

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## CONFORMED OR TRANSFORMED

It's Wimbledon time again and I've just been watching (with some satisfaction) John McEnroe surprisingly knocked out at Quarter-final stage in three straight sets. Apparently, McEnroe's lack of form may be due to the fact that his new girlfriend, Tatum O'Neal, has taught him that there's more to life than tennis. Well, hopefully, we all live and learn. Many years ago a good brother suggested to me that watching tennis was *worldly*, and although I did not agree, I still remember what he said each time I watch tennis. Watching T.V. can be 'Worldly', of course. I suppose it depends upon *what* we watch, *why* we watch and the *amount of valuable time* we spend watching. Instead of *doing* things, we end up merely *watching* things. In a world which is coming a close second to Sodom and Gomorrah, I suppose it is ever timely to consider our position and see if we are becoming more 'worldly' and in danger of being indistinguishable from the world in general. How worldly are we? Paul to the disciples in Rome said, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And *be not conformed* to this world, but *be ye transformed* by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (12:2). I daresay Paul's call to disciples to present themselves as *living sacrifices* would not be popular everywhere, and neither shall it be today, but such a thing, Paul says, is but a *reasonable* service. He calls upon church members not to be conformed to this world but rather to be *transformed*. There is increasing pressure upon us, is there not, in every department of life, to conform to the world's standards. As the world's standards plummet there is always the danger that our standards will take a similar direction. "Well, everybody does it" seems to be the current slogan as a good reason for all to comply. "Well, everybody 'fiddles' their Income Tax; Everybody looks after 'No, 1'; Everybody 'sleeps around'; Everybody 'gets divorced'; etc. etc." It is, of course easier to conform than to transform. It is much easier to go with the tide than to swim against it. It is much more popular to be 'one of the lads' than to be 'a stick in-the-mud'. Those with young children at school will know, much better than I do, of the temptations their children undergo, ranging from bad language to 'birth' pills; from promiscuity to 'glue sniffing'. As Jesus said, "*the world* is on the broad road to destruction and many there be which go in thereat," and so it behoves us (from time to time) to consider whether our feet are still firmly treading that narrow way which leadeth unto life. Jesus also said "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon". John said, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, (the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,) is not of

the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (1 John 2:15-17). we must 'love not' the world.

### Warnings Against Worldliness

If we ever completely succumb to 'worldliness' it will not be in ignorance, for the scriptures abound with solemn warnings against it and there are examples galore of men whose lives have made shipwreck on those same 'worldly' rocks. "For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul." This familiar statement from Jesus should knock the bottom out of worldly ambition, but usually only for a short while. Again, Jesus said, "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." (Luke 21:34). Paul urged the Colossians to "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth." Again, Paul, in writing to Titus links *ungodliness* with *worldliness* when he says, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." We notice here, too, that the opposite to worldly living is to live *soberly, righteously, and godly* in this present world. 'In this present world' indicates that Paul holds no brief for forming Christian communes to avoid the evil world, or to live and learn in a 'Christian Atmosphere', but would have us rub shoulders with 'all kinds' and survive. The cloistered serenity of the average monastery is not really a great test of steadfastness - honours are only to be won in the 'trenches'. Paul accepted that we had to come into contact, and even keep company with evil people, "else" says he, "ye must needs go out of the world". (1 Cor. 5:10). The apostle James warned that "the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God". (James 4:4). There is, then, as can be seen from these random examples, no shortages of advice and admonition on the subject.

### What World?

Is it not greatly surprising, when we consider all that is, and has been, said about 'worldlings' and 'worldliness' that the former *never* appears in the N.T. and the latter only twice? One such reference is to the "Worldly sanctuary" of the O.T. (Heb. 9:1) and the other to "worldly lusts" (quoted above Titus 2:12). The word 'worldliness' never appears. What is it about 'the world' that we should 'love not'. Did not God make a wonderful world - a most beautiful and marvellous creation? Why should we be God's enemy if we love the world (that He made)? Obviously the term 'world' is used in varying senses in the scriptures and we must carefully differentiate. When John says, "*Love not the world*, neither the things that are in the world" he obviously means a different 'world' from the one he mentions (in 3:16) when he said, "For God so *loved the world*." Again the term 'world' quite often refers to the literal globe, as when Jesus said, "Go ye *into all the world*." Clearly we have no reason to hate this amazing orb upon which we live. It would seem, therefore, that we can love the planet, (and certainly we ought to love all the people on this planet) but must also avoid all the evils of human behaviour and material pursuits.

Thus when John says, "Love not the world" he is talking about 'worldly' affairs such as prosperity, riches, pleasures, pastimes and pursuits which seduce us away from God, and which are obstacles to the cause of Christ. We are *all*, as far as I can see, 'worldlings' (i.e. 'of the world') and surely most pleasures can only be described as 'worldly' (i.e. 'of the world').

### What is 'Worldliness'?

Enjoying a meal; listening to good music; reading a book; going for a swim; playing with the children etc. etc. are all worldly pleasures. What else can they be?

