

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## REJECTING GOD

God is infallible, all-seeing; all powerful; all knowing and God has introduced into the world His plan of salvation for mankind. For those who do not like to think in terms of God's "plan of salvation," let's call it God's 'Scheme of Redemption.' Whatever we call it it matters not — the fact is that God has ushered into the world a system, the 'Christian System' as Alexander Campbell called it, whereby man can be saved from the guilt and consequences of his sins. Occasionally, men who endeavour to implement God's system get downhearted at the apparent lack of results and come to the conclusion that there must be something wrong with the plan. However we can be sure that there can be nothing wrong with anything devised by the Lord and any fault, if there be any fault, must lie with those who administer God's scheme. It may be that man misunderstands the scheme, misinterprets the scheme, or is following some previously corrupted version of God's scheme. Usually when men erroneously conclude that there is something wrong with God's system, they, in their wisdom, try to rectify the system and so, in the end, there is something wrong with the system — man's doing. Similarly doctors no doubt often wonder why their prescribed medicine has not helped the patient, not realising that the patient still keeps it intact in the bottle, or else has poured it down the sink. Similarly many manufacturers of machinery give no guarantee of good results unless the product is used strictly in accordance with the operating instructions, or maker's handbook.

### Samuel's experience

This is not a new phenomenon and we really should have learned from the mistakes of the generations which have gone before, especially from the Jews. After all, the Old Testament scriptures were written for our learning and our admonition (1 Cor. 10: 11). One instance which comes readily to mind was the occasion when the Jews demanded a King (1st Samuel). As the children of Israel multiplied in number it became obvious that the job of ruling them and administering such a great nation was too much for one, or even a few individuals. God advocated a system of judges. "Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates which the Lord Thy God giveth thee throughout thy tribes; and they shall judge the people with just judgement. Thou shalt not wrest judgement; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift, for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous." Thus God ordained a system of itinerant judges (and so our circuit judges are nothing new). Strictly inherent in the system was the solemn necessity that the judges would be completely impartial and would never, under any circumstances,

be induced to accept a bribe or a gift (which is often just a bribe with a fancy wrapper). The scheme was good — once again it was man who failed to implement the scheme. Samuel had appointed his sons to be judges over Israel and they turned arise after filthy lucre and accepted bribes to pervert the fountains of justice. This, apparently, triggered off the request from the Jews that they be given a king. All the elders of Israel came to Samuel and said, "Behold thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways, now make us a king to judge us, like all the nations." Predictably the request greatly displeased Samuel, probably first of all, because it was Samuel's own sons (two at least) who had let God down. Samuel no doubt well remembered the vision he had received, when a boy concerning Eli the priest and how he had had to inform Eli of the terrible calamities which would befall the House of Eli because Eli's sons had "made themselves vile and Eli restrained them not." Here now was Samuel in almost a completely similar position and in public rebuke. *Secondly*, Samuel would be displeased with the request because it was a 'vote of no confidence' in a system ordained by God. How often in these days do we hear men, in their great wisdom, proclaim their vote of no confidence in God-ordained procedures. *Thirdly*, Samuel would be displeased at the request not because it was revolutionary in concept but because they wanted a king — a monarchy in exchange for a Theocracy. They wanted a man to replace God. *Fourthly* Samuel would be displeased and disappointed at the desire of the Jews "to be like all the nations around them." Hitherto their chief glory had been that they were uniquely God's possession, and entirely *unlike the nations* around them. They had had God's personal protection, guidance, providence and leadership. Now they wanted in God's place a puny little man, whose breath was in his nostrils, just like all the other (inferior) nations around them.

Samuel, being displeased and disappointed, consulted God. God's answer was that He knew the Israelites to be a fickle people. "According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken Me and served other Gods, so do they also unto thee." God advised Samuel to grant them their request "for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them." (I Sam. 8). In granting their request Samuel was also to *protest solemnly and warn* the Jews of the consequences of their action, the less serious of which would be that their new king would take their sons for soldiers, their daughters as cooks, their property for billets and a tenth of their income for taxes. God also warned that when these things would come to pass and when, in disillusionment, the Jews cried out to God "because of the king ye shall have chosen," the Lord will not hear you in that day. "Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay, but we will have a king over us. That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us and fight our battles." And so Israel got their earthly king.

### Lessons

In reviewing the above historical incident in order to derive benefit or lessons from it, it may strike us as extremely strange that the sons of Eli, the priest of God, were rakes and wasters, and that the sons of Samuel, the prophet of God, were dishonest in the extreme. Eyebrows are sometimes raised that the children of some devout member of the church never become church members and yet here, as long ago as Samuel's time, we have circumstances extremely similar.

