

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## BEWARE OF COVETOUSNESS

Francis Xavier, the 16th Century Jesuit Missionary, said that, in the 'confessional' every known sin had been poured into his ear, sins so terrible that he had never dreamed they existed, "But", he added, "No one has ever confessed to me *the sin of covetousness.*"

Covetousness is an ugly word for an ugly weakness, and essentially amounts to *greed*. The Greek (Pleonexia) for covetousness, embraces other subtle shades of meaning which includes, 'to defraud', 'over-reaching ambition', 'self-seeking' and 'taking advantage of fellow-men'. *Cupidity* and *avarice* are latin words which refer to the same sin. Cicero defined 'avarice' as 'the unlawful desire for things which belong to another' and includes a general tendency to the materialistic outlook - 'the accursed love of possessing.' We live in a very materialistic world yet we do not hear many 'sermons' on the evils of covetousness. We have just emerged from another Christmas and New Year, and although a little lip-service was paid, here and there, to Jesus as a mute little infant (the world prefers their Jesus to remain a speechless little baby) yet any weighty considerations of His birth were effectively edged out by the overall preoccupation with gift-hunting. The clinking of money in the tills successfully drowned out the words of some of the (more sensible) carols. A week later, Christmas was followed by the mad rush at the January Sales where, at some of the larger stores, some customers slept at the door of the shop (on the pavement: in the snow) during the previous week and where, when the doors were finally opened, there was real danger of being trampled to death in the stampede. We live in a materialistic world, all right. Doubtless we all appreciate a bargain, but surely we would hesitate to dig somebody in the ribs, or trip them up, to get it. When we consider the really vast sums of money spent on food, gifts and parties at Christmas and then reflect upon how near to God it brings the participants, we might be inclined to join with Ebenezer Scrooge and say "Bah, Humbug." Virtually everything in this world is commercialised and reduced to the terms of pounds, shillings and pence. 'Money talks' and certainly did most of the talking over the festive season.

### A lesson Hard to Learn

In Luke (chap. 12) we read that, as Jesus discoursed with the multitudes, a man out of the crowd pleaded with Jesus to come and confront his brother and force him to share the inheritance due to both of them. After explaining that He had no role as Judge or Magistrate, Jesus went on to warn His hearers, *of covetousness*. "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth". It would be difficult to get the world to accept that statement today. Indeed it is a most difficult lesson to learn, even for Christians. How

reluctant we are to acknowledge these sentiments. After all, it is freely understood that goods and possessions are symbols of status. As we know, the world judges men in terms of human values, and is impressed, mainly with the size of a man's house, the cut of his clothes, the health of his bank-balance, the make of his car, etc.

In order to reinforce this warning against covetousness Jesus immediately followed up His remarks with that well-known parable of the farmer who prospered so much that he (instead of giving some of the surplus to the poor) decided to build even bigger barns. As the farmer congratulated himself and had resolved to take his ease and "Eat, drink and be merry", God who had been looking down upon the scene, said, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee, then whose shall these things be which thou hast provided". Not content with this parable alone as sufficient illustration of His point Jesus added the abiding assurance that as God feeds the ravens He will assuredly also feed the disciples, and if God clothes the lily and the grass, He will also clothe the sons of men. "O, ye of little faith". The farmer was foolish; "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." "Beware of covetousness".

### Extremely Rich but Very Poor

Men talk today about 'controversial subjects' but can we imagine the surprise the teachings of Jesus must have caused. How could anybody be expected to love their enemies, pray for those who ill-used them, or offer the other cheek to the striker? Surely a man's life did consist of the things which he possessed, and surely it was *sensible* (if not *natural*) that a man should seek to lay up treasures on earth? It was surely flying in the face of widely held opinion, and indeed, common sense, to oppose these things; then and even now? The natural tendency of almost every human being is to become rich. Those without the means or the talent must depend on winning the football pools or engaging in crime. I asked a young man, the other day, what he wanted to become when he left school, and he replied, "A millionaire". But millionaires would be the very first to contradict public opinion and agree with Jesus on this question. Examine the lives (and especially the deaths) of any of the well-known millionaires (Henry T. Ford, Howard Hughes, Andrew Carnegie etc.) and the evidence is overwhelming indeed, that man does not live by bread alone, nor does his life consist merely of an abundance of material possessions. Its now 150 years since Andrew Carnegie was born and we have been hearing a lot lately about him in the media. As one of Scotland's famous (or notorious) sons, he was born in Dunfermline in fairly poor circumstances and went (as many still do) to seek his fortune in the U.S.A.; the 'land of opportunity'. Starting work as a bobbin-boy in a cotton factory, he became a telegraph clerk and performed such feats of memory and skill that he was given a job on the, then new, railways. He rose to eminence in the Railways (introduced 'Sleeping-cars') and after the Civil War got a foothold in the steel industry. He formed the Keystone Bridge Works and later bought out the Homestead Steel Works. Having a virtual monopoly of the supply of raw materials he began to make profits faster than he could count them. His business empire survived even the Depression of 1892 (marked by the bloody strike at the Homestead Works) and ultimately all his interests were incorporated in the United States Steel Corp. in 1901, after which he retired. Carnegie always paid low wages (the cause of the strike) and in many parts of the U.S.A. his name 'stinks' even today. Andrew Carnegie was no mere millionaire; he was a billionaire several times over. It seems that his riches did not bring him any happiness and indeed as he grew older he seemed to suffer with a troubled conscience, and sought to give his money away to good causes. He gave gold medals to citizens for heroic deeds, bought organs for churches, built Public Libraries (2,505 of them), erected Institutes of Technology, financial help to Universities, Educational facilities for negroes, Trusts and other Institutions much too numerous to

mention; and also pension funds for former employees. He wrote *The Gospel Of Wealth* (1900) and various other publications, acknowledging the great responsibility which wealth brings. There are multitudes of good 'quotes' from Carnegie. He said that the men who smile least are all millionaires and the men who become most miserable as they grow old are the ones who made making money their God. "They long to retire, but have nothing to retire to."