There is nothing spiritual about ham-and-eggs but they are very enjoyable. Thus, in my view, most pleasures are 'worldly' but some are legitimate and allowable, and some are unwholesome and are to be avoided. I believe it is impossible to define the boundaries of 'worldliness' and each person must ultimately decide for themselves what is, and what is not, included. It will vary with regard to *our geographical part of the world* and it will vary with reference to *the century* in which we live. For instance it was shameful in the Victorian era to see a lady's ankle but if we objected to that now we would be thought very strange. African natives, by contrast, have never had such a problem and were running around innocently wearing nothing but a string of beads, until missionaries tried to force them to wear clothes. Then they had problems. "Why should we wear clothes" they wondered? Thus our definition of 'worldliness' will depend upon *our geography, our century, our social environment and our knowledge* of God's word. In the past, and even now, ignorance and bigotry pronounce many things wrong which are harmless. On the other hand, carelessness and laxity permit many things which are by no means innocent. In some parts of the USA mixed bathing is frowned upon but nowhere in Britain that I know of. Now in Britain we have beaches allocated to nude bathing and while this might shock us today it may be 'normal' in the next century (or before). In some parts of Scotland the idea of a 'Christian Sabbath' (contradiction of terms?) prevails and it would be regarded shocking and very worldly to buy from a shop on a Sunday in these areas - but it varies from place to place. Some believe it wrong to have to work on a Sunday but do not mind the 'bus driver driving them to church on that day. When I was a young person the concept of 'worldliness' then consisted mainly of smoking, drinking, frequenting cinemas, attending dances, going to opera or theatrical plays. Some went farther and would not watch football; play snooker; or play cards even 'in fun'. If it's wrong to play cards we then wonder if it's right to play draughts, or chess or even Monopoly. Also, if it's wrong to *watch* football, is it not also wrong to *play* football, (or bowls, or tennis, or even 'I spy'). Clearly we have to know *why* certain pursuits are to be eschewed and *the general principles* which apply. There is also the question of setting a bad example to others who are, perhaps weaker than ourselves. Paul (in Rom. 14) refers to those who regard some days as special (even holy) and some who don't; some who may eat all things and some who refuse. "*Let every man be persuaded in his own mind*" says Paul (v. 5) "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself" (v. 7) i.e. we all have an influence on others, for good or for evil. There is also an impression which circulates that we should feel guilty if we are enjoying ourselves and that there is something slightly suspect about laughter and merriment. A century ago, 'on the Lord's Sabbath' it was all a question of black suits and dresses, long faces and whispered conversation, with the obvious impression that there was a strong connection between misery and godliness. God is not a kill-joy. Paul (in 1 Tim. 6:17) charges those who are wealthy in this world, not to trust in their uncertain riches but to trust 'in the living God, *who giveth us all things richly to enjoy ...*' God actually gives us *all things that we might enjoy them*, and so God sanctions 'enjoyment'. Paul (in v.14 of Rom. previously referred to) said, "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, *that there is nothing unclean of itself*; but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean". Most things have a use, a proper function and purpose, and are not unclean in themselves. It is the *abuse* of such things that render them *worldly* or evil. For instance, *sex and marriage* have a very proper (and vital) place in the world but are abused by men. There is nothing wrong with *money* - it is *the love* of money which lies at the root of all evil. There is nothing wrong with *ambition* provided it does not lead us away from God. *Progress* is admirable provided it is in the right direction. There is nothing objectionable about many forms of *dancing* - but Greek men dancing together is one thing - dimly lit 'discoes' are quite another. *Drugs* are extremely helpful to mankind (indeed our National Health service

spends billions on them) but *the abuse* of such drugs is our growing problem. *Leisure-time* is essential to our wellbeing, but again can be abused and squandered. Even *alcohol* has important industrial and medicinal uses but sadly is grossly misused by mankind. And so we could go on, proving the truth of Paul's words "That nothing is unclean of itself." *Moving-pictures* are a brilliant invention, ideal for teaching and communication, but are used mainly to satisfy commercial interests with films portraying violence, sadism, horror and immorality. *Even wisdom* (something the early disciples prayed for) can be of a 'worldly' species and serve only to make us 'worldly-wise'. Nothing, therefore, is unclean of itself - it is what men do with things that make them good or evil, and we must analyse each on its own merits.

### 'Fruits' Provide The Clue

Since it is so difficult to define the boundaries of 'worldliness' perhaps the best strategy is to examine *the likely fruits* of any particular course of action and, in this way, identify that which is worldly. Jesus recommended this line of enquiry, did He not, when He said that good and evil can be recognised by its fruits. This, I believe, is the best basic rule. We must anticipate the end-result of any proposed practice, or course of action, and assess the fruits thereof, (bearing in mind the affect on others.) Sadly, Paul records, "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed into Thessalonica". Think of all the former church members who have "so loved the world" that they have departed, and abandoned the church. Thus worldliness *leads to apostasy*. As in the parable of the sower "the cares of this world", and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word and Christians become unfruitful. Thus worldliness *leads to unfruitfulness*. And so we could go on enumerating the evil fruit of 'worldliness'. Certain broad questions we must be ever asking ourselves:-

- (1) Do I frequent *places* in which I would be ashamed for Jesus to find me?
- (2) Are all my *actions* always in harmony with God's word?
- (3) Do my *words* (and conversation) edify the hearer?
- (4) Are my *thoughts* (motives or desires) worthy of Jesus?
- (5) Am I *fruitful in every good work* or do I squander time?
- (6) Do I set an *example* worthy of copy?
- (7) Am I motivated by self-interest and material considerations?

In short, Am I *conforming to this world* or am I being transformed in a renewal of mind? Answers to questions such as the above, and the fruits of our activity, will help us to identify the presence of any 'worldliness' in our lives.

