states that the oldest MSS render for 'God' in this passage 'He who' but this does not materially alter the weight of the verse for unless Christ had been immeasurably superhuman there was little point in the apostle mentioning that He (God) was 'manifest in the flesh'. My Christadelphian friend says that this claim is not so much a mystery as a blasphemy, but Paul is unlikely to be guilty of any such charge. Had a man been 'manifested in the flesh' Paul's statement would have been a nonsense. Had Paul said that an angel had been 'manifested in the flesh' it would have been of some interest but nothing very new. But when Paul says that 'God' was 'manifested in the flesh' then that, without controversy, is a very worthy part of a larger mystery.

#### LESSONS FOR US

Paul, enlarging upon a theme of 'grace' to the Christians at Corinth, instances the grace of Jesus, and says, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye, through His poverty might be rich." (2 Cor. 8:9). It was through the grace (kindness, mercy and goodness) of Jesus that, though He was rich He, for our sakes, became poor. Obviously Jesus was never rich in this world, but must have been extremely rich before coming here. He was born (not in a king's palace) but in a stable and that humble beginning characterised His entire lifetime. He was even less well off (as He said on one occasion) that the beasts of the field, for the foxes had holes and the birds had nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head. At His death he left behind great spiritual riches (but nothing in the form of any real-estate) and indeed the soldiers gambled for the few garments He stood up in. As He died He had to place His own mother on the charity of friends. How, then, could Jesus have been, at one time, rich? Obviously the answer lies in the conditions of His pre-existence. As we have seen, He co-existed with God (the Father) and made all things, in earth and in heaven, visible and invisible. Thus our Lord's pre-existent riches were quite incalculable. What then, is the lesson in the verse? It is to illustrate our duty of giving liberally to the Lord's

work, from the fact that Jesus was willing to give His all for the benefit of others. The idea is, that He who was Lord and Proprietor of the universe, and possessor of all things, was willing to leave His exalted station in the bosom of the Father, and to become poor, abjectly poor, in order that man might become rich in the blessings of the gospel. He is our Exemplar and we, in our turn, ought to give of our substance that others might benefit.

Indeed, as we noticed earlier, Paul said, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus". Jesus demeaned and demoted Himself as no other ever has. He was in the form of God and equal with God, yet made Himself of no reputation but became a servant and was found in fashion as a man. Lower still did He descend and allowed Himself to be martyred by a rabble: and died the death of a criminal (with a common thief on either side). Jesus became the common servant of all and this is a lesson to any of us who might have illusions of grandeur, or think of ourselves more highly than we ought. Because Christ humbled Himself in this way "God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name." It is difficult even for God to exalt those who exalt themselves. Jesus said, "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased: and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

And so, in this brief little sojourn into the subject of the pre-existence of Jesus, we have learned that we ought, like Christ, to be gracious and benevolent. We have also learned that we must strive to copy His example in humility. "And be ye clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble." (1 Peter 5:5).

EDITOR.

## GLEANINGS

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

### ONLY

"Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ." Philippians 1:27.  
(R.V.)

"Only let them order their life in a way worthy of the Gospel of Christ." "Only"; as if this were the one possible topic for him now. This will content him; nothing else will. He "desires one thing of the Lord" — the practical holiness of his beloved converts; and he cannot possibly do otherwise, coming as he had just come from "the secret of the presence," felt in his own experience. Will they be watchful and prayerful? Will they renounce the life of self-will, and entirely live for their Lord's holy credit and glory? Will they particularly surrender a certain temptation to jealousies and divisions? Will they recollect that Christ has so committed Himself to them to manifest to the world that it is the "only" thing in life, after all, in the last resort, to be practically true to Him? Then the Missionary will be happy; his "joy will be fulfilled."

H.C.G. Moule

### CONVERSATION

"Oh Days of heaven, and nights of equal praise,  
Serenely peaceful as those heavenly days,  
When souls, drawn upwards in communion sweet,  
Enjoy the stillness of some close retreat;  
Discourse, as if releas'd and safe at home,  
Of dangers past and wonders yet to come,  
And spread the sacred treasures of the breast  
Upon the lap of covenanted rest."

Cowper.

**WE QUOTE— ISAAC SELBY**

“My friend wanted to know what there was in pain that suggested wisdom and goodness. I would say that pain is the sentinel that stands upon the outposts of human life. Pain warns us of approaching danger — that the citadel of life is about to be stormed; because the first symptoms of disease manifest themselves by irritation, and we know then that disease is about to be introduced into the organization, and we can prepare to resist its encroachments. Therefore, if pain had no other purpose than this, it had a purpose. But pain and trouble have been the means of disciplining the lives of the greatest and best of mankind. Supposing there were no storms at sea, where would be the skill of the mariner? Supposing that our gardens only brought forth beautiful flowers and fruits, and no weeds, where would be the ingenuity of the gardener? The very fact that there are difficulties in life helps to discipline our characters and to bring them to their ripest development.”