### Pierced Through With Many Sorrows

Life's real needs are, basically, quite simple. Paul says, "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world and it is certain that we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us therewith be content" (I Tim. 6:6-12). We don't need midwives and morticians to confirm the fact that we bring nothing into the world and take nothing out, but that does not stop us from trying to amass great possessions before we die. Paul says that he was content with 'food and raiment' and adds the warning that 'they who would be rich' fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. He also goes on to remark that it is not money, but *the love* of money, which is at the root of every evil "which some, having coveted after, have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." Paul ends his discourse (v.11) with the words, "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.." Readers, can perhaps, appreciate the truth of these words and may, themselves, know some who have indeed set out to seek riches and have ended up as described - pierced through with many sorrows and eventually drowning in destruction and perdition. But, someone asks, how rich is 'rich'? Clearly 'rich' is a relative term and means different things to different people. Obviously the 'poor' in Britain would be considered extremely rich by the 'poor' in India. The actual yardstick, or datum level, is surely unimportant, and if we prefer the pursuit of wealth (whatever conception of that term we may apply) to duty to God, and men, then we are truly engaged in a form of idolatry that can well be described as 'covetous'. Our '*affections*' are supposed to be set '*on things above*', not on the things on this earth. If we become preoccupied with material possessions, and worldly gain, our appetite for spiritual things correspondingly dwindles. A five-penny piece is a very small thing but if held close enough to our eye it can block out even the vastness of the sun. It is true that we must work to provide for ourselves and our families. Indeed, in this very same epistle (I Tim) Paul says (chap. 5:8) that if a man does not provide for his own, and especially those of his own household, he is worse than an infidel; and if a man will not work, neither should he eat. This is of course a duty but is surely a far cry from the spirit of avarice.

### Investments In Heaven

True peace and contentment then, consist not of the abundance of things *around* us but the nature of the things which are *within us*. The godly pauper is richer, by far, than the sensual millionaire surrounded by priceless treasures and his art collections. Nero fussed and fretted in his magnificent Imperial Palace, but Paul and Silas sang their hearts out, in the stocks, in a dark and dingy jail. "But godliness with contentment is great gain" says Paul. Obviously covetousness is not something limited to millionaires, or those who would be, but applies to every sphere of activity and every class of humanity. Moses warned against coveting not only a neighbour's house, wife, servant but even his cow or donkey and so covetousness is equally a sin no matter how trivial the object.

Paul could have easily have claimed financial support in his evangelistic labours but said, "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know

that these hands (as a tentmaker) have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me". (Acts 20). Jesus advocated that we should accumulate treasure; certainly He did, but not in a bank here. We should lay up treasure, in heaven, said Jesus, and how can we do that? : by good works. Each faithful and good deed we do is credited to our spiritual Bank Account in heaven. That's no doubt, what Jesus meant when he said, "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags (purses) which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth." (Luke 12:33). All good deeds, and labours for Jesus, accumulate in a heavenly purse, incorruptible, thief-proof and not subject to inflation, awaiting us at life's end. The health of that heavenly bank-balance depends, therefore, on our kindness, liberality and compassion for others while we sojourn here. Poor old Andrew Carnegie (he was poor, really) said that he wanted to retire but had nowhere to retire to. What he was really saying was that he did not seem to have much of an Account in heaven to look forward to (most of his wealth was here on earth) and perhaps that was why he started to bestow his wealth on his fellowmen - (I hope that I am not misrepresenting Mr. Carnegie).

"For a man' life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. Take heed *and beware of covetousness*". "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matt. 6:20).

EDITOR

## A CHAT WITH AN OLD-PATHER

(A chat between I. Davidson and the late Tom Nisbet)

IAN: You told me once that it was through the preaching of Charles Bailey you were converted.

TOM: Yes, that is correct. This was about the year 1909 between my father's conversion, and my mother's. Charles Bailey, was an evangelist who supported by the General Evangelist Committee of the Churches of Christ at that time, and was doing a mission at Tranent. It was while he was preaching there that I decided to be baptised. I was thirteen.

IAN: How soon after your conversion did you begin to exhort the church?

TOM: It was a long time before ever I attempted to speak publicly. I would be twenty years of age, anyway. That was when I was home on leave from France during the first World War. I can always remember what I spoke on. I spoke on the *Parable of the Good Samaritan* because I thought I was carrying out the teaching of the parable by going into the Royal Army Medical Corps to succour the wounded. I really thought that, but I have changed my mind since then.

IAN: Just before we talk about that, what age were you when you married?

TOM: We were married on 1st July, 1921. I was twenty-five and Annie was twenty-three.

IAN: How did you come to meet sister Annie?

TOM: That was interesting too. There used to be a song called *'My Sweetheart When a Boy'*. Actually, I think we were really sweethearts when we were still at school... Of course, she went to Africa with her parents about 1910 - South Africa, out to the Coulters. You see, Jimmy Coulter, the colliery manager here was a chum of Joe Guiney, Annie's father, they were chums in Slamannan, they were chums all their days. Jimmy Coulter got them to come out as he had a job for Joe in the mines in Africa. So they were about four years there and, of course, when she was there we wrote to each other. In fact, I have in my pocket-book a lock of her hair that she put in one of her letters from South

Africa. Well, they came home from Africa and she went away into domestic service. The war came on soon after they came home. In fact, they were lucky getting home because the war had started. She went into domestic service, and I went away to war. Of course, we wrote regularly to each other when the war was on, and then when I came home we took up. We were getting on in years now, you see. I was twenty-one when I came home. I had my twenty-first birthday in the army in Salonika, away out in the Mediterranean.