### Conclusion

Worldliness does not consist solely in doing certain things, or in being in certain places. It is *an attitude* or view of life. It is *a state of mind*. For instance a person may be in the midst of a 'worldly' atmosphere and yet not feel at home there, but inwardly revolting against the place and impatient to be gone. Then again, one may be in a thoroughly 'spiritual atmosphere', in a church building and engaged in the worship of God, and yet not be in harmony with the occasion but far away in mind and spirit (singing hymns but thinking of that dress in the shop window or that promotion in the office). Jesus, we recall, found this outlook in the temple and had to cleanse it from its worldly commercialism. The House Of Prayer had become a den of thieves. Indeed the Jews furnish us a profitable object-lesson of how the very elect of God readily spurned their unique position, and copied the heathenish peoples surrounding them, enthusiastically bowing down to the golden calf of idolatry and worldliness. There is always a danger that we could do the same today. The world is indeed evil and we must try never to conform to it. It would be easy to do so but we must resist the temptation and busy ourselves in God's service. There's more to life than tennis;

certainly. There's more to life than fame, ambition, popularity and riches. Even millionaires must leave every penny behind. I don't suppose that character can be rightfully judged by single or isolated deeds, either good or bad. It is *the trend* of one's life that determines his destiny. When men and women are engrossed by the material things of life, then, however punctual their formal religion, they are 'worldly'. Conversely, those men and women who, despite their weaknesses and many mistakes still take seriously the teachings of Jesus; they are spiritual. After all, we have no abiding city here but are merely pilgrims passing through. And, of course, the world itself will eventually be destroyed.

EDITOR

*(THE following is a reply by Bro. Steven Masood to Mr. Arfaque Malik who recently, in a Muslim magazine called "The Straight Path", wrote an article called "A Beam In His Eyes". In his article Mr. Malik tried to show that the Bible was inaccurate and unreliable whereas the Qur'an was neither.)*

## A BEAM IN WHOSE EYES?

On the 20th May I received a plain envelope, postmarked London, containing a photocopy of a three page article entitled "A BEAM IN HIS EYES".

The article, a reply to my tract, "The Bible is changed-REALLY?", had been written by a Mr. Malik and printed in the April 1985 issue of a magazine called "The Straight Path."

The sender had given neither his address nor that of the publishers. Fortunately the address is in the booklet, "Books on Islam in English" by Mr Ghulam Sarwar of the Muslim Educational Trust, London.

Viewed in isolation his reply appears very convincing but when one investigates the history of ancient manuscripts one will see that there is a lot more to evaluating the textual accuracy of ancient documents such as the Bible and the Quran.

Mr. Malik says, "I wonder if he accepts the Holy Qur'an as authentic? If not, what right has he to prove the authenticity of something on the basis of something that he considers as unauthentic? The attempt in my view is nothing but a missionary fraud."

Those who have had the opportunity to read the tract will appreciate that there is nothing in it warranting the over-reaction of abuse displayed in Mr. Malik's article. The tract is an inoffensive appeal to those who believe in the Qur'an to consider the Bible objectively.

Right at the beginning of my tract it says, "It is supposed by many Muslims that the Bible that Christians have today, is a corruption of an original text which has been lost. They charge Christians with distorting the Bible yet on the other hand their "holy" book the Qur'an upholds this same Bible, calling it the word of God."

Muslims respect the testimony of the Qur'an so, considering it as their authority, I gave references from it which unreservedly acknowledge the Bible to be the true Word of God. Mr. Malik's response was that I had both misquoted verses from the Qur'an and quoted them out of context. Yet he did not produce one single illustration to support his allegation. Whilst on the other hand much of his article consists of references to the adverse opinions of some western scholars and authors, concerning parts of the Bible.

Do I suggest in my tract that no western scholar has ever criticized the Bible? I would not be so foolish. Would Mr. Malik be prepared to defend the proposition that no Muslim scholar or author has ever said anything to the detriment of the Qur'an, or that they have never suggested any suspicion of change in the text of the Qur'an? He should not use a line of argument against the Bible which he would not be prepared to sustain if the same kind of argument was used against the Qur'an.

He also refers to variant readings in the Bible. Does a variant reading prove that the Bible has been changed? Did I suggest in my tract that there had never been any variant readings in any copies of the Bible? Would Mr. Malik take the stand that the Qur'an, has always escaped the presence of variant readings or that no Arabic copies or muslim translations of the Qur'an ever had any appreciable differences? Of course not! Then he should not have given the impression in his reply that I had asserted in my tract that every manuscript and translation of the Bible, including their divisions, chapters, verses and even vowel points are totally preserved. If variant readings do not discredit the authenticity of the Qur'an then they do not discredit the Bible either.

Under the sub-heading "Internal Evidence" He has given examples of what he considers to be contradictory statements in the Bible and has asked if I would explain them.

There are no contradictions in any of these statements. For example he has mentioned 2 Samuel 24:1, where we read that the Lord moved David to number Israel, and 1 Chronicles 21:1 which says it was Satan who provoked David to do so. If Mr. Malik had viewed this matter in the light of the teaching of the Qur'an he would never have mentioned it. The Qur'an says, "Thus have we (God) appointed unto every prophet an adversary - devils of humankind and Jinn... (Surah 6:113). According to that Allah uses the devils to provoke others.

God knew David's heart so he allowed satan to provoke him to number Israel.

Mr. Malik has also presented comparisons which have numerical differences. These are copying mistakes and can hardly be regarded as serious "contradictions". For example:-

There is quite obviously a copyist error in 2 Chronicles 36:9, that Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign. The correct age is 18. The difference turns on the omission of the smallest Hebrew letter in some of the manuscripts, namely 'yod' which as a numeral represents ten.

Mr Malik has quoted other "contradictions", having similar numerical mistakes. These are all minor copyist errors, easily identifiable and are not contradictions in the sense Mr. Malik suggests. These points have no effect on the contents of the Bible as a whole. If Mr Malik still thinks that numerical discrepancies are a proof that the Bible has been corrupted then by the same balance it could also be alleged that there exist contradictory statements in the Qur'an.