There probably always will be church members who look longingly at 'the nations around about them,' or in the present context, look enviously at the religious denominations around them and would seek to copy them. We perhaps noticed that the request of the Jews to Samuel seemed to be generally popular, unanimous and plausible — yet that same request was a rejection of God. Surely the lesson is there

for all to see. There are also always those who reckon that God's system can be improved upon, that we ought to 'keep up with the times' and bring the church 'up to date' (whatever that might mean). It is worth stating again that once we take one step away from God's order there is simply no stopping place and one change easily justifies another, as witness the Roman Catholic church. As custodians of God's holy oracles we have a duty not only not to change God's arrangements but also to see that nobody else in the church is allowed to change them. The church *is unique* and is intended to be a chosen generation, a royal priesthood; a holy nation; a peculiar people, to show forth the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. (1 Peter 2: 9). We have a fat chance of being that if fired by a desire to be like some denominational body. For the church to lose its special identity it loses all and becomes just another of the many denominations and cults.

May we recognise the great truth of the lesson from Samuel — that a reluctance to implement God's scheme of redemption (exactly in the form God gave it) — is a rejection of God. The Pharisees rejected the commandments of God that they might keep their own traditions — so said Jesus Himself (Mark 7:9). Is it not a fact that there are religious people today who like-wise prefer 'their church's traditions' to the commandments of God? The Pharisees and lawyers "rejected the counsel of God against themselves being not baptised of him (John)". (Luke 7; 30). I wonder how many of those today, who refuse Christ's baptism, would acknowledge the truth of Luke's gospel that it is a rejection of the counsel of God?

May we all strive at all times to guard and preserve God's order rather than change it. May our desire be to do God's will rather than to refuse it.

Editor.

## LOVE. THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD

### No. 6. A Many Splendoured Thing. (continued)

#### (viii) LOVE — Is Not Provoked. (RV)

If you are reading the Authorised Version you will notice the word "Easily" is in italics. It does not occur in the original but was interpolated by the translators of 1611 because they thought it helped to a good understanding. The Apostle's meaning is severely weakened by its inclusion. LOVE is not provoked.

This word "provoked" literally means, to stimulate to action, and it can be applied to good or evil. The writer to the Hebrews exhorts us to do that which will "provoke unto Love and good works." Heb. 10.24. When the word is used without qualification it is always bad. So, literally transcribed this text can read, Love is not stimulated to evil action.

LOVE — is not provoked. Whatever treatment is meted out to Love it will never stimulate wrath, anger, malice nor retaliation. Under all pressures Love remains calm and replies gently and is never motivated to return evil for evil, but will always seek to do good, because:—

LOVE is not provoked.

#### (ix) LOVE. Thinketh No Evil

By way of a general understanding of this facet of love we can say, Love seeks to put the best sense or explanation on all that is done. Love keeps its bias toward the benefit of others. There are times when Love must make a judgement but the judgement of Love is weighted as far as is possible in the other's favour. We would all like to be able to judge perfectly. Such an ability belongs only to God. Love will always judge leniently.

An unknown sage has said, "To construe an unkind action as good is but to pleurably deceive myself. While to misconstrue a good deed is a treble wrong. It is wrong to myself, it is wrong to the deed and it is wrong to the doer."

King Edward III said, "Evil be to him who evil thinks."

There is so much good in the worst of us,  
And so much bad in the best of us,  
That it hardly becomes any of us,  
To speak about the rest of us.

Edward Wallis Hoch.

And from the Lord himself, "For with what judgement ye judge, ye shall be judged." Love will always judge leniently, such judgement is least likely to offend God.

If you look at the Revised Version you will read this text a little differently, "Love taketh no account of evil." This gives a further insight into the attribute of love. Love does not keep a record of ills received, nor a catalogue of injuries suffered. Neither with the intention of repaying nor in order to dwell upon them nor to recount them to others. Such actions only create hard-done-by feelings. If someone's action hurts, it is far less painful if considered as an accident or viewed with mitigation.

Love thinketh no evil, so Love never plans anything unpleasant, unkind nor detrimental. With Love there is NO SPITE. The Psalmist describes the unlovely as lying in bed thinking up evil devices. Such is not Love for LOVE thinketh no evil.