IAN: Why did you wait another four years to get married?

TOM: Saving up to get married, saving up. I saved like a red-hot cinder, like anything, to get married. It took all that time. Wages were not very high when the war finished.

IAN: What is the secret of a happily-married life?

TOM: Well, I don't think there is any married couple but what occasionally have their differences and possibly have a good row. We had that, but we never allowed them to linger. They were things that were put right, right away. I always believed in that. We both believed in that, but we never had a row that would make us hate each other or stop loving each other - never had a row like that. We always cared for each other.

IAN: The great advantage was that you were both Christians.

TOM: That was it! Both were Christians. I think that is the secret. We were both Christians.

IAN: You had three children. Who is the eldest?

TOM: Jack is the eldest. He was born in 1923, September, and the snow was coming down thick and heavy that day when he was born. And then Joe was born two years later, then Betty was born two years after that. 1927 Betty was born.

IAN: How did you enjoy bringing up children?

TOM: We enjoyed it very well. As a matter of fact, we always said it was the happiest years of our married life bringing up the children. It was a glorious time. It was a hard life, mind you, for wages weren't high then, but you see both of us liked children. I was always fond of children. I was always among children and when I became a Christian I became a Sunday School teacher when I was fifteen. I was a Sunday School teacher until I was sixty-five. That was fifty years. I was delighted to be among children. I only gave up the work among children because I was now going away to do full time evangelistic work, or I would be teaching yet. I always loved children and so did Annie.

IAN: She was always with you on all your evangelistic travels.

TOM: Absolutely, a tower of strength in all the evangelistic work that I did because I found I was able to give every minute of the day to the study of preaching, of doing this work. I didn't have to be concerned about any other thing, nothing about the temporal things. She sorted all that out. She went with me on most of the occasions and did all the work. Yes, she was a very, very helpful person in the evangelistic work. To tell you the honest truth, that is something I find today to be against me. I can't give my mind to the work because I have so much temporal work to do.

IAN: Now you are realising what she did.

TOM: Realising more than ever the value of the woman with the man, and how true it was when God said: "It is not good for man to be alone".

IAN: She was well loved. When you speak to people they still fondly remember Annie.

TOM: Yes, she was very much liked by everybody with whom she came in contact. She seemed to have a grand way with her in making friends. Friendship, I think, would be the key-note of her life. Even yet, church members come to me to say how much they liked her and valued her and what a fine woman she was.

IAN: What I remember of her, even in her latter days, she always had a sharp mind.

TOM: Yes, very, a very decisive woman. She was that. She could sum up people too. She had a right Guiney wit about her.

IAN: Where were the Guineys originally from? Were they Tranent people?

TOM: No, Slamannan. Annie's grandfather, Robert Guiney, came from County Antrim in Northern Ireland.

IAN: Campbell country.

TOM: In fact, our Joe has a big card with the family tree of him coming from County Antrim and settling in the Slamannan area. He worked at the colliery down the pit somewhere, either a shaftsman or something, because he met his death by falling down the shaft. Annie told me often she was just a little girl when he was killed. Every day she went to meet him and he would carry her home. She wasn't at school then. This day a miner was coming home from the pit and he picked her up and took her home. He said: "Come on ma lassie, I'll take you home today." That was the day her grandfather had fallen down the pit and was killed. He didn't want her to go any nearer the pit. That was what happened... He came under the influence of James Anderson's preaching when he was in Ireland. And when he came across here, he was an Orangeman, a very strong Orangeman. Slamannan always had an Orange Walk and he was always in it. But he came under Anderson's preaching and became a Christian. During the next Orange Walk in Slamannan, he was standing at the door and watching the Walk go by and some of them shouted to him: "Come on Bob! This is your place here in the procession!" He shouted back: "O no! Not now! All things have become new as far as I am concerned!" Words to that effect. That was Robert Guiney. That was the grandfather.

IAN: What about the father?

TOM: Joe was a fine big man too and had a very fine nature. All the Guineys seemed to have a very fine nature and I knew them all. They had a very fine nature and that had passed to Annie. You know, I can trace that in my own children. You talk about having a good report from without! There wasn't a person in this town who would say a bad word about Joe Guiney. They wouldn't listen to anything ill about him. O, what a great name he had - even down the pit! Yes he was a very fine man and was superintendent of the Sunday School for many years until I took it over from him. He had a great mind for exposition. You know, our brethren were very, very clever at that in those days. I never hear an exposition today like I heard in those days... We had a man called Jimmy Simpson who was married to a woman called Wright. You could not get a better expositor of the scriptures, and that man was a coal miner. He was a treat. You know, Ian, they would just go up to the platform with their Bible, read a chapter and then start at the first verse and expose every verse right through.

IAN: When you read the records of the Slamannan District, nearly all the men were miners.

TOM: Aye, they were nearly all miners; yet they had that ability to study and to give an exposition and an exhortation. It was wonderful to listen to them.