**I FAILED TO DO THE DEED**

“Today, I thought, I’ll give a helping hand  
To one in need. I’ll help the weak to stand.  
A noble thought. It was, But, ah, the seed  
Was wasted ... for I failed to do the deed.”

Maurice Cox.

**NOBLE FEAR**

“We need only remind ourselves here that in all our conduct to fear to do wrong is more becoming and manly than the false courage that violates conscience. The truth is expressed in the words:

“I dare do all that may become a man:  
Who dares do more is none.”

Hence in Scripture “the fear of the ‘Lord’ is not only extolled as “the beginning of wisdom,” but also regarded as in harmony with man’s noblest self. The Puritans were fearless in their opposition to men because they feared God. No man need think he is cultivating a sentiment less than the noblest when he acts from fear of God.

It is true that “perfect love casteth out fear.” But that is a fear we do not speak of — the fear that has torment. The fear that “trembleth at God’s word” also knows God’s love, and is as full of joy as of reverence. Those who have this fear of God can fulfil the Psalmist’s exhortation and rejoice with trembling.”

Lancelot Oliver.

**LONELY? NO, NOT LONELY**

LONELY? — No not lonely

While Jesus standeth by:

His presence fills my chamber;

I know that He is nigh.

**FRIENDLESS? — No, not friendless,**

For Jesus is my friend;

I change, but He remaineth

True, faithful to the end.

**TIRED? — No, not tired,**

While leaning on His breast;

My soul hath sweet possession

Of His eternal rest.

**SADDENED? — Ah, yes, saddened**

By earth’s deep sin and woe;

How can I count as nothing

What grieved my Saviour so.

HELPLESS? – Yes, so helpless,  
 But I am leaning hard  
 On the mighty arm of Jesus,  
 And He is keeping guard.

WAITING? – Oh yes, waiting,  
 He bade me watch and wait;  
 I only wonder often,  
 What makes my Lord so late.

HAPPY? – Yes, so happy,  
 With joy too deep for words,  
 A precious sure foundation,  
 A joy that is my Lord's."

E.T. Everard Poole.  
 Selected by Leonard Morgan.

## COMMANDS OF GOD AND CUSTOMS OF MEN

Because God's commands often conflict with the customs of men, customs can be stubborn barriers to obedience. As Israel entered the Promised Land God warned: "So keep my charge never to practice any of these abominable customs which were practiced before you, and never to defile yourselves by them: I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus 18:30).

The Pharisees had a tradition which allowed them to ignore God's command to provide for their parents (Matt. 15: 1-8). Jesus asked them, "Why do you transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?"

Many years ago on a train in Holland I spoke with a woman preacher of the Dutch Reformed Church. I asked her why the practices of the Reformed Church are so different than those of the New Testament church. Her response was revealing: "Why that was 2000 years ago! Things have changed. We must adapt the church to our own times."

There are certain things in the New Testament which are incidental because of cultural conditions. But we must be extremely careful that we do not ignore commands of God just because they conflict with our customs. Maybe God does not like our customs.

In attempts to ignore commands of God by appealing to 'changed customs,' inaccurate and superficial statements are often made about customs in New Testament times. The Roman Empire was a conglomerate of many peoples of greatly differing cultures. The customs of the Jews were not at all like those of the Greeks, just as the customs of the Greeks were different than those of the Romans.

These differences are well illustrated in a statement from Bardesanes written about 180 A.D. "And what shall we say of the new race of us Christians, whom Christ at His advent planted in every country and in every region? For, lo! wherever we are, we are all called after the one name of Christ – Christians. On one day, the first of the week, we assemble ourselves together, and on the days of the readings we abstain from taking sustenance. The brethren who are in Gaul do not take males for wives, nor those who are in Parthia two wives; nor do those who are in Judea circumcise themselves; nor do our sisters who are among the Geli consort with strangers; nor do those brethren who are in Persia take their daughters for wives; nor do those who are in Media abandon their dead, or bury them alive, or give them as food to the dogs; nor do those who are in Edessa kill their wives or their sisters when they commit impurity, but they withdraw from them, and give them over to the judgment of God; nor do those who are in Hatra stone thieves to death; but, wherever they are, and in

whatever place they are found, the laws of the several countries do not hinder them from obeying the law of their Sovereign, Christ."

What was shameful in one society was not necessarily shameful in another society. Then, as now, the hardest commands to obey in all societies were those which went against local customs.

In his letter to the Corinthians Paul emphasized that what he wrote was a command of God (1 Cor. 14:37). He was not just a Jew trying to force his customs on Greeks. He was an apostle of Christ commanding peoples of all cultures to obey God regardless of their customs to the contrary.