For example, in several places the Qur'an states that Allah created the heaven the earth and everything in six days (Surah 50:38) and yet Surah 41:9-12 gives a total of eight days.

In Surah 32:5 and Surah 22:47 a day with God is described as a thousand years in our reckoning, whereas in Surah 70:4 such a day is described as fifty thousand years.

Now Mr. Malik said, "If one statement is correct then the other is false". He further says, "Take your pick Mr Masood. Do not adopt the ostrich like attitude? Face the facts?" What should I say here? I leave that to the readers to judge for themselves.

I agree to continue to deal one by one with each passage that Mr. Malik has asked me to explain, providing the editor of "The Straight Path" is pleased to grant me space in his magazine for this and the subsequent responses. My desire is that your readership shall have the opportunity of studying all these matters objectively in order to be able to arrive at their own conclusions concerning issues which directly affect our relationship with the Almighty and our eternal destiny.

Steven Masood.

## “SONS OF GOD”

*“For ye are all sons of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ” (Galatians 3:26-27).*

It is well that we make a careful study of this important Scripture. Here at least two thoughts of great importance are suggested: (1) We are children of God by faith; (2) We are children of God by faith **in Christ Jesus**.

It should be most carefully observed that Paul did not write that “ye are sons of God through faith” and stop there. This would accord well with the teachings of Protestant denominationalism, but this is not what Paul wrote.

Neither did the apostle write that “ye are sons of God through faith **out of Christ**.” Observe, please, that Paul expressly declares that we must be **in Christ** in order to be children of God by faith. This locates salvation telling us where it is found. This teaches us **where** we must be in order to be children of God by faith. To be a child of God by faith, a person must be **in Christ**.

The next verse tells us how we may enter Christ where salvation is found. remember that you must be **in Christ** to be a child of God by faith. But, man enters **into Christ by baptism into Christ**.

It therefore follows that it is the believer who **obeys the Lord** that receives the blessing of salvation from past sins. In 1 John 1:11, 12 we read: “He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” Thus, the believer merely has the power to become a son of God. Merely believing alone (giving mental assent only) does not constitute one a child of God! The word “power” in this passage means “right” or “privilege”. Hence, believers have the right or privilege to become sons of God by completing their obedience to the gospel.

The N.T. teaches justification by faith, but it is vital to learn man is not justified by faith until he is baptized. In Rom. 5:1 Paul writes: “Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Observe that by using the plural pronoun “we”, Paul includes himself among those justified by faith. Yet, remember that Ananias said to Saul: “And why tarries thou — Arise, and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). Saul was not justified by faith until he was baptized.

William J. Shackelford,

## GLEANINGS

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

### CHRIST IS EVERYTHING IN THE BIBLE

“Christ is everything in the Bible. I do not care where I open the Bible, I find Jesus. In whatever path I start, I come, after awhile, to the Bethlehem manger. I go back to the old dispensation and see a lamb on the altar and say: “Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” Then I go and see the manna provided for the Israelites in the wilderness, and I say: “Jesus, the bread of life.” Then I look at the rock which was smitten by prophet’s rod, and, as the water gushes out, I say: “It is Jesus, the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness.” I go back and look at the writings of Job, and I hear him exclaim: “I know that my Redeemer liveth.” Then I go to Ezekiel, and I find Christ presented there as “a plant of renown;” and then I turn over to Isaiah, and Christ is spoken of “as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opens not His mouth.” It is Jesus all the way between Genesis and Malachi. Then I turn over to the New Testament, and it is Christ in the parable, it is Christ in the miracle, it is Christ in the Evangelists’ story, it is Christ in the apostles’ epistles, and it is Christ in the trumpet peal of the Apocalypse.”

T. De Witt Talmage.

## KEEPING UP TO TONE

"One day when I was with Mr. Hicks, the painter, I saw on his table some high-coloured stones, and I asked him what they were for. He said they were to keep his eye up to tone. When he was working in pigments, insensibly his sense of colour was weakened, and by having a pure colour near him he brought it up again, just as the musician, by his test-fork, brings himself up to the right pitch. Now every day men need to have a sense of the invisible God. A clear conception of the perfect one produces a moral impression..... No nature is of such magnitude that it does not need, every day, to be tuned, chorded, borne up to the ideal of a pure and lofty life. "The New Testament furnishes this "clear conception of the perfect One," this "ideal of a pure and lofty life". If we would keep up to tone spiritually we must continually look to Jesus as there portrayed. Paul says:- "But we all with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of God, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. 3:18).

Henry Ward Beecher

## WHAT IS INSIDE?

"Men talk what is in them. If their minds are full of business and politics, their words will show it; if they are occupied with froth and vanity, with fashion and folly, the word they say will give evidence of it. A man cannot shake off himself; and his words contain the very essential elements of his existence. The man who has nothing to say for the Lord, knows little about the Lord. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." He who would speak for God must be filled with Divine thoughts. "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly with all wisdom." That Word shall make you wise unto salvation through faith, and from its fulness you shall pour forth blessings to others, as you proclaim the wonderful works of God." -Common People

## WE QUOTE - ARTHUR T. PIERSON

"A human life filled with the presence and power of God, is one of God's choicest gifts to His Church and to the World."