(To be continued)

## GLEANINGS

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

**"My grace is sufficient for thee."**

"My grace is sufficient for thee" - sublime and satisfying answer! How much better than the literal granting of the apostle's request! Had the pleading of those sensitive nerves been literally yielded to, what losers would Paul and ourselves have been! Paul

would have lost more power than pain; and how many thoughts that have since inspired patient heroism would never have come to us! Such epistles as Paul's could only have their birth in the travail of trial. Paul's prayer was sincere and intense, but it left the higher spiritual altitudes unscaled. To have the thorn removed was poor compared with having its presence sanctified. To have the "messenger of Satan" taketh away was poor compared with having him transformed into a "ministering spirit". Paul wanted the thorn away; whereas Christ wanted to show how grapes may be gathered of thorns. God's choicest flowers oft bloom on bitter stems. "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth fruit". "

J. Sidlow Baxter

### THE NEED OF PATIENCE

"We have need of patience in our dealings with other people. It will help us to be patient with others, especially with those whose good we are seeking, to remember what trouble we are having with ourselves. And again, after all, we do not know what they have to contend with. We are all of us mysteries and secrets to one another. Often we do each other a great injustice. I have told elsewhere of a Scottish professor who called upon a student to stand up and "construe". "Hold your book in the other hand," said the professor. The student went on reading, apparently paying no heed. "Do you hear me, sir?" The student ceased reading, still holding the book as before, but now having his head cast down. "Sir!" shouted the professor. Whereupon the student raised his other arm - from which the hand had been cut off! It is said that the professor did all that a man can do who has done an irreparable thing. He rushed from his desk, and going down on his knees before that maimed lad, in the sight of all the class, pleaded, "Will you ever be able to forgive me?" We had better take the deep and holy view of our fellow-men."

John A. Hutton

### "Not Right to ignore Me."

" "But it was not right", you say "he had no business to ignore me, to snub me, to treat me as he did. And it was most unjust; that other person ought not to have been placed over my head." That may be perfectly true, and we make no excuse for wrong and injustice. But you are a disciple of Jesus (I am speaking only to such), and I ask you - if you had come, like your Master, "NOT TO BE MINISTERED UNTO but to minister", would you be feeling so sore and angry and jealous? The trouble is, you came to be ministered unto."

J. H. Horsburgh

### ARE WE THE SLAVES OF JESUS CHRIST?

"Are we the slaves of Jesus Christ? then we shall be "heartily contented that He appoint us our work; good servants, when they have chosen their Master, will let their Master choose their work and will not dispute His will, but do it." Are we the slaves of Jesus Christ? then our time is not our own, it is not our own substance that we squander in our idle moments, - we are wasting our Lord's goods. Are we the slaves of Jesus Christ? then we can discern the glory of the menial task, the blessedness of being permitted to "wash the feet" of the outcast sinners who are welcome guests at His table?

J. G. Tasker

### WHICH LEG TIRES?

" "The leg you use must grow very tired", remarked an onlooker to a potter working at his wheel. "No, it's the leg that does nothing that gets tired," was the reply." T.W.T.

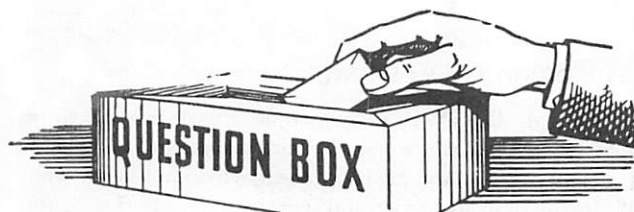
### AN IMMUTABLE FOUNDATION

"A good cause, a good calling, and a good conscience will make good courage, and

they are all necessary for a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Let a man be fully persuaded that he is called of God to a work, and it will endue him with a might that is more than human. When a man feels that the Spirit of God is upon him, when he is commissioned from the Deity, credentialled from heaven, mailed in the panoply of Christ, then, though might may stand against right, the many against the few, yet is he identified with almighty power, has his feet on an immutable foundation, and strikes with the force of an omnipotent decree."

Peter Mackenzie

selected by LEONARD MORGAN




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Conducted by  
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**"In 1st Corinthians, chapter 14, Paul often uses the phrase "In the Church" referring to the breaking of bread, but when we (the ecclesia) meet together, other than upon the first day of the week - e.g. Gospel meetings, Bible studies, etc, is it the church, and, if so, do the same rules apply, e.g. 'Let your women keep silent in the Church?'"**

During the whole of the 37 years that I have been in the Church, questions similar to this one have been asked with alarming regularity. It is quite evident to me that they have not been answered in such a way as to convince *everyone*, otherwise the questions would not recur. Do differences in interpretation arise because each local congregation believes it has the right to interpret as it wants to because of its autonomy? Is it acceptable that there should be different interpretations of difficult passages of Scripture? Or is it because the passage of time, and increased social awareness, make us want to interpret first century statements to fit in with twentieth century requirements? These questions, and others, have obviously influenced the minds of many Christians. Is it really possible to make definitive statements on some of the questions involved, or must we be content with that irritating expression, "We must agree to differ? What we *can* do is to let the Bible speak to us, and then to reason as logically as we can on the points it makes.

### Church and Congregation

The Greek word for 'Church' is ECCLESIA and means, 'assembly', a body of people 'called out'. Hence, when Jesus said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church" (Matt. 16:18), He meant that world-wide assembly of people who were called out of the world by the Gospel. This Church is referred to in other places as the 'Body of Christ' and comprises all Christians everywhere. Christ is Its Head.

The N.T. also refers to 'Churches', in the plural. This does not mean the denominational groups as we know them today, but rather the 'local' congregations of Christians, designated 'local' because of the district or locality in which they assembled for worship and other Christian activities. Such congregations or 'assemblies' were overseen by Elders and Deacons, and were completely autonomous. Nevertheless, they were still under the overall Headship of Christ. There was no earthly hierarchy.

This Divine arrangement has never been changed. The questioner quite rightly refers to 'we (the ecclesia)' as applied to Christians today, in any locality, who meet in 'assembly' to worship God and to promote His work here on earth. The Bible says



nothing about popes, cardinals, archbishops, synods, and the like, which form the hierarchical structures of most religious groups, and consequently we do not refer ourselves to such when we seek the Will of God. Our only standard is the Bible.