We are astounded by the way the Corinthians were eating the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:20). But when we know what sacred feasts in Greek religions were like, we understand how they could allow the Lord's Supper to degenerate into a drunken party. Their local customs were leading them away from God's commands.

Paul also emphasized that women were not to speak in church. He said that such is shameful (1 Cor. 14:35). Was it shameful because Greek customs considered it to be shameful? No, it was shameful because an inspired apostle of Christ declared it to be shameful. In connection with this Paul asked them, "What! Did the word of God originate with you?" (1 Cor. 14:36). They did not have the right to set aside God's word for the sake of their own practices.

Women were to remain silent "as in all the churches of the saints" (1 Cor. 14:33). Then, as now, local customs varied from place to place. But Paul in no way relates this command to a local custom. It is a universal command to be obeyed by all churches.

#### WOMEN'S VEILS

Many incorrect and superficial things are also said about customs regarding veils in New Testament times.

The definition of the English word 'veil' has been greatly influenced by the teachings and practices of Islam. Because of this the word 'veil' normally calls to our mind a covering of the face. This is not, however, even the basic meaning of the English word: "a length of cloth worn by women as a covering for the head and shoulders and often also in eastern countries the face" (Webster).

The meaning of the Greek word for veil (KALLUMA) – which of course predates the Islam religion – is much broader than the present meaning of the English word 'veil.' for this reason it is more accurately translated by 'covering.' The word could be used for various kinds of coverings. As an item of clothing, it sometimes referred to a covering of the face, but in most cases referred to some type of head-covering.

But actually, this word is not even used in 1 Corinthians 11. The only place it is used in the New Testament is in 2 Cor. 3:13,14,15,16 where it is stated that Moses "put a veil (covering) over his face." If wearing a 'veil' necessarily included having the face covered it would not have been necessary to specify that the veil was over his face.

The word used in 1 Corinthians 11 are AKATAKLUPOTOS (uncovered) and KATAKALUPTOMAI (to cover). Some other word must be used to indicate what was covered or uncovered. In this case it is the head. The face is not mentioned. Neither do the words specify what is to be used as a covering.

When Paul commanded women to cover their heads when praying or prophesying, there is no indication whatever that this was because of local customs. To the contrary, local customs were probably the cause of the problem. First century customs varied on this point. Various historical writings indicate that among the Jews and Romans the custom existed for BOTH men and women to cover their heads when worshipping, and that among the Greeks NEITHER men nor women covered their heads when worshipping. (For a number of references see Kittel, Theological Dictionary of the N.T., Vol. III. pg. 562.)

God's command written by Paul did not correspond to either of these customs. Regardless of local customs the churches of God had **NO SUCH CUSTOM**, namely that men should cover their heads when praying or that women should pray with their heads uncovered (1 Cor. 11:16)

Since Paul gave no instruction about the type covering, that could vary according to local style. Greek women wore a cape with a flap which could be thrown up over their heads. In other areas the styles were different, It must also be remembered that Paul makes no requirements whatever with regard to whether women were to cover their head in public. This also indicates that the command is related to communion with God and not to local customs.

Paul's commands that women were to remain silent in the assemblies, that men were not to cover their head when praying, and that women were to cover their head when praying are all based on the relationship between God and man from the beginning (1 Cor. 11:7; 14:34 1 Tim. 2:11-14). This takes the matter completely out of the realm of local custom.

Our ideas of what is shameful cannot be safely based on local customs. The Greeks saw nothing shameful about homosexual activities. In many so-called civilized countries today people walk around naked on the beach and almost naked in the streets with no evidence of shame. God's word tells us however that certain things, such as homosexuality and nakedness, are shameful, regardless of what the customs of a certain culture may be.

A few years ago the devil was dressing his girls in mini-skirts. Many supposedly Christian women went right along with the devil's crowd.

Now he is dressing his girls in shorts, tight pants and other immodest apparel. And many supposedly Christian woman go waddling around in such attire while the supposedly Christian men do not object.

I once read an interview with a fashion designer who said they were trying to get men and women to dress alike. Their efforts to persuade men to wear women's clothing, she said, had largely failed, but they were more successful in persuading women to dress like men. Who is behind such custom? The devil knows that for a woman to wear men's clothing or for a man to wear women's clothing is not only a shame, but an abomination to God (Deut. 22:5). The devil likes for his girls to wear masculine clothing and for his boys to prance around with long hair and in feminine clothing. He wants them to be an abomination to God.