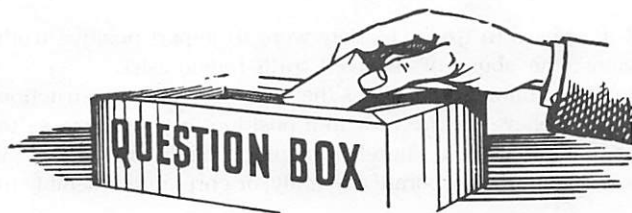
## THE PINNACLE OF POWER

"The name of Napoleon the Great truly stands prominent for power. Musing, a lonely prisoner on St. Helena, he summarised thus: "Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires. But on what did we found them? On force! Jesus Christ alone founded His on love, and to-day there are millions who would die for Him"."

## BE STRONG

"Be strong to-day; the world needs men  
Of nerve and muscle, heart and brain,  
To war for Truth and conquer wrong.  
The fight is on; the foes combine;  
The order passes down the line,  
"Quit ye like men; be strong"."  
Selected by Leonard Morgan.






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 Conducted by  
 Alf Marsden
 

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**“Is there any sure way of knowing what admonitions (e.g. in the Epistles) are directed at us as individuals or as Churches? For example, some say that “do good to all men” applies to us as individuals not as Churches. The function of the Church is to preach the Gospel and keep the ordinances. Are good works to men in the world to be done by individual Church members and not by the Church as such?”**

This is one of those questions which demand a closer look at the way Christians interpret words and phrases which are in common use. We need to look at what is meant by ‘admonitions’; ‘individual Christians’; ‘Churches’, and most important, personal decisions made by individuals as distinct from *corporate* decisions made by a community of Christians. When we have done this it may be possible to say something meaningful regarding the question, although I must confess I am not *entirely* sure what is in the questioner’s mind.

### The ‘Local’ Church

The Greek word used for Church, or Assembly, is the word EKKLESIA, the ‘called out’ ones. In the universal sense it comprises all the ‘called out’ throughout the world, and is referred to in the N.T. as the ‘Body of Christ’; in the local sense it means the ‘called out’ ones in a particular district or locality, and by definition ought to be representative of the whole ‘Body’. I take it that the questioner has in mind the ‘Local Assembly’, and is concerned as to whether *individual* Christians should admonish, or whether admonitions should be on a *corporate* basis.

First of all we must determine what the verb ‘to admonish’ means. In Paul’s charge to the Elders at Ephesus we read, “Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn (admonish) every one night and day with tears” (Acts 20:31). Similarly, in 1 Cor. 4:14 we read, “I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you”. So here in the Word we have examples of ‘putting in mind’ by warnings.

Secondly, we read in Eph. 6:4 “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”. The word ‘nurture’ is, in the Greek, the word PAIDEIA, and is to do with the training of a child (note our anglicised word Paediatrician, specialist in children’s diseases). We can understand, of course, that the training of a child involves instruction, discipline, and correction (sometimes rendered ‘chastening’, as in Eph. 6:4). So this introduces the broad idea of education, so in effect what Eph. 6:4 is saying is that the ‘putting in mind’ (admonition) can be brought about by education, instruction, discipline, and correction. Taking this a stage further we can see the obvious implications for the Christian in 2 Tim. 3:16 which reads, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”. There is one other passage we need to consider and that is Col. 3:16 which reads, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord”. Paul is here stating that the Colossians were to ‘teach and admonish one

another', and to 'abound in praises to God', i.e., they were to impart positive truth (teach), and to warn against the abuse of received truth (admonish).

Therefore, we can say that admonition involves the twin elements of instruction and warning. This being so, I believe we are now in a position to investigate as to whether the N.T. indicates that in the Local Church admonition can be carried out by individuals to individuals, individual to corporate assembly, or corporate assembly to individual.

### The Evidence

It is quite obvious that Col. 3:16 indicates that teaching and admonition is to *one another*; this implies individual to individual. The proviso, contained in both Col. 3:16 and 2 Tim. 3:16 is that *each individual* shall be able, from the Word, to teach and admonish. It is unwise to think that a Christian, unlearned in the word, would be able to instruct and warn concerning the things *he himself did not know*.

It is also quite plain that Paul, an individual, instructed and warned the *corporate* assembly of Elders at Ephesus. This, one must also say, is what happens when the preacher, whether he be Elder or whoever, exhorts the corporate assembly of Christians in any locality on the Lord's Day.

It is also quite scriptural for the *corporate* assembly to admonish the individual Christian; an example of this is contained in what is referred to as the Case of the Incestuous Brother at Corinth. The incident is recorded in 1 Cor. 5 and by extension in 2 Cor. 2 and also 2 Cor. 7. It will help to recount the incident in order to further our study.

In his first letter (which is really the second; see 1 Cor. 5:9) Paul indicts a brother at Corinth of the grave sin of incest. It seems, from later remarks, that Titus was the bearer of this letter. After naming the sin, it is interesting for us to consider v4, where Paul says, "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are *gathered together*, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus". Paul's use of the phrase 'when ye are gathered together' indicates that the admonition, in this case ex-communication, was to be delivered corporately. The objective was to be correction of the brother concerned, and a warning to others against the sin of fornication. Later, in his second letter, Paul reveals his disquiet of mind; would the corporate assembly at Corinth follow his directive? "Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother" (2 Cor. 2:12, 13). In verse 6 of this same chapter he also reiterates the corporate nature of the admonishment, "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of *many*". In 2 Cor. 7, Paul comments on the problems encountered in Macedonia, then he explodes into comments of joy and praise for the Corinthian brethren, and from verse 6 we read, "Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more". The reading of the whole chapter is helpful.