### The Christian Hierarchy

It is necessary for us to state this so that we can answer the latter part of the question. Paul gives the hierarchical structure quite plainly in 1 Cor. 11:3 when he states to the Christians at Corinth, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God". In his comments on the Greek word for 'head', W.E. Vine says, "It is used metaphorically, of the authority or direction of God in relation to Christ, of Christ in relation to believing men, of the husband in relation to the wife" (Exp. Dic. of N.T. Words).

Quite clearly, the Apostle is talking about a hierarchy of *authority*; God, Christ, man, woman, in that order. There are many who seek to alter that order, especially twentieth century woman. To acknowledge and live according to that order does *not* mean that God, Christ, and man, are anti-feminist. The woman has an important, nay, unique role in God's arrangement of things. It was of woman that Christ was born in the flesh. She, as a wife, is a help suitable for the husband. *He* must love her as Christ loved the Church, i.e., he should lay down his life for her if necessary. She stands alongside the man, helping, prompting, advising, upholding; and under her benign care the family is bound by the sweet cords of love and devotion. Let no one say that women in our Western society suffer the same sort of indignities and restrictions as their sisters may do who live under strict Islamic law.

What, then, is so significant about the Christian hierarchy? It is this; in the Church the woman should not usurp the authority of the man. God set the order, and for *anyone* to change that order without the express approval of God is unthinkable. But given the status of woman from God, why on earth should she want to. Surely it can only mean a lack of respect for God, and who would want to be guilty of that?

### When does the Church meet?

We have said that the Church, in its local context, is the assembly of saints in any given locality. There are some who say that the only meeting spoken of in the Bible is the meeting for the Breaking of Bread, or, as the questioner infers, the meeting(s) held on the first day of the week. In most of our assemblies we have, on the first day of the week, a Bible School, the Breaking of Bread, and a Gospel Meeting. In some assemblies the Bible School seems to be a 'rest' period for most of the saints; we expect a good turn-out for the Breaking of Bread; and 50% for the Gospel Meeting seems a satisfactory numerical objective. So I ask, when does *the Church* really meet. According to what is said by some, are two of these meetings unscriptural anyway?

For meetings held on days *other than* the first day of the week, the questioner asks, "do the same rules apply, e.g., let your women keep silent in the Church". Well, let's employ what seems to be, on the face of it, a silly little argument. If a local assembly has, say, forty members and they all meet for the Breaking of Bread, then the general consensus would be that *the Church* then meets. If those same forty members meet during the week for a Gospel Meeting or a Bible Study session, by what strange reasoning is it thought that this *does not* constitute the Church meeting together? If it is agreed that such a meeting *does* constitute the Church meeting together, then why should the same rules *not apply* in midweek as they do on the first day, whatever those rules are assumed to be? Where in God's Word does it say that the hierarchical structure of the Church is altered for non-first day meetings? Which Solomon has the wisdom to categorise meetings into worship and non-worship? If I study God's Word so that I can live my life by it, am I not then worshiping the God who gave it so that my steps might be guided aright? Ah, but some will say, if only *twenty* of your forty meet

for Bible Study, then how can you say that *the Church* is meeting together, and does not this nullify the rules which apply when *all* meet together? The only answer to that argument is that we may as well dispense with *all* rules governing the assembly of saints, for we seldom get all the Church members meeting together at any given time.

Let us be sure what we mean. If the Church is called together for the Breaking of Bread, Bible Study, or whatever, then the ones who respond to that call constitute the Church at that time. The question which Church Leaders ought, I believe, to ask themselves is this; 'does the Word allow for meetings *ancillary* to the Church to be held (I look on the Bible School as ancillary to the Church). If it doesn't, then we should take a fresh look at our activities. Perhaps, also, we should announce that *the Church* will meet together for Bible Study or whatever.

There can be little doubt as to what Paul teaches in his first letter to Corinth. In 1 Cor. 11, under the hierarchical structure which he sets out, women should *not* meet with their heads uncovered. In the same manner he asserts that some of the women were creating disturbance in the public worship by their speech (1 Cor. 14:34). The same verb is used by Paul in v28 (speakers in tongues), and in v30 (prophets). There is no doubt as to what the Apostle means. In the Church the women are not allowed to speak nor to ask questions. They are to do that *at home*. The question which has to be asked is this; were Paul's commands meant for specific conditions which applied in Corinth at that time, and do they not apply wholly now? What we see in some assemblies of saints leads us to the view that some Church leaders have concluded that the commands do not apply for all time, and on all occasions. Be that as it may. There is one thing which is absolutely clear; the hierarchical structure as laid down by Paul *has not changed*, nor I believe can it. This being the case, I would conclude that *any* meeting, for any purpose whatsoever, deemed to be a meeting of *the Church*, that at such a meeting the same rules should apply as at all other meetings.

The question of women's meetings raises further issues in my mind, but perhaps this can be the subject of a further question.

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

## THE NEW TESTAMENT TEXT

I read, with keen interest, the recent two-part article by Graeme Pearson, from Glasgow, and, in particular, would like to say that dealing with the last part of the sixteenth chapter of Mark, is like skating on thin ice, mainly to those young in faith, who are feeding upon the sincere milk of the word. There are so many pro's and con's regarding these verses.