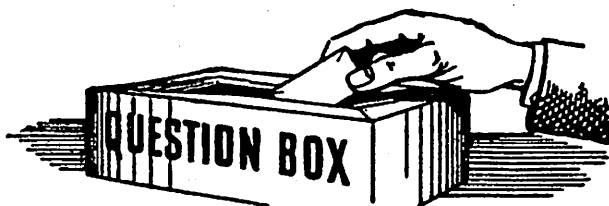
Human customs are not reliable indications of what is shameful. The unjust know no shame (Zeph. 3:5). Some even glory in their shame (Phil. 3:19). When the word of God classified something as shameful or dishonourable, we may be sure that it is so, whether local customs agree or not.

Here are examples of shameful things, according to Scripture: nakedness, both physical and spiritual (Hab. 2:15; Rev. 3:18); serving idols (Jer. 11:13); disrespect for parents (Prov. 19:26); laziness (Prov. 10:5); homosexual activities (Rom. 1:26); for Christians to go to court with one another (1 Cor. 6:5); for a man to pray with his head covered (1 Cor. 11:14); for a woman to pray with her head uncovered (1 Cor. 11:5) for a woman to shave her head (1 Cor. 11:6); for a man to have long hair (1 Cor. 11:14); for a woman to speak in the assembly (1 Cor. 14:35); unfruitful works of darkness of which it is a shame even to speak (Eph. 5:12). Our society has a custom which says that we should be allowed to speak openly about ANYTHING. But God's word teaches us that there are some things about which we should not even speak. Our society has many customs which are contrary to God's commands.

This world is in rebellion to God. Many of it's customs are inspired by the devil and do not correspond with the will of God. The customs of Christians should be different than the customs of the world because they obey the commands of God.

Sent in by Roy Davison, Wellen, Belgium.






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Conducted by  
Alf Marsden

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In 1 Cor. 13:12 we read, "Then shall I know even as also I am known".  
What do these words mean?

Teaching and instruction can be accomplished in two ways. In the first place the teacher can teach his basic message and also try to anticipate any problems which may flow therefrom. On the other hand, the teacher can teach the basic message, leave it at that, and then wait for the hearers to present the problems which will be generated when the teaching is put into practice; it seems to me that the latter method characterises Paul's experience at Corinth when he taught the Gospel there.

The letters to Corinth illustrate the anxiety that Paul had for the Church there. The saints raised complicated problems with which he had to deal, e.g., incest, factional strife, immorality, marriage, spiritual gifts, non-appreciation of conduct required in the Breaking of Bread, and associated problems relating to the resurrection. In addition to these problems, he had to divert the minds of the saints from pursuits which were wholly fleshen into the more exalted avenues of faith, hope, and love; it is into these more exalted spheres that our question falls, but in trying to answer it we must pay due attention to the context.

#### KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge can be defined as 'the theoretical or practical understanding of something or someone'. When people say, "I know that person", they usually rely on facial recognition or the physical way in which a person walks and talks. That, however, was not the sort of knowledge that Paul sought concerning his Lord. On one occasion he said, "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more" (2 Cor. 5:16). He had come to realise that even the bodily presence of the Lord could get in the way of that intimate knowledge of, and closer relationship with, his Lord; he wanted the experience of being a partaker of the Divine nature through the operation of the Holy Spirit in his life. The mistake we all tend to make is that we fail to differentiate between 'knowing of' someone, and 'really knowing' them; 'really knowing' involves understanding and many times we fall short in this area.

It seems to me that Paul's great passion was to have a **surpassing** knowledge of his Lord. In Phil. 3 he tells us that he suffered the loss of all things for Christ, but instead of feeling bitter about this he counted these things as refuse if he could but win Christ, and be found in Him, being enveloped by the righteousness of faith in Christ (vv.8,9). In v.10 he then goes on, ... "that I may know Him". What was he looking for? Well obviously he was looking to have a unique personal acquaintance with Christ and ultimately to have the experience of being totally taken over by the Lord, where the flesh did not get in the way, and where possessions and status were of no consequence whatsoever. You will recall that early in the same letter he had anticipated the complete subjugation of himself to Christ when he said " ...Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:20,21). This is the glorious concept of life in a rarified spiritual atmosphere; perhaps not many of us can attain this, but Paul is teaching us that it should be sought by all.

So that we shall not be confused, there is one other point which should be made while we are considering this theme of knowledge. In 1 Cor. 13:8 Paul says, "Whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away". It would seem to be fairly obvious that he is not talking about the surpassing knowledge of Christ which he is seeking, but of that type of knowledge and wisdom sought after by the Greeks. The wisdom and knowledge of the world, he argues, had not brought people to God, so when he brought the message of the Gospel to them he was able to write afterwards, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:1,2; but read chapter 1 also). His message is plain and unequivocal; Jesus Christ is the only reality. He died for me, and it is He of whom I want a surpassing knowledge. Oh, that this should be the spiritual objective of every Christian. Incidentally, we should note that all the special spiritual gifts mentioned in V8 were to cease or to be 'done away' (literally, made idle, inoperative). Wordly knowledge can never lead us to God: it is inoperative in that sense.