### Conclusions

Churches are made up of individual Christians. A local Church ought to be a microcosm of the Body of Christ, as the individual Christian ought to be a microcosm of the local Church to which he belongs. Therefore, if the objective of the individual Christian is 'to do good to all men in the world', then this should also be the objective of the local body corporate. Consequently, I do not subscribe to the idea that the *only* functions of the Church are Gospel preaching and ordinance maintenance, the

corporate assembly may want to participate in the 'good works to all men' in such areas as community work, aid to the Third world countries and such like endeavours. I firmly believe that each corporate endeavour undertaken by the Local Church, if done in the name of Christ, will enhance the preaching of the Gospel, and further the work of the Lord in the places where we operate. We can and should admonish each other as individuals; we can and should admonish individuals in a corporate sense; and as a corporate body we can and should admonish the world by our love of the Lord, and by our display of zeal in carrying out His will.

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

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

SEPTEMBER 1985

1—Daniel 3:8-30	Matt. 22:1-22
8—Psalm 2	Matt. 22:23-46
15—Isaiah 59	Matt. 23:1-26
22—2 Chron.24:1-22	Matt. 23:27-39
29—Genesis 6	Matt. 24:1-22

### THE MARRIAGE FEAST

Jesus is dealing by parable with those who were in the high places in the Jewish religious world but who hated Him. The parable of the two sons, and still clearer picture of their own wicked hearts are followed here by the marriage feast of the king's son. It is as though Jesus is tearing the veil from their blindness and revealing themselves to themselves in their rejection of His holy presence and teaching, and their subsequent fate (22:7). So to speak "the publicans and sinners" (21,32) filled the tables but even one of these was rejected because he had refused the garment provided, thinking his own clothes were good enough, thus offering insult to the gracious indiscriminating host. Hypocrisy, arrogance and pride cannot enter the kingdom of heaven! Only fear stopped them from immediate murder, and Jesus knew it all. The "call" from John the baptist, Jesus and His disciples had been made clear during three years of ministry but how many had accepted the invitation and the wedding garment of repentance to be "chosen"? - and are *now* by the gospel?

### TRIBUTE - TO WHOM?

Even politicians are drawn in to the

effort to discredit Jesus. Their subservience to Roman rule, which secretly they hated, did finally bring Pilate's false verdict (John 19:15). The Herodians were probably despised as being irreligious but the subtle question was much to their surprise turned against themselves through their acceptance of Roman coinage. His questioners as always were not only answered but given teaching for their discomfiture and defeat.

### THE RESURRECTION

Pharisees, Scribes, Lawyers, Herodians but now the Sadducees, the Priestly officials doctrinally different must question the unaccredited rabbi. They can prove by the scriptures that the others have false views by an insoluble problem! To us it appears almost childishly foolish, and we cannot understand the invention of the story. To them it was a serious question or they would not have asked it. Jesus has not only shown it to arise from ignorance of two things, Scriptures and the Power of God, but revealed truth on two important points. 1. To God the dead are not dead, in particular Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; 2. Resurrection is a future certainty. We cannot but recognise in the transfiguration that Moses and Elijah spoke with Jesus respecting His decease, his departure to eternal life with God. They were there, dare we say within inches of Peter, James and John on the holy mount (2 Peter 1:18). One of these questioners was told by Jesus that he would see Him when he, the Sadducee, would be resurrected (Matt. 26:64) - what a surpassingly awful prospect! BUT for us too what a sobering thought - "after that the judgement!" (Romans 14:10; Heb.

9:27; Matt. 27:64). Please read all three passages again, and 2 Cor. 5:10. "I AM", the eternal present (22:32).

### THE ENQUIRING SCRIBE

Not all listeners were merely finding fault. The "lawyer" a scribe no doubt in a rabbinical school which held views about the relative importance of the numerous detailed laws, came with the question. Read Mark 12:28. He received an answer which satisfied him, and showed Jesus his willingness to learn, and his comprehension of a vital truth. It seems questioning was now over but Jesus then put a question which they dare not answer because the scripture makes/made Him the Son of God. Please note by reference to Mark's gospel that "the common people heard Him gladly" (12:37). His wonderful works in the Temple enraged the authorities but what a difference of attitude was seen in these last days of His blessed ministry in the very Temple courts. what a spiritual, mental and physical scene of victory with "the common people". Alas they became a fickle mob!

### DENUNCIATION OF FALSE TEACHERS

It took me about five minutes to read chapter 23 which is one long list of the Pharisaical sinful attitudes. We who make profession of being true to God's word need to remember their respectability and how truly religious they APPEARED TO BE. They knew their "Bibles" so well but it was so deceptively wrong. The lawyer got the thought so necessary to have that all the outward signs of zeal are less important in the sight of God than the humblest practice of true goodness and love. (Mark 12:32-34). We may distinguish the eight "Woes", which follow the advice of Jesus to the common people and the disciples, warning them to listen to the teaching of Pharisees and scribes in their exposition of Moses while plainly condemning their failure to practise it. Their love of show must not be limited. Clerical dress and titles must not be used by Christians,

which of course does not mean the actual relationships are forbidden, but ostentation is. Here also neither phylacteries nor borders are forbidden but the extra show is forbidden. (Read Ex. 13:16; Deut. 6:8). Summarising the "Woes" Jesus is telling the Pharisees their outstanding faults - their rejection of the coming kingdom and teaching against it; their grasping after wealth at others' expense while expressing lengthy prayer; their zeal getting followers who imitate their hypocrisy; their formal and false ideas about degrees of loyalty to keep vows, making breaking the word excusable; for insistence upon paying exaggerated attention to small matters but not paying proper attention to the three most important - justice, mercy and faith; attention to mere ceremonial cleanliness; showing great respect for tombs, but cherishing illwill in the heart; neglecting honest consideration and honesty. They had the appearance of faithfulness to the law, while failing to appreciate its fundamental requirements, so recently acknowledged.