B. W. Johnson in "Peoples's New Testament with notes" writes:

"The remainder of the chapter is not found in the Vatican or Siniatic Greek MSS but is found in the Alexandrian. These are the three and most important MSS. Some hold these verses to be a later addition, but as they are found in all the most ancient versions they must have been a part of Mark's Gospel when the First Century ended. Schaaff, Plumtre, Olshausen Lockman and others regard them genuine, while other critics consider them doubtful. A circumstance in their favour is that the Vatican MS. has a vacant space for them. It seems probable that in an early copy, therefore, they were omitted for some cause by a copyist who left a space for them, but did not afterward fill it, and that the Siniatic MS was made from the mutilated copy. It is clear that verse 8 was not designed to conclude Mark's Narrative".

I feel therefore, that in order to prevent the entry of doubt into the mind concerning the Word of God, it is better to analyse the sixteenth chapter itself, which will, most certainly cause no such difficulty

**Verses 1-8** describing the testimony of the Resurrection to its first visitors.

**Verses 9-13** describe how the testimony of those who saw Jesus after He was raised from the dead was received. Note

**Verse 11** "And they, when they had heard that He was alive, and had been seen of her, BELIEVED NOT.

**Verse 13** "And they went and told it to the residue:  
NEITHER BELIEVED THEY THEM.

**Verse 14** Jesus manifests Himself to the disciples "And He upbraided them for their unbelief and hardness of heart because THEY BELIEVED NOT THEM WHICH HAD SEEN HIM AFTER HE WAS RISEN.

**Verses 15-18** Jesus commissions His Disciples  
Promises that signs will follow  
THEM THAT BELIEVE

**Verse 19** Suggests that the commission and conversation took place during the forty days that He was with them until His ascension to Heaven.

Some religious bodies use verses 17-18 as applying today and claim that they are able to work miracles. This cannot be, it applied to the apostolic age alone. Miracles were for the confirming of the Word which was only then in the process of being written. Miracles continuing would cease to be miracles and would become every-day happenings. God has confirmed His Word and it needs no further confirmation.

**Verse 20** "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, The LORD WORKING WITH THEM, AND CONFIRMING THE WORD WITH SIGNS FOLLOWING."

There is no difficulty but that we make ourselves. If in sincere faith we meditate upon the word of God, Praying for His guidance and understanding, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, light will break upon our darkness and lead us in the way that leadeth to Life Eternal.

Tom Kemp, Hindley

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

### MARCH 1986

2—Num. 14:26-45	Hebrews 3
9—Psalm 95	Hebrews 4
16—Exodus 28:1-12	Hebrews 5
23—Genesis 22:1-19	Hebrews 6
30—Genesis 14	Hebrews 7

### APOSTLE AND HIGH PRIEST

Christians from Jewish families stood in a unique position one of most solemn importance. God's chosen people, descendants of Abraham in covenant relationship, receivers of a land, a law and kings and prophets, a priesthood. Finally upon them came the awesome responsi-

bility of a visit from the Son of God. No wonder God ordained a letter especially for them - and of course useful for all other Christians. The emphasis is upon the two great authorities. He is the supreme messenger and the supreme intercessor, both demanding the closest attention and warning based upon the hardening of heart previously manifested with disastrous results. The High Priest stood for the Jews in the presence of God - the Holy of Holies.

### THE CHRISTIANS' REST

The magnificent Temple, the splendid ritual still stood and seemed to stand for God but its glory had departed. Rest must be found in Christ alone. The "rest" in Canaan had passed too. The Christian's hope is a heavenly reality. There is not a

human priest in whom to confide. We may confide of course with one another but our High Priest has passed into the heavens there to plead at the throne of God for us. We may rest with confidence upon Him (4:3). God's faithfulness and the Saviour's power and sympathy give us confidence (4:14-16). The material objects of worship and sacrifice have ceased but the heavenly things of which they are a shadow cast before are real.

### PAST AND PRESENT PRIESTHOOD

In all ages there has been priesthood because in all ages there has been worship. It would appear that the sons of Adam offered sacrifice, each individual for himself, but that some men were chosen as time went on, to be set apart for the purpose to act for others, as was the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron, to release others for other duties. God certainly appointed some or there could not be "an Order" as in the case of Melchizedek by divine appointment. Heathen priests and priestesses abounded in the world of A.D. 1 - before and after. Certainly believers in the Lord God Almighty would accept only divine appointment. The ante-diluvian patriarchs must have acted so, and Melchizedek had God's approval. The world drifted away from personal godliness but through the sacrificing and offering of the Son a new relationship is appointed - every Christian a priest, making his own priestly service and seeking to draw others closer to God through the gospel. This drastic change is forecast in Jer. 31:33. Our writer feared for his countrymen that the changes would be difficult to appreciate fully, and thus he lays stress upon the difficult points.

### HARD TO ACCEPT?

He lays stress upon the hardness of hearts which was so opposite to obedience and reason. Forty years of miraculous sustenance in the wilderness ("day by day the manna fell, Oh, to learn this lesson well" 411 1908 book). Note repetition "harden not your hearts." (3:12 & 13; 4:11). Again is the fear expressed that

discouragement will hinder obedience (5:12 & 13). They had had to bear persecution avoidable if they sink back into Judaism. Are not verses 3 to 8 of ch. 6 some of the most terrifying words of scripture? The following assurances are the most encouraging (13 to 20).

### MELCHIZEDEK

I will never cease to pray for guidance in earnestly seeking to understanding the scriptures. There are some points on which I confess uncertainty. One is how to understand what we read of this character. The happy issue is, however, that he was a great man in God's service, and that Abraham acknowledged him to be so, and paid up. The two virtues, we are assured, he showed were righteousness and peace. It seems clear also that God approved his priesthood. He is honoured because he is identified in his priesthood with Jesus our righteousness. Hebrews must respect him though outside the race.