#### (x) LOVE Rejoiceth not in iniquity

Iniquity:— that is, unrighteousness. A very literal translation of the text is, "Love rejoiceth not in unright." It is so written to apply to all things; people and deeds. It also includes situations and circumstances brought about by causes unknown. It is the direct opposite of "right", either before God or by man's standards of good conduct. Love finds no pleasure in vice, scandal nor crime. Some folk just gobble up stories of human failings and error. They find great delight in reports of professing Christians who fall into sin and are caught out. They follow the tale seeking and savouring every detail and then revel in the punishment. Where Love is there would be no delight, not even if the person had put themselves at enmity.

How sad, we are so quick to tell others the evil we know of one-another. I wonder why? Do we hope to magnify our own virtue? Is it just to show how clever and knowledgeable we are? One thing is absolutely certain, Love is not the motive. There is no pleasure for Love in anything evil, unkind, unpleasant, even if it befalls an enemy because

LOVE rejoiceth not in iniquity.

PAUL JONES.

## GLEANINGS

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

### Glory to God in the Highest!

"It is easy to know the knock of a beggar at one's door. Low, timid, hesitating, it seems to say, "I have no claim on the kindness of this house." How different, on his return from school, the loud knocking, the bounding step, the joyous rush of the child into his father's presence . . . Now, why are believers bold? Glory to God in the highest! It is to a father in God, to an elder brother in Christ, that Faith conducts our steps in prayer; therefore, in the hour of need, bold of spirit, she raises her suppliant hands, and cries, "O that thou wouldst rend the heavens, and come down."

— Guthrie.

**It's mighty hard**

"It's mighty hard to serve God with the Devil in you: you know that by experience."

— Trotter.

**I had wandered out of Thy pasture**

"The old shepherd who offered up prayer in a Welsh revival meeting described the position aptly when he lamented his backsliding in these words: 'Lord, I got among the thorns and briars, and was scratched, and torn, and bleeding. But, Lord, it is only fair to say that it was not on Thy ground; I had wandered out of Thy pasture!'"

— B.T.I.

**Nothing but the Bible**

"The word of God is the only source whence we may learn what conversion is and how it can be brought about. An English dictionary should help us to the commonly accepted meaning of any word in every-day use; but if we mean to be correctly informed as to what conversion is in God's employment of that term, we must turn to the usage of the word by those holy men of God, who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Modern reports of work done by various sections of professing Christians may enable us to discover what they severally understand by conversion; but it is to the Scriptures that we must have recourse, if our aim be to obtain well-grounded assurance as to what is God; presentation of conversion, its causes and its real ingredients. Nor need that necessity be deemed unnatural to Protestants, whose motto is, The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible."

— Alex Brown.

**From the same material**

"From the same material one man builds palaces, another hovels; one warehouses, another villas; bricks and mortar are mortar and bricks until the architect makes them something else. Thus it is that, in the same family, in the same circumstances, one man rears a stately edifice, while his brother, vacillating and incompetent, lives forever amid ruins."

— Thomas Carlyle.

**"Alleluia, the Lord omnipotent reigneth"**

"The little lad, reading some story, becomes enrapt in the fortunes of his hero . . . How shall it end? He turns over the pages. It is all right. The hero lives and triumphs. Now the lad breathes again, and bravely faces the course of the fight once more. We, like the lad, have sometimes trembled for the fortunes of our King. Then it is good to skip the pages of time, and to look at the end. It is all right. "Alleluia, the Lord omnipotent reigneth."

— Mark G. Pearce.

**Who let their throats be cut**

"I willingly believe the witnesses who let their throats be cut to attest the truth of what they believe."

— Pascal.

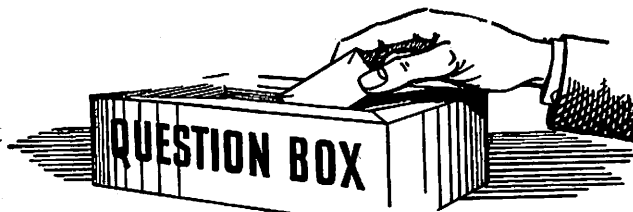
**The divine confession of faith**

"The only apostolic and divine confession of faith which God, the Father of all, has laid for the church, and that on which Jesus Himself said He would build it, is the sublime and supreme proposition: That Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Son of the living God. This is the peculiarity of the Christian system; its specific attribute . . . There is no other confession of faith on which the church can be built.

on which it can possibly stand one and undivided, but on this one. With the heart man believes this proposition in order to justification: and with the mouth he maketh this confession of it in order to his salvation. So Paul explains it (Rom. 10:10).

— Alex Campbell.

Selected by Leonard Morgan.