### FATAL TESTS TO COME

There is no escape from judgement upon evildoers. The final test came within the next day or two. The rejection of the ministry of God's Son within their hearing, seeing and understanding culminated at that Passover celebration of the release from Egypt, in their deliberate sacrifice of the Lamb of God on preparation day. On that day when thousands of lambs were killed in the Temple courts, ONE BODY hung upon the tree (Matt. 27:62; Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:14, 31 & 42), THE ONCE AND FOR ALL OFFERING FOR SIN. Jesus told them mankind's story of sin, and the specific story of HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE - "Jerusalem the golden, with milk and honey blest." Between the crucifixion and the destruction of Jerusalem lies the story of the persecution of those who did accept Jesus, and a time of internecine strife of political and religious bigotts. The church passed through those days, and having heeded the warn-

ings in our next chapter escaped the final siege and fall. Jesus wept as He viewed a city of magnificent appearance from the ascent of the mount of Olives and expressed His sorrow.

### DESTRUCTION FORETOLD

We should read with chapter 24 of Matthew, Mark 13 and Luke 21:3-36. Only the first fourteen verses contain the immediate answer to the question of the disciples. The sight of the magnificent Temple of Herod was wonderful, and to comprehend the assurance that one stone should not be left upon another is perhaps easy for us because we know it happened, but shocking for the disciples. Some indeed must have lived to experience the hardships forecast in these verses, reaching into the times when poverty and trouble welcomed the relief brought by Paul and his company from the Gentile christians, many of whom were also suffering for their faith. Jesus in the 14th verse surely looks into our own times while some are taking the good news into dark places where enduring to the end is no light task. Indeed iniquity abounds, love grows cold. May that grace of God, by which alone we triumph, be mercifully granted to us whatever our circumstances.

R. B. Scott

### AN APPEAL

The small congregation in Haddington, is an 'Old Paths' church which began in 1955 in the home of the late Brother Thomas Nisbet. Currently we number twenty members and have been meeting in the Town House, Haddington, for the last 28 years or so. These premises are ideal but our more elderly members now find difficulty in climbing the stairs to the first floor. Indeed some members can't climb the stairs and have to travel to another congregation.

About 3 years ago we purchased a modest two-storey building which, with modification (and addition) could be made suitable for us to meet in. These premises cost us just over £6,000 but we

had also to re-tile the roof at a cost of £3,500. We have also spent a few thousand pounds upon new windows, new floors, staircase and partial re-wiring. It is intended to use the ground-floor for worship and the upper-floor for Classes, Sunday School etc. We still have to build a Toilet Block, small kitchen, drainage, phones, plumbing, lighting and heating, etc.

So far we have used only our own financial resources and labour of members, trying to save up enough money before tackling each further section of the work, but this is proving very time-consuming and the elderly members, after 3 years, are becoming anxious to see the work completed.

It is with some reluctance, therefore, that we seek assistance from sister churches who may be able to render us any help - practical or financial. Obviously if we had the money we could purchase materials and expedite the remaining work. We appreciate, of course, that many congregations are small and may have financial problems of their own, but if any church, or individual, can assist us (albeit in a very small way) we shall be most thankful. Any gifts, enquiries or communications will be gratefully received by Bro. John McLuckie, 2 Silver Street, Dunbar, East Lothian. Tel. No. Dunbar 63547. (Treasurer).

### Can't It Be Done TODAY???

God never goes to the lazy or the idle when He needs men for his service. Moses was busy with his flocks at Horeb; Gideon was busy threshing wheat; Saul was busy searching for his father's lost beasts; David was busy caring for his father's sheep; Elisha was busy plowing with twelve yoke of oxen; Amos was busy following the flock; Nehemiah was busy bearing the king's cup; Peter and Andrew were busy casting a net into the sea; James and John were busy mending their nets; Matthew was busy collecting taxes; Saul was busy persecuting the friends of Jesus.

It would perhaps be well to note that activity in the lives of these men was as easily seen after God enjoined their services as it was in carnal things before. Why is it Brethren see no lesson in such Bible illustrations? Does activity *always* have to be a *goal*? Can't it be realized *NOW ... TODAY?*

## VITAL IN RELIGION

Christianity is a quality of life and not a set of theological beliefs, not measured by correctness of creed, but by the uprightness of his life.

Jesus said that we should let our lights so shine that others seeing our good works might glorify God, (Matthew 5:16).

The great tragedy of the church is that the secondary things such as creeds, sacraments, rituals and ecclesiastical regulations so often have taken the place of the primary in religion, which is living in the Spirit of Jesus of Nazareth and learning from His teaching how to live usefully and abundantly with love for God and for one's fellowman.

What Jesus did equaled what he taught, Acts 1:1.

T. W. Phillips (II)

## HUMAN CREEDS CANNOT BE DEFENDED

Any creed containing more than the Bible is objectionable, because it contains more than the Bible.

Any creed containing less than the Bible is objectionable, because it contains less than the Bible.

Any creed differing from the Bible is objectionable, because it does differ from the Bible.

Any creed precisely like the Bible is useless, because we have the Bible. This covers the whole ground. There can be no other creeds. A creed must contain more than the Bible, less than the Bible, differ from it, or be precisely like it. No man defends his creed on the grounds that it contains more than the Bible, less than the Bible, that it is different from the Bible, or is precisely like it. If a creed cannot be defended on any of these grounds, on what ground can it be defended? Certainly on no ground conceivable to man.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

A DOCTOR once declared: "I have been practising medicine for 30 years and I have prescribed many things. In the long run I have learnt that for most of what ails the human creature, the best medicine is love." "What if it doesn't work?" he was asked. "Double the dose," he replied.