### "MIXED WITH FAITH" (4:2)

Hidden in the Greek words is a parable. When we eat, saliva is mixed with food in the mouth while it is also pulverised by the teeth, and sent on to the stomach to be treated by gastric juices, in preparation for the astounding process of metabolism. It is said that every particle of the bodily organism is completely replaced every seven years - I speak from memory, check it! May we suggest this is a lesson in: how we should deal with the divine messages - "the word which they heard" (see also verse 12 in the same chapter.) If we are to avoid a mere apprehension of so many words let us not harden our hearts as in the provocation (3:8).

### HEBREWS

There has always seemed to me to be a special power in the language of this letter, felt even through translation into a different language. Some scholars have experienced this, and the general charm of the A.V. is perhaps due to the persecution through which many of the translators passed in order to make "the

ploughboy know the Bible as well as the Pope". BIBLE SOCIETY reports confirm 4:12 today. I take this opportunity to add a comment suggested by recent studies in Romans and Galatians the special position of the Jewish converts in the early days of the church. They formed a tiny minority of the Jewish nation but a powerful influence for moral purity among the heathen converts, thanks to the divine law which they must regard as having been replaced by grace. It was their schoolmaster in a special sense demanding the unselfish adoption of an even higher standard of continued spiritual growth - and in many cases the bearing of a doubled burden of persecution - from the flesh and the devil.

R. B. Scott

### LIFE'S CLOCK

The clock of life is wound but once,  
 And no man has the power  
 To tell just when the hands will stop,  
 At late or early hour.  
 To lose one's wealth is sad, indeed,  
 To lose one's health is more;  
 To lose one's soul is such a loss,  
 And no man can restore.  
 The present only is our own,  
 Live, love, toil with a will;  
 Place no faith in "Tomorrow"  
 For the clock may then be still.

### THE CLERGY

Why should we ape the popular clergy?  
 There is not on earth such another feeble,  
 ineffective and helpless set of men. After  
 all their pretensions, their high-sounding  
 titles and claims, they will lay hold of  
 Moody and sankey or any other revivalist  
 without a ministerial claim, or even a  
 membership in any church, who is no-  
 thing and preaches nothing in particular,  
 and hang to his skirt to gather a few  
 fragments of his revival, and build them  
 into some sectarian party. They have no  
 power to save the people. There is but  
 one plea in the world in the name of  
 religion deserving of any consideration:  
 the glorious plea for a return in all things

to the original ground where the apos-  
 tles and first followers of Jesus Christ  
 stood. We cannot be too radical, too near  
 the Lord.

1878, *Ecclesiastical Observer*

### EVERY CHRISTIAN A MISSIONARY

"I feel that we have really limited the effectiveness of the church by our attitudes toward mission work.

Which members of God's kingdom are *not* missionaries? Why sell the church short by giving an arbitrarily selected figure like 200 as the number of missionaries we have in the world? Christians in the armed forces number in the thousands... so why do we not say thousands?

I feel that the word missionary has given us a crutch. Instead of being a kingdom of priests accepting our priestly responsibilities we have turned the gospel message over to a few special missionaries. On one hand we claim that we make no distinction between clergy and laity but on the other hand we actually distinguish and give special titles to our brethren who preach abroad.

I firmly believe that if we called *all of us* missionaries or if we just forgot that name and stuck to Christians, Saints, Priests, Ministers, Slaves, etc. we just might spark a response in the minds and spirits of the thousands who do not feel any personal responsibility to preach the gospel either by word or unique deed."

Comment of a missionary in *Mission Strategy Bulletin* March-April 1972.

### YOU CAN'T FOOL GOD

You can fool the helpless public,  
 You can be a subtle fraud,  
 You can hide your little meanness,  
 But you can't fool God.  
 You can advertise your virtues,  
 You can self-achievement laud  
 You can load yourself with riches,  
 But you can't fool God.  
 You can criticize the Bible,  
 You can be a selfish clod,  
 You can lie, swear and gamble,  
 But you can't fool God.  
 You can magnify your talent  
 You can hear the world applaud,  
 You can boast yourself somebody,  
 But you can't fool God.

*Sentinel of Truth*

## DON'T LOOK AT IT

I once learned a lesson from a dog we had. My father used to put a bit of meat, or biscuit, on the floor and say "No" to the dog, and the dog knew that he must not touch it. But he never looked at the meat. No: he seemed to know that if he looked at it the temptation would be too great, so he always looked steadily in my father's face for further instructions. A gentleman was dining with us one day, and said, "There' a lesson there for us all. Never look at temptations. Always look away and into the Master's face."

Yes: this is the only safe way. When temptation comes to us to do that which is evil we may depend that it comes from the devil. Our Master says, "No" and so we should look away, and look into our Master's eyes. Avoid the evil thing; pass it by on the other side. "But flee these things" says the apostle. In times of trial let us look to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. We shall be more than conquerers.

## DUTY AND INCLINATION

'Stay at home,' said Inclination,  
'Let the errand wait.'  
'Go at once,' said Duty firmly,  
'Or you'll be too late.'

'But it snows,' said Inclination,  
'And the wind is keen.'  
'Never mind all that,' said Duty,  
'Go, and brave it, Jean.'

Jean stepped out into the garden,  
Looked up at the sky,  
Cloudy, shrouded, dreary, sunless,  
Snow unceasingly.

'Stay!' again said Inclination.  
'Go!' said Duty, 'Go!'  
Forth went Jean with no more waiting,  
Forth into the snow.

You will smile if now I tell you  
That this quiet strife,  
Duty conquering Inclination,  
Strengthened all her life.

Sometimes on a little skirmish,  
Hangs a nation's fate;  
Very much hung on that skirmish  
At the garden gate.