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Conducted by  
Alf Marsden

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**“How would you explain Acts 2:38 in the light of the statement made by Paul in 1 Cor. 12:3, ‘And that no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Spirit’?”**

I rather think that a word of explanation about this question is in order. There are those who believe that a person can be in receipt of the Holy Spirit before having obeyed the Gospel. Therefore, what the question is really asking is this: “How can a person confess that Jesus is the Son of God *before* he is immersed if he is not in receipt of the Holy Spirit *before* immersion,” because 1 Cor. 12:3 says, “No man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Spirit?”

This is another classic example of taking two related but different ideas and manipulating them so that they *seem* to mean what someone *wants* them to mean, without due regard to the context in which they are written, or without necessary support from other scriptures, particularly in the N.T. Let us try, as objectively as we can, and without pre-conceived ideas, to find out what is *actually* taught.

### The Context

The statement in 1 Cor. 12:3 occurs during Paul’s discourse with the Church at Corinth regarding worship in the Church. He has taught about head-covering for women, and also given instructions as to how christians ought to conduct themselves when meeting around the Lord’s Table. In chapters 12-14 he turns his attention to the use and misuse of spiritual gifts, and it is at the beginning of this discourse that he makes the statement under consideration, which we will now repeat in full, and which read, “Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit.” We now need to consider the two parts of this statement.

### “Jesus is Accursed”

Before Paul uses these words he reminds the Corinthian brethren what they were before they became christians, “Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.” Now it ought to be obvious to anyone that Paul is here referring to their sinful and unregenerate state prior to salvation. In that condition they were “without hope,” and “without God” in the world; they were “lost”. Paul’s reaction to the Jews exemplifies *their* condition, as Acts records, “Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed he shook his raiment, and said unto

them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles" (Acts 18:5, 6). It is possible that Paul before *his* conversion, had tried to make christians blaspheme the name of Christ and His relationship to God, because he says, "I punished them off in every synagoge, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities" (Acts 26:9-11).

Now the point being made by Paul in 1 Cor. 12:3 is this: people still in the bondage of sin could and did say that Jesus was Anathema (accursed), because the darkness of sin and the Light of Christ are Anathema to each other, but no christian renewed and regenerated in Christ through the Gospel could say that Jesus was Anathema; the new creation in Christ Jesus should love the Lord to such a degree that they would never even contemplate such a remark, indeed, at the end of the First Letter to Corinth, Paul says, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema" (1 Cor. 16:22). Rather curiously, Paul includes the Aramaic phrase "Maran-atha", "Our Lord (maran) cometh (atha)," which seems to express the watchword of every christian that the lord will, in fact, come; this was, and still is, a living hope among christians of all ages, and is probably another strong reason why no christian speaking with the spirit of God could ever say "Jesus is Anathema."

### "Jesus is Lord"

This statement makes clear the broad and significant separation between the Church and the sinful world. This christian "bond" of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Church is, in the eyes of Paul, far above all distinctions as to the reception and manifestation of any spiritual gift made available by God for a specific time and purpose. It is infinitely more important for a person to be a *christian* than for a christian to "show off" any other attribute which would seem, in his eyes, to make him a *better christian* than someone else.

Therefore, in this second part of the statement under consideration, Paul is saying that just as a christian would not say that Jesus is Anathema, only christians who had obeyed the Gospel and were in receipt of the Holy Spirit *could* confess the Lordship of Jesus in their lives. It is a very important statement for Paul to make because it shows sin to be exceedingly sinful, and Grace to be exceedingly precious, especially to those who have embraced it. But the statement is not complicated in its context; it is only complicated by those who wish to promote points of doctrine which will embellish their own particular beliefs.

### The first priority of the Holy Spirit

If we are serious in our wish to establish priorities consistent with the christian faith then we can do no better than to refer ourselves to the words of the Lord, for "they are spirit," and "they are life."

It seems to me that Jesus, shortly before He left His sorrowing disciples, expressed to them what the primary work of the Holy Spirit would be, "and when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged" (John 16:8-11). In verse 13 Jesus says, "Howbeit, when he the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all the truth."

Therefore, it would appear that Paul is saying that in essence the primacy of the Holy Spirit's work is in the Gospel. The Good News is that Christ died for our sins, and that He rose from the dead. This is a message which should be stated, believed, and obeyed, as Paul says, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how

shall they hear without a preacher . . ." "so then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:14-18). That the Holy Spirit is involved in the promotion of the truth cannot be doubted, because when Paul speaks about the whole armour of God he says, "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17).