#### IN PART

We need to comment on this phrase because it has an important bearing on the question. It means literally, 'as opposed to the whole'. I shall examine two passages of Scripture in order to illustrate the meaning. In 1 Cor. 12 Paul teaches concerning the unity of the Body of Christ. He argues that God has so tempered the Body that with all of its diverse members there should be no schism in the Body; members should have the same care one for another. If one member suffers, all the members should suffer with it; if one member is honoured, all the members should rejoice with it. He then goes on, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular (or severally)". The meaning is very clear. All the members comprise the Body, but one member is not the Body, it is only 'part' of the Body. Taking the figure a stage further, each localised community of Christians is an autonomous unit and all together they comprise the whole Body, but one localised community is not the Body, it is only part of the Body.

In Rom. 11:25 we read, "... blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in". The whole gist of Paul's argument here is that the power of God can do what is contrary to natural processes. God had put the wild olive (the Gentiles) into the good olive tree, and had made the wild olive (contrary to nature) become the good olive. God can also graft the natural Israel back into the spiritual Israel if they are willing to open their eyes and see. The blindness of natural Israel was only 'in part', and it is plain that Paul envisages that some of natural Israel will respond to the Gospel and so come into the true spiritual Israel of God. We can understand that the Whole of natural Israel was not irrevocably lost because of God's elevation of the Gentiles; the Jews could still respond to the Gospel.

#### THE APPLICATION

Applying what we have learned to Paul's statement "For we know in part" we are led to the inevitable conclusion that our partial knowledge, because it is partial, is incomplete, not full; some sort of revelation is in the future. We now see through a glass, darkly, as Paul puts it. We must remember that mirrors in Corinth were made of the famous polished Corinthian brass. 'Darkly' means literally 'in an enigma'. Looking at someone face to face is far better than seeing someone distorted through an untrue mirror, good though the polished brass was. There is coming a time, however, when the perfect (literally, full-grown, mature) will come and them that which is in part shall be done away (made inoperative).

There are two ways of looking at what Paul means by 'the perfect'. If we consider the revelation given by Christ in the Gospel then we need no longer know only in part; the glorious reality of the 'mystery' has been uncovered in Him. Paul knew this

and that is why he wanted that surpassing knowledge of his Lord. The revelation was now complete and so we and he can go on to the glorious reality of what that revelation portends.

There is also coming a time, of course, when we shall be face to face with God. There are many blessings **laid out** for us while we are here on earth, but there are also many blessings **laid up** for us in Heaven, God knows all about me now, but there is coming a time when I shall stand before the Eternal God; **then** I shall know, even as I am now known; **then** the knowledge will be no longer 'in part'. It will be the culmination of the glorious revelation which began in Christ. **Then I shall know all.**

(All questions, please, to:

Alf Marsden, 20 Costessy Way, Winstanley, Wigan, Lanc. WN3 6ES)

## IF ANY MAN SPEAKETH (1 PETER 4-11)

In our search for criteria to guide us in the interpretation of scripture with regard to what we should not do in worship we must go to the scriptures themselves and not rely on our own understanding.

Let us examine some of the most well known passages on the subject of worship, to see what they say and also to make sure that we have not been reading something into them that is not there.

In the New Testament several Greek words are translated "worship." The most common are:—

**PROSKUNEO** (pros, towards. kuneo, to kiss). The emphasis in this word is on the outward performance.

**SEBOMAI** to revere. Stresses the feeling of awe towards the one worshipped.

**LATREUO** to serve, mainly to do with carrying out religious rites.

**Matthew ch. 15 vv. 1-20.**

Here in verse 9 **SEBOMAI** is used, "But **IN VAIN** (to no purpose) do they **WORSHIP** (stand in awe of) me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men." (R.V.) The word vain, **MATAIOS** means "void of result" W.E. Vine. This verse is telling us that no matter how piously these people taught human ordinances, God was not impressed. As far as I can see this particular passage does not teach that **practising** an unauthorised act of worship is sinning.

In verses 3-6 Jesus criticises the practice of human traditions which break/nulify God's commandments. v.3 "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition" and v. 6 "ye have made void the word of God because of your tradition".

With regard to the Pharisees and all human sects, Jesus said "Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up." v. 13.

From this passage we learn the following:

Teaching human ordinances is futile.

Practising human traditions which contradict God's word is sin.

God rejects man-made religious organisations.

**John ch. 44 vv.19-26.**

The Samaritans were Assyrians who occupied Samaria during Israel's captivity. circ. B.C. 730. They adopted some of the Jewish worship, accepting only the first five books of the bible. They intermarried with "stray" Jews who had been left behind when Israel were led away captive. Consequently Jews of "pure" descent, despised them (v.9).