## GEMS OF TRUTH

'Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth' — Jesus

If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and continue to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury our glory in profound obscurity.  
— Daniel Webster.

The last business of Christ's life was the saving of a poor penitent thief. — D. L. Moody.

Jesus did not sacrifice principles nor an opportunity to do good that he might conform to public opinion.

A religion that never suffices to govern a man will never suffice to save him. That which does not distinguish him from a sinful world will never distinguish him from a perishing world. — Gospel Broadcast.

Never was a truer saying: most sinners have more pain and difficulty to get their souls damned than the righteous have, with all their cross-bearings to get to the kingdom of heaven. — Adam Clark.

If anything is right, let us do it first; then others will be willing to follow our example. We must do, and then teach others to do. This is the rule that our Master followed. 'The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach' — W. Claytus Anderson.

The way to keep your religion is to keep it busy. — Truth in Love.

The true religion of Jesus Christ our Saviour is that which penetrates, and which receives all the warmth of the heart, and all the elevation of the soul, and all the energies of the understanding, and all the strength of the will. — Gospel Broadcast.

In view of the value of the soul and because of its intelligence and immorality, we should seek to save it. The eyes and ears are but the windows of the soul. Open them and let the thoughts of heaven and the fears of hell have entrance for consideration, and then make a choice. Race away from the broad way, and seek the narrow way. Desire heaven, live for it, pray for it, and be zealous and work for it. — L. O. Sanderson.

## A FIFTY YEAR OLD DECISION

People do not *accidentally* attend worship for over fifty years without missing one worship service for twenty years. They must have *planned* always to attend. Soon after I obeyed the gospel in 1909, I read of an old brother who had not missed going to worship a single Sunday in 41 years. That story caused me to resolve and to purpose in my heart that I would never miss the worship on a single Lord's Day as long as I lived, if possible to attend. I have missed only four Sundays in over 50 years and then it was because of illness.

Once I had made that decision, the question has not come up as to whether I would attend the church services or not. In fact, I did not decide last Lord's Day to go to worship, nor the Sunday before. That decision was made *more than fifty years ago*. I believe that it is a sin for any member of the church to miss the worship unless he, or she, is quite unable to attend. The very nature of our religion is such that those who feel this is a burden *need to be converted*.

Bro. Gus Nichols.

From: "The Light"

## IT'S REWARDING

There are three kinds of giving: *grudge* giving, *duty* giving, and *thanks* giving. Grudge giving says, "I hate to"; duty giving says, "I ought to", thanks giving says, "I want to". The first comes from constraint, the second from a sense of obligation, and the third from a full heart. Nothing much is conveyed in grudge

giving, since the gift without the giver is bare. Something more happens in duty giving, but there's no song in it. Thanks giving is an open gate into the rewards.

## THINK ON THESE THINGS

1. Robert E. Lee never promoted a man who drank. He said: 'I cannot consent to place in the control of others one who cannot control himself.'
2. Abraham Lincoln said: 'The saloon is a cancer on humanity, eating at its vitals and threatening its destruction.'
3. 'Drink does more harm than war, pestilence, and famine.' — W. E. Gladstone.
4. "Eighty per cent of the suffering of the families of the common labourers of Chicago was wiped out by prohibition" — Evangeline Booth.
5. 'The drunkard drinks alcohol to escape the hard realities of life. His wife does not escape, his children do not escape, society does not escape, and in the end the drunkard does not escape.'

## OBITUARY

**Motherwell:** It is with deep regret that we report the passing of our much beloved sister May Stevenson on Monday, 16th December, 1985, at the age of 75 years. She was baptised in 1928, and through her long and faithful Christian life remained a credit to the church, faithful in attendance, and faithful in being a fine example to all her brethren.

She loved her Saviour dearly, and ever endeavoured to live in accordance with His word, and in doing all to be well-pleasing unto Him. She was a friend to all and the church here will certainly miss her.

We commend her loved ones, and all others who mourn her passing, to our heavenly Father's care. The Funeral Service on Thursday 19th December was conducted by Bro. Hugh Davidson.

W. J. Purcell, (Sec)

## COMING EVENTS

## I WONDER

The 96th Anniversary Meeting will take place, God willing, on Saturday 5th April 1986, at 6.30 p.m. at Oxford Street Chapel, Oxford Street, Brighton.

Visiting Speakers:

R. B. Scott (Kentish Town)

R. Holden (Oxford)

Tea will be served at 5.00 p.m.

Eric Daniell (Sec)

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RUSSIA has investigated her juvenile delinquency problem, and traced the trouble to the demoralising influence of the cinema. To remedy it, Soviet children of high-school age will not be allowed to attend cinemas during the entire school age.

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*For thinking before speaking, for forgiving and forgetting, for being generous to the poor and kind to the needy, for looking before leaping, for living a square and fair life, for doing your level best — for all these you will never be sorry.*

I wonder what makes some children of God think they would enjoy themselves in Heaven, spending eternity with God, the Lord Jesus, and the redeemed of all ages when it appears they do not enjoy spending an hour or two with Him and His brethren on the Lord's day in worship.

I wonder how some members think the voice of our Lord will sound so sweet at the judgment, when His voice through His written word holds no interest for them at all.

I wonder how people think they can expect to escape the wrath of God in the day of judgement, when they live lives of indifference, neglect, disobedience and sin during this worldly sojourn.

I wonder how people expect to reap that which was not sown, or how they expect to harvest life while sowing death or how they can lay up heavenly treasures but never make any deposits, or how they can expect to grow spiritually but never engage in spiritual exercises.

H. SPURLOCK

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“WE concentrate on our failures, not our faith — on our problems, not our power.”

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