Therefore, I conclude that when a person who has believed the Gospel message says, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," then that person is responding to the facts made known by God and inherent in the Gospel, and is not *in any way* uttering inspirational statements directly forced from his lips by direct intervention of the Holy Spirit, but is rather giving a response which the Gospel message exhorts him to give; that is a somewhat different emphasis from that which the inspirationalists give. It is a source of constant amazement to me why people crave for miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit in their lives when by obeying the Gospel they can take part in the greatest miracle ever revealed to man, namely, cleansing from sin, a new life in Christ Jesus, joint heirship with Christ, the abiding influence and comfort of Holy Spirit throughout their lives, preparing them for the everlasting glories of heaven. Is there a greater miracle than the Gospel? Is there a greater demonstration of the Holy Spirit's power than the sanctified life of a christian?

If I must make a summation of the question, then I would have to say that I believe that 1 Cor. 12:3 refers to the *lifelong* confession of the christian of the Lordship of Christ in his life, and has nothing whatsoever to do with the confession of *faith* in Christ as the saviour from sin.

*Questions please, to Alf Marsden, 377 Billinge Road, Highfield, Wigan.*

## "WHEN THAT IS PERFECT IS COME . . ."

— 1 Cor. 13: 8-13

When studying with people who insist that God still bestows miraculous gifts upon men today, we usually point out that the scriptures teach these gifts were given for a limited time and have now ceased, the word having been confirmed by them (Mk. 16:20; Heb. 2:3, 4). When citing 1 Cor. 13:8-13 to support this conviction the usual reply is that verses 10-12 speak of Christ coming again and thus the miraculous gifts are to remain until that time.

In the first place the impersonal pronoun "that" cannot refer to the Christ. It is most irreverent to refer to Jesus as "that." In this context we observe a number of contrasts: "that which is in part" with "that which is perfect (complete)", things that are "done away" with things that "abide"; "childhood" with "manhood"; seeing "darkly" with "face to face". There is an obvious relationship between incompleteness and such things as "part", "child", "see darkly (not clearly)", just as there is between completeness and "man", "seeing face to face (clearly)". Childhood is soon "done away" while adulthood "abides."

God's completed revelation is "that which is perfect". It was not delivered "complete" at first, but "in part". All did not have the gifts of prophecy, knowledge, and tongues (through which God's revelation was given), and each was consequently dependent upon the other in receiving knowledge. For example, the man in the chariot who had only the Old Testament (part) of God's revelation was dependent



upon the prophet Phillip for more (complete) knowledge of the Christ (Acts 8:28-35).

Paul mentions three gifts which were to abide — the spiritual gifts of faith, hope, and love which were to remain even after the doing away of tongues etc. at the coming of “that which is perfect”.

Our FAITH is in Christ declared to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:4). We see him only by faith now but one day we’ll see him as he is (1 Jn. 3:2, 3). We walk by faith now, not by sight (2 Cor. 5:1-7), but when he comes again “faith will be lost in heavenly sight”.

Further, this faith produces the HOPE of eternal life (Tit. 1:2, 3:7) which will be realised at the “glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ (Tit. 1:13). Hope will cease when eternal life is given at the coming of Christ the second time for no man still hopes for that which he has received (Rom. 8: 23, 24). LOVE is the “greatest” and will never cease for God is love (1 Jn. 4:16).

In summary: Miraculous spiritual gifts were to be done away when “that” which is perfect is come, yet faith, hope and love were to abide ever after the doing away of tongues etc. As faith and hope cease at the second coming of Jesus, yet tongues, knowledge and prophecy cease before faith and hope, we can know “that which is perfect” does not refer to Jesus or his second coming, but to something which happens before that great event.

What then is “that which is perfect”? It is the completed revelation of God’s will as we have it in the scriptures today, confirmed by the miracles (Heb. 2:3, 4), and into which a person may look “face to face” (James 1:23-25). It is the “all scripture given by inspiration of God” that is able to make the man of God perfect by thoroughly furnishing him unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

— Roland J. McDowell.

## “THE NECESSARY EVIL”

“And now we come to the necessary evil of this service — the offering.”

These words were spoken by a preacher during a religious gathering in Liverpool, England. He was apologising for the fact that they could not get on with the important spiritual part of the service until they had taken care of the rather dirty business of collecting money. Studying the Word, however, shows us that giving is far from a “necessary evil.” On the contrary, it is one of the greatest privileges God has given to his people.

A far better attitude is seen in the incident reported from Korea after the war.

A young man was seen pulling a plow, guided by an older man. “That’s a strange scene,” a visiting businessman said to a missionary.

“That’s the family of Chi Boui,” the missionary replied. “Our church building was destroyed during the war and they sold their only ox and gave the money to help with the new building.”

“That must have been some sacrifice,” responded the businessman.

“They didn’t call it that,” answered the missionary. “They seemed glad that they had an ox to sell.”

Many members of the church seem to reflect the attitude seen in our first story in contrast to our second one. They appear not to have seriously studied the Bible on this vital theme. There are problems in meeting budgets. And these budgets are often far lower than they ought to be. Budget increases are not even keeping up with inflation! Preachers fear criticism, and so fail to deal forth-rightly with the plain Biblical teaching. Elders are apologetic if called upon to encourage the congregation to meet their obligations.

The religious world has all but abandoned any semblance of New Testament giving. Professional fund raisers are needed to get any response in many denominations. Bingos, sales and suppers are used to bolster sagging offerings. We rightly condemn such substitutes for scriptural giving. But while we give at the scriptural time, do we really give in the scriptural way? We reject unscriptural methods of raising funds, but do we really sacrifice when we give?

To those who would grow in their understanding and practice of New Testament giving, we would recommend a thorough study of Second Corinthians, Chapters 8 and 9. Henry H. Halley, author of the popular "Bible Handbook," says these chapters are "the most complete instructions about church giving which the NT contains."

Here Paul extols what he terms "the grace of giving" (2 Cor. 8:7). Grace is more than "unmerited favor." There is a great depth of meaning in this term. In this context it suggests a voluntary gift. When we view giving in this light, we see it no longer as a necessary evil, but a grateful response to the grace of God. Our giving becomes a reflection of what God has done for us.

In a lecture given at Harding College, Mac Layton says that giving is the most frequently-mentioned grace in God's Word. He continues, "Of the 33 parables of Jesus, more than 20 of them deal with stewardship, sharing, or some aspect of formulating a proper attitude toward the world in which we live, and the world to which we are going. One in every six verses, on the average, deals with this vital theme." But although the act of giving receives such prominence in the Scriptures, it is sadly neglected in the church. Brother Layton says, "Figures show that churches of Christ are far down the list in giving among religious groups in America." Do you suppose that we are doing any better in Canada? Of course, the giving of the denominations is not the standard we must go by. But it is much easier to reach than the standard of God's Word.

John 3:16 has often been called "the greatest text in the Bible." It is great because it speaks about a God who gave the greatest possible gift. When we learn to give, we become more God-like. Our Gracious God permits us to have fellowship with Him in His work. He could accomplish all that He wants to do without our feeble efforts, yet He permits us to participate through our lives, prayers and gifts. Paul could say, "But by the grace of God I am what I am . . ." (I Cor. 15:10).

Our giving reveals a lot about us as congregations and as individuals. It is an index to our spiritual growth. It shows just how much we really love God. God can take our gifts and multiply them to His glory. A bank has a sign which reads, "Put your money to work for you." A better motto would be "Put your money to work for God."

This year the GLCC Bible Lectureship is on the theme of "Stewardship." The speakers and their topics indicate that this will be a great opportunity for some in-depth study of the topic. We hope to see you there.

Keith T. Thompson,  
Canadian Gospel Herald.

# SCRIPTURE READINGS

NOVEMBER 1981

1 Isaiah 40, 12-31 1 Cor. 1, 26 to 2,16  
 8 Malachi 3, 13-46 1 Cor. 3  
 15 Psalm 10 1 Cor. 4  
 22 Deut. 13 1 Cor. 5  
 29 Exodus 23, 1-13 1 Cor. 6

## Beginnings

Our letter shows that a church of some numbers had developed at Corinth, and we should therefore take a look at its earliest days by reading the story in Acts 18. We observe there was first a partnership in business, and that happened because in the providence of God a Jewish couple occupied in tent-making was expelled with all other Jews from the city of Rome. What could be more natural than that a common business brought stranger Jews together in a strange town. We do not know that Aquila and Priscilla were Christians, but if not they soon become competently so as their story proves (Acts 18, 26) — a common trade often proves a bond in other senses. Daily work can be a daily and continual blessing, an effective evangelism. Reading of Paul's feelings on entering the town (2, 1-5), we think what a comfort his new companions must have been. We might compare with the Saviour's tremendous trial, the entry of Paul to this desperately worldly and wicked place. On one occasion Jesus said "Father save Me from this hour!" (John 12, 27) in the form of a question. Did not Paul have the experience again and again? (II Cor. 1, 8: 11, 23-28). We may be sure that in such circumstances OUR FATHER is ready to help for He knows our weakness. In this town the Lord spoke in Paul's need for He had "much people in this city" (18,10). So his reasoning on the sabbath, resulted in the chief synagogue ruler's conversion, baptised by Paul himself, and three other households formed a nucleus for a strong active congregation — Justus,

Stephanas and Chloe. Besides this the enemies of the faith received a strong rebuff from the Governor Gallio. Eighteen months proved a truly solid time of instruction.