Mount Gerizim v. 20. has a derelict temple where the Samaritans still commemorate the passover. Their copy of the Pentateuch has insertions to favour this practice, e.g. Deut. xxvii. 2-7 and xi. 30: "and it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over

Jordan ... ye shall set up these stones ... on Mount Gerizim ... and there shalt thou build an altar ... that mountain ... over against Shechem." Smith's Bible Dictionary.

PROSKUNEO, which stresses the outward action, is the word translated worship in this passage.

v. 20 & 22 The worship (outward performances) of the Jews were based on knowledge, whereas the Samaritan's outward performances were done in ignorance. That included the place where they carried out the rites as well as the nature of the rites.

v. 20 Now, neither mount Gerizim nor Jerusalem are stipulated places of worship.

v. 23 There are true worshippers and by implication, it is possible for there to be false worshippers. Those who perform correctly and those who don't. The distinctive marks of the true worshippers is that they do their performances spiritually and correctly. "the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth". God wants this kind of performer.

v. 24 The outward actions of worship must be carried out both spiritually and correctly. No alternative is permitted. "they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth".

From these verses we learn:

- (1) Mount Gerazim and Jerusalem are not mandatory places for the performance of acts of worship.
- (2) God requires the actions of worship to be carried out spiritually.
- (3) God requires the actions of worship to be carried out correctly.
- (4) We can "know" what actions of worship are acceptable.

We do not question each others' efforts to worship in an acceptable, spiritual manner. Our differences arise when it comes to deciding what, in certain instances, is correct practice. Also we all realise that we must worship "in truth". Jesus said "Sanctify them in the truth: thy word (logos) is truth". John ch. 17 v. 17. The only divinely authorised source of information on what actions of worship are required/acceptable is the word of God.

The question remains: how restrictive and how specific are the requirements in the word of God regarding what we may or may not do as worship? We evidently have more investigation to do in the word of God. In the meantime if you feel that I have misrepresented the word of God in anything I have written, so far, please bring it to my attention.

Allan Ashurst,  
60 Kenwood Road, Stretford, Manchester.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

Dec. 6 Lev. 19: 1-18 John 15: 12-27

Dec. 13 Jer. 38: 1-13 John 16: 1-14

Dec. 20 Jer. 38: 14-28 John 16: 15-33

Dec. 27 Deut. 4: 1-14 John 17

### The World Hates the Disciples

We have to be very careful with the term "world" in the Scriptures. It has various meanings throughout God's word. When Jesus spoke of the world hating his disciples, he referred to those who compose that great body of mankind which refuses to recognise the right

of God to govern their lives. In other words, "the world is human society in so far as it is organised on wrong principles, characterised by base desires, false values and egoism". So wrote C. H. Dodd. Kenneth S. Wuest described the world as "the present condition of human affairs in alienation from and in opposition to God."

We read: "They will put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time comes that whosoever kills you will think that he does God service" (16:2). Such things, of course, came to pass. Jesus foresaw their persecution as clearly as his own suffering and death. He tried to prepare

them for the hostilities ahead. The promise of the Spirit would greatly encourage them.

I am reminded of the fact that here, in the early days of Christianity there were ten major persecutions of the Christians by the pagan Romans. Cornelius Tacitus, the Roman historian, in his book *The Annals of Imperial Rome*, wrote: "First, Nero had self-acknowledged Christians arrested. Then, on their information, large numbers of others were condemned — not so much for incendiarism as for their anti-social tendencies. Their deaths were made farcical. Dressed in wild animals' skins, they were torn to pieces by dogs, or crucified, or made into torches to be ignited after dark as substitutes for daylight. Nero provided his Gardens for the spectacle and exhibited displays in the Circus ..." But, in the end, the persecutions all worked against the Roman powers because the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church. Praise the Lord!

#### The Disciples' Grief Will Turn To Joy

Jesus here spoke of the new age. What did he reveal about it? He declared that sorrow will turn to joy; that there will be fullness of knowledge; and that there will be a new relationship with God through Him.

Much could be written on joy. Alexander Campbell once said: "The first Christians always rejoiced because the moment they were baptised into Jesus Christ, they had put Him on as their Saviour. . . . They did not cease — they could not cease — always to rejoice, with joy unspeakable and full of glory. 'Tis monks and friars and monasteries that have invented the gloomy religion of the times. The first christians were commanded to rejoice always. So that the legitimate tendency of the religion of Jesus Christ is to fill all who submit to his government with peace and joy and good hope; and to cause them finally to exclaim: 'O Death, where now thy sting! O Hades, where now thy victory!'"

#### The Holy Spirit

One of the most profitable studies I have ever undertaken was on the Holy Spirit. I read countless books on Him, most of which I think, were poor in content. Notable exceptions were: *The Charismatics and the Word of God* by Victor Budgen; *Heaven Help Us* by W. Carl Ketcherside; and *Flesh and Spirit* by William Barclay.