## BREVITIES

DO not reproach a man for the sin which he has committed, when God has forgiven him.

THERE is one way to be a gentleman, and there are a hundred ways not to be.

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Stretford, Manchester:** Again we have cause to rejoice with thanks for the baptisms into Jesus:

Miss Bushra Parvin Sardar from a Muslim background. Please pray that the Lord may protect her from unbearable harassment.

Brother Masih's wife, Zarina Begum  
 Brother Masih's brother-in-law Gulzar  
 Masih.

Brother Masih's nephew, Patris Masih.

Please pray for their continued growth  
 and that the Lord will use them mightily.

A. Ashurst. Sec.

**Ghana:** In my recent letter to you I gave the names of two faithful brethren as Brothers J. K. O. Boakye and the other as Bro. Asante. In place of Bro. Asante I should have said Bro. Abraham Aduameyaw. Bro. Boakye's address is as given in my last report. Bro. Aduameyaw's address is P.O. Box 50, Koforidua, E.R. Ghana. I take this opportunity to appeal to all sister churches to assist us in sending hymn books to us here. All such items should be sent to the addresses above (to Koforidua church). Thank you.

D. Arku-Mensah.

P.O. Box 1639, Accra, Ghana.

**Haddington, Scotland:** On 2 June the church enjoyed a visit from Rene and Earle Severson from the Burnaby Congregation in Vancouver. This is now their third visit to Haddington and again we all profited from the visit, and from the sound teaching of our good brother. We felt we could do with him here on a permanent basis. We wish the Severson's well on the remainder of their tour. Haste ye back.

R. Nisbet Sec.

**Kitwe, Zambia:** Zaire is the third largest country in Africa and straddles the equator in Central Africa. Two seminars for Bible study and discussion for future growth of Churches of Christ in the French language nation of Zaire were held for Zaireans in May 1985. The emphasis was upon "in-depth" study for and setting on the right Biblical track of key Zairean preachers, and not a mass gathering. Mutunda Umba of Likasi, Jonas Pesa of Sakanya and Kashinde

Gardoza of Lubumbashi are evangelists whose home areas are several hundred kilometres apart. Mutunda Umba has known Chester Woodhall since 1972. These three evangelists attended the second seminar. They travel extensively, preaching and teaching between them in 218 congregations known to them, mainly in Shaba Province but some congregations in Kasai - Oriental Province and even across Zaire's Western Border into Angola. Mutunda Umba is a train driver which is very helpful to his itinerant evangelism. In total, there are 40 evangelists serving this fellowship. Their major concern is to get registration to operate by the Zairean Government for Churches of Christ. In addition, there are 248 congregations with other preachers and in other areas who share the same anxiety - a grand total of 466 congregations seeking to be Churches of Christ. The numbers continue to grow and do not include Kumwenda Banda and his 31 congregations who defected to another mission. It is hoped to have a big preaching meeting in August at Dilolo on the Angolan Border with an open invitation to brethren of all the Zairean Churches of Christ.

Chester Woodhall

## OBITUARY

**Tranent, Scotland:** It is with sadness that the church in Tranent reports the death of our sister Jean Wilson on Sunday 23rd June. Sister Wilson died after a short illness and was 80 years of age. Bro. Mark Plain officiated at the funeral.

Jean came to the Lord as a very young girl and taught for many years in the Sunday School. She has been faithful for all those years and will be missed from her place in Tranent.

We commend those of her family to the Lord remembering that she ran the race and finished the course.

John Colgan, Sec.

**CORRECTION**

The reference to "Mr." Orton in the July issue was, of course, entirely a printer's error. I have never, in my life, referred to a brother as "Mr." and am unlikely to begin now. My apologies to Bro. Orton.

Editor.

Quiet, now...

Breathe in new strength

New Courage Learn

His master plan for you...

Then in peace, return to duty.

**SPECIAL MEETINGS**

Dalziel Street, Motherwell. Special Saturday Evening Meetings will (D.V.) be held on August 24th & 31st and September 7th at 6.30 p.m. when Bro. Ian S. Davidson will deliver talks on Philemon, and 2nd and 3rd John, considering their relevance to today. He will also examine the background material, viz. Roman Slavery (Philemon) and the Gnostic Philosophy (2nd & 3rd John). These meetings are for earnest students of the Word of God. Plan to attend.

**AT THE SIGN OF THE HEART**

But art thou come, dear Saviour? Hath Thy love  
Thus made Thee stoop, and leave Thy throne above

Thy lofty heavens, and thus Thyself to dress  
In dust to visit mortals? could no less

A condescension serve? and, after all,  
The mean reception of a cratch and stall?

Dear Lord, I'll fetch Thee thence! I have a room  
(\*Tis poor, but 'tis my best) if Thou wilt come

Within so small a cell, where I would fain  
Mine and the world's Redeemer entertain—

I mean my Heart: 'tis sluttish, I confess,  
And will not mend Thy lodging, Lord, unless

Thou send before Thy harbinger—I mean  
Thy pure and purging Grace, to make it clean,

And sweep its nasty corners; then I'll try  
To wash it also with a weeping eye.

And when'tis swept and was'd, I then will go  
And, with Thy leave, I'll fetch some flowers  
that grow

In Thine own garden, Faith and Love, to Thee;  
With these I'll dress it up, and these shall be

My rosemary and bays. Yet when my best  
Is done, the room's not fit for such a Guest.

But here's the cure: Thy presence, Lord, alone  
Will make a stall a Court, a cratch a Throne.

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