## How many letters?

Study has been centred upon the question of correspondence with this church because it is evident other letters had been sent and received. We read of one of them in ch. 5, 9, and Paul had a letter asking questions (7, 1). He had also personal connections through the household of Chloe (1, 11) and with Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus (16, 17 & 18). The question remains; is what we call the first letter the one which caused such distress (II Cor. 2, 4) in being written? Or could that be the one mentioned in 5, 9. Personally, we feel our "First" IS it by reason of the church troubles it reveals, which surely were a cause of deep grief.

The suggestion that II Cor. 10 to 13 was misplaced when the N.T. letters were brought together seems far-fetched. Paul felt it an urgent matter to put his case for authority before the church rather than be compelled to be harsh when with them in the body. The mention of a third visit (II Cor. 12, 14 & 13, 1) appears to mean he had paid a visit between times, of which there is no trace in Luke's or Paul's own record. Would not this be explained by the one *intended* visit *not made* as stated in the first chapter of the second letter? He was apparently accused by some of vacillation, but it was discretion or wisdom which deferred it. The apostle's complete loyalty to truth was tempered by a great tenderness of heart.

## God's word and God's wisdom

Jesus once gave thanks to the Father for the choice of the humble for the fulfilment of His designs (Luke 10, 21). Those who are eminent in the eyes of the world have no pre-eminence in the sight of God, and the highest authorities in worldly wisdom are excluded from His favour unless they utterly renounce

man's wisdom in favour of God's. The Corinthian Christians were paying too much attention to man's share in the preaching of the gospel, and forgetting that he is only an instrument for God's use. We sometimes mistakenly talk of converting people if that is man's operation it cannot prevail to change one soul.

Only the Spirit of God can truly convert. Only once is the word "convert" left in the Revised version 1881. The Greek word means turn and refers to an action on the person's part of course brought about by the Spirit of God. When we are poor and low in human society we might however be just as far from the kingdom of God if we are proud of that. So whatever our station in life we must humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God in order to be acceptable to Him. Hence Paul's insistence upon God, His wisdom, His revelation, His inspiration, His over-all power and responsibility. Christ is the power and the wisdom revealed through His word, and entrusted to men who must speak in the "words which the Holy Spirit teacheth" (2, 13). We have had occasion to say that each Christian needs to read the actual scriptures himself rather than listen to sermons or lectures — necessary though they often are — and that accordingly careful public reading of them is an essential part of New Testament worship and quite as important as the sermon. We observe the precedence Paul gives to Jesus and the cross (2, 2). Reasonings are important and useful (Acts 18, 4) but they must present facts.

### The Apostolic Record

I suppose we all "feel the breeze" and are moved with deep humility when we meet this record, so plainly stated in 4, 9-13. We cannot exaggerate the sublime heroism of those early Christians, nor fail to see the contrast between these days at least in the "West" and those in times of desperate persecution. The apostle had this in mind surely when he wrote "the present distress" (7, 26) as being then present and always imminent

at that period. However we now rarely pray without thinking of those in the present world who are in deep distress and suffering for maintaining the faith. Those interested should read Bro. Gatewood in "Contact", or Richard Wurmbbrand or "Underground Evangelism" — the two latter are "Interdenominational."

It seems quite certain those apostles faced death continuously and must have just escaped like Paul with hairbreadth adventure up to their martyrdom. God chose to rescue Peter from early violence (Acts 12), but not so James (12, 2). The only one said to have died naturally was John. Was he not spared that he might write those portions of the New Testament attributed to him and so vitally necessary for Us? We have no reason to doubt that Peter and Paul died in the Neronian persecution, and all the others likewise in one way or another sealed their testimony with their blood. Coming to modern times again let us not forget the plight of our brothers and sisters in Africa caught up in the awful conflicts in that tormented continent.

Who knows what our children may face in a world "gone left" with anti-God domination? "The Son of God goes forth to war" (524 Christian Hymnary: 282 C. of C. Hymns 1957...