Let me emphasize that the Holy Spirit is a personality of the Godhood. He has a mind (Romans 8:27); He has the power of knowing (1 Corinthians 2:11); He can speak (1 Timothy 4:1); and He can teach (1 Corinthians 2:13). Jesus described Him as the Comforter (John 15:26; 16:7). In the Greek the word is *Parakletos*. It means someone called in to help; someone who gives comfort and consolation in distress; someone who acts as an advocate and pleads our case; someone who encourages one who needs to cope gallantly with a perilous and dangerous situation.

A lot of people in reference to John Chapters 14-16 say: Surely the promises contained were made to the apostles. This is true because they were present as listeners, but it must be remembered that theirs was a dual role. As has been pointed out, they were both disciples and apostles. Whatever applied to them specifically as apostles and in view of their official function, belonged only to them. But whatever applied to them as disciples is equally applicable to all disciples of our Lord.

There are seven functions of the Holy Spirit. (Remember the number seven is a number of completeness to the Jews.) The Holy Spirit was and is involved in creation, revelation, incarnation, inspiration, confirmation, incorporation and transformation. This is why, I think, the seven Spirits of God are mentioned in Revelation (4:5; 5:6).

The Holy Spirit is a birthday gift from God (Acts 2:38). Without Him there is no spiritual life (Romans 8:9). But through Him we can become channels of blessing (John 7:38). And let us re-

member that He could only come after Jesus was glorified (John 7: 38-39).

I thank God daily for his indwelling Spirit. He is with me every minute of the day and every step of the pilgrim way. With His help, I can discern the truths of the Word of God (1 Corinthians 2); I can pray to the Father (Romans 8: 26-27); and I can produce His fruit in my life (Galatians 5: 22-23).

There is one thing I wish to add here. A better understanding of the Holy Spirit will produce a better understanding of the spirit in man. It was Martin Luther who once said: "Pneuma (spirit) is the highest and noblest part of man, which qualifies him to lay hold of the incomprehensible, invisible, eternal things; in short, it is the house where faith and God's word are at home."

#### Jesus Prays For Himself, His Disciples, And All Believers

There is no greater example than personal example and Christ Jesus is our example in all things. We read that Jesus prayed in the morning (Mark 1: 35); in the evening (Mark 6: 46); and all night (Luke 6:12). He prayed in public and in private. In other words, Jesus was a man of prayer.

First, in John chapter 17, Jesus prayed for Himself (1-5). We must remember that the suffering and the cross were now not far off. He needed the Father's help, comfort and strength in time of weakness. He spoke of glory and glorifying. There is glory of unity, but there is also the unity of glory. A study in depth of "glory" could prove inspirational.

Second, Jesus prayed for his disciples (6-19). They were his chosen ambassadors on earth. How Jesus loved them despite all their weaknesses! They were set apart for the Master's service. Jesus knew the tremendous difficulties to be faced, thus: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one (in purpose and effort), as we are" (17:11).

Third, He prayed for all believers (20-26). "That they all may be one; as

Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (17:21).

Let us face it, the Church of Christ is one of the most divided communities on earth. As a result, the world does not believe in Jesus. What a tragedy! Alexander Campbell in his preface to **The Christian System** wrote: "Next to our personal salvation, two objects constituted the **summum bonum**, the supreme good, worthy of the sacrifice of all temporalities. The first was the union, peace, purity and harmonious co-operation of Christians, guided by an understanding enlightened by the Holy Scriptures; the other, the conversion of sinners to God." Notice what he places first.

Division in Christ's kingdom is not once commended in the Scriptures. Indeed, division is a sin. It is carnal and immature. It is a work of the flesh. But how then is it to be overcome? I read this somewhere: "The only way to cure our divisions is to resolve never to create or promote another one, and to work to eliminate those which we have inherited."

Ian S. Davidson,  
Motherwell.

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Kitwe, Zambia:** We have encountered a Sabbatarian sect with a strong emphasis on a mix of the Old Testament and traditional African religion. In their view, men should have beards and woman dress always in white dresses. On Saturdays they danced in open air services. These were some of the practices identified with getting to heaven. A Zambian branch of this Zimbabwean based sect have become interested in the plea for the restoration of New Testament Christianity as a result of receiving New Testaments distributed by the Woodhall family on behalf of the World Bible Translation Centre in Fort Worth.

Discussions with missionary Chester Woodhall are continuing.

There were 11 baptisms during a Gospel Meeting at a village near Nyimba in Zambia's Eastern Province and a further 10 baptisms at two other places — Katete and Petauke — in Eastern Province during August, 1987.

Chester Woodhall,  
Church of Christ,  
P.O. Box 22297,  
Kitwe, Zambia.