### Evil in the Church

Our readings reveal matters of vital importance as invading the church at Corinth, and bringing severe rebuke from the one responsible for its original existence. We can only briefly list them. First, there is difference among members due to their personal attachments to preachers and teachers. The preachers did not differ among themselves but had different personalities. It was not and is not right to allow differences of this kind to influence our feelings towards one another or the truth. Secondly, serious moral failure had been known and not rebuked. Fleshly sin in the church must be put out unless repentance is at once manifested. Thirdly, differences among members

had been taken to court. In no case should one Christian do this. He should raise the matter to be considered together with his brethren, and suffer wrong rather than seek justice. We think Jesus did provide for such things (Matt. 18, 15-17), and though perhaps difficult to carry out, must be our individual procedure. We can misjudge our Corinthian brethren by not appreciating the condition of society which they were immediately called upon to face with outstanding firmness, but we can appreciate the deep grief with which Paul received the news, and the necessity of severe rebuke. Those Christians had to stand up and be counted. Our temptation is rather to sink into mere respectability — which is almost worse than moral failure.

R. B. Scott.

### CLOSING THE GAP

Stepping off the pavement I tripped, spilling the contents of my handbag which included a wallet and a watch I was taking to be repaired, out into the gutter. As I sat on the kerb rubbing my knee the first to arrive on the scene was a youth. He was of the type they call a Skinhead.

Others also helped pick up the scattered money and the lad, himself, handed me my wallet. I dropped everything back into my handbag.

An elderly woman had been watching the Skinhead and nudged me as I got to my feet. "You should have told that one to clear off. Where there's anything of value his sort need watching," she mumbled.

Having recovered from my fall I slowly limped on home, but had not gone far when someone tapped me on the arm. On turning I saw the youth again. To my amazement he handed me a couple of pound notes, and I thanked him.

"They must have blown away," I said. "No they didn't," he replied. "I whipped 'em from your wallet when no one was looking. But because you didn't

check on me I felt pretty lousy after you'd gone. You see, most people expect the worst of us, and we don't like to let 'em down!"

I watched him hurry away, in his strange clothes and ungainly Bover boots until he was lost in the crowd; and I stood there, lost in thought.

PAULA TOONE IN *Guideposts*

### WHAT HOUR?

The subject under consideration here is the hour of the observance of the Lord's Supper. By hour we mean the time of the observance, not the day, as Acts 20:7 settles the day. We will consider the hour acceptable by God for the observance of the Supper.

1, In the absence of a specified hour (time of day), it seems that any hour contained in the twenty-four hours of the first day of each week would and must be acceptable.

2, To bind a specific hour to the exclusion of all others is fallacy, to say the least. We would surely condemn those who partake of the Supper at a different hour of the day. Therefore, we must not bind tradition upon anyone who has different customs in this respect. The hour is purely a matter of expediency that may vary from congregation to congregation.

3, So we must not become slaves to tradition. We must remind ourselves that we partake of the Lord's Supper on a specified hour because we have by mutual consent agreed upon that hour, not because that hour has been determined by divine revelation. Since the hour is an expedient locally, the time of its observance may be changed by the membership any time.

*Conclusion:*

*The day is Specific (Acts 20:7) The day specified is the first day of the week (Sunday).*

*The hour is not specific; therefore the hour is left to the judgement of the local leadership or elders.*

GARRETH L. CLAIR

## BAPTISM

### What Is Baptism?

Water is the element — Acts 10:47; 8:38  
 Takes much water — John 3:23  
 John baptized in the Jordan River —  
 Matt. 3:6  
 Jesus came up out of the water — Mark  
 1:10  
 Baptism takes place after going “down  
 into the water” and before coming “up  
 out of the water” — Acts 8:38-39  
 It is a burial — R 6:4; Col. 2:12  
 (Note: Neither sprinkling nor pouring is  
 New Testament baptism).

### Who Is To Be Baptized?

Those gladly receiving the word — Acts  
 2:41  
 Those who believe — Mark 16:16  
 Those who repent — Acts 2:38; Matt.  
 3:7-8  
 Those who confess — Acts 8:37  
 Those having freedom of choice — Luke  
 7:30  
 Those guilty of sin — Acts 2:38; 22:16  
 (Note: Infants are not proper subjects of  
 baptism).

### Why Be Baptized?

John's baptism was for remission of sins  
 Mark 1:4 Matt. 3:6  
 Baptism a condition of salvation —  
 Mark 16:16  
 For remission of sins — Acts 2:38  
 To wash away sins — Acts 22:16  
 It is a command of God — Acts 10:33, 48  
 Baptized into Christ — Rom 6:3; Gal.  
 3:27  
 Frees from sin — Rom. 6:3, 7, 17, 18  
 Baptism saves — 1 Peter 3:21  
 (Note: According to the New Testament  
 none are saved from their sins before  
 and without baptism).

*Baptizo* is the Greek for *Immerse*  
*Immersion* is *Baptism*  
*Rantizo