**Stretford, Manchester:** The church now meets in the Green Hut, at 538 King's Road, Stretford, Manchester. Mini-buses from Manchester: numbers 2; P 15 and P 16 will drop you off at the door.

The Meeting times are: Bible School 10.00 a.m. Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m. Gospel Meeting 6.30 p.m.

As a church we are getting too big for the house. More non-members are attending. Please pray for souls to be saved and Jesus to be glorified. Our love to all brothers and sisters.

Allan Ashurst.

**Newtongrange :** On Saturday, 17th October we held our ANNUAL SOCIAL at Newtongrange. We met at 4 p.m. for tea and fellowship and after our opening hymn "Guide me O Thou Great Jehovah" Bro. J. Wilson (Slamanan) opened proceedings with prayer and thanksgiving. Bro. Jim Morris was unable to be chairman, and Bro. Andrew Sharp readily took his place. Bro. John McCallum led the singing in his usual robust way, his lack of good health in no way diminishing his ardour to sing God's praises.

Solos during the evening, were sung by Sister J. Mould, Sister M. Wilson and Sister G. Coventry.

The first speaker was Bro. David Scott, Tranent, who spoke on "The life that you Live" and gave us all much food for thought. A short break followed. After further congregation singing, and solos from the sisters previously mentioned, we had our second speaker, Joe Currie

(Newtongrange) who spoke on "What is a Christian" and emphasised the elements of Disciples; Saints; Priests and Soldiers. Proceedings were closed with further singing and closing prayer and benediction from Bro. L. Purcell (Motherwell). Thanks to all those who made the day such a great success.

A. P. Sharp (Sec.)

## A BIRTH

Congratulations to Brother Stephen and Sister Abigail Ashurst of 52 Buxton Road, NEW MILLS, Derbyshire, a SON — Michael, on Friday, 18th September, 1987.

## OBITUARY

**NEWCASTLE: (North Shields):** We regret to report the passing of Alexander Malcolm (68 years) who has been meeting with the church in Newcastle since his baptism four years ago. Alexander was happy in his new found faith but unfortunately befell an illness over the last year or so which has proved fatal. Bro. Alexander will be greatly missed by all, perhaps especially by the small congregation at Newcastle, and we commend all they that mourn to the God of all comfort and consolation. Alexander has now gone from his pain and discomfort and gone to be with His Saviour. We thank Bro. James R. Gardiner for officiating at the service in North Shields Crematorium on 12th October.

Joe Malcolm.

## IF YOU WERE BUSY

If you were busy being kind,  
Before you knew it you would find  
You'd soon forget to think 'twas true  
That some one was unkind to you.

If you were busy being glad,  
And cheering people who are sad,  
Although your heart might ache a bit,  
You'd soon forget to notice it.

If you were busy being good,  
And doing just the best you could,  
You'd not have time to blame some man  
Who's doing just the best he can.

If you were busy being true  
 To what you know you ought to do,  
 You'd be so busy you'd forget  
 The blunders of the folks you've met.  
 If you were busy being right,  
 You'd find yourself too busy, quite,  
 To criticise your neighbour long  
 Because he's busy being wrong.

— Selected.

**MUTUAL HELP**

The family is a school of mutual help. Each member depends on every other. Today the robust father holds the "wee laddie" on his knee, or leads him up the stairway of that schoolroom in which he is to be taught his alphabet. But there is a tomorrow coming by and by when the lisper of the A B C will be the master of a home of his own - with an infirm, grey-haired parent dozing away his sunset years in an armchair. Each helps the other when and where the help is most needed and every word and deed of unselfish love, comes back in blessings on its author. God puts helpless babes, and infirm parents into our families for this purpose (among others) that the strong may bear the burden of the weak, and in bearing them may grow stronger themselves in Bible graces.

**"SEEK YE FIRST. . ."**

In order to achieve the real peace passing understanding, we must develop

a proper perspective. Difficult though it may be to realise, God's kingdom and God's righteousness are to be given prerogative over everything else. Jesus said that all else would fall in its place when these two things are given first place (Matt. 6:33).

Sometimes our willing spirits have trouble with the willing flesh. Frequently, like Paul, we have to buffet our body to keep it under subjection. Why? Because all in us that is flesh argues vehemently that God's kingdom and God's righteousness are not the most important things. Our very reason seems to say that material things must come first. We cannot see how the more intangible, spiritual things deserve first place; nor can we realise that, when they are given first place, the secondary things will also be ours.

This is where we have a need for faith. Only by faith can we reach to the spiritual achievement to see how things must fall into the proper perspective and develop an awareness of the importance of spiritual matters. Remember, God's kingdom and god's righteousness demand first place in our lives. And remember also that the only promise we have of attaining all else comes after we have put God's business in its proper place. To reach this point, we must "walk by faith and not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7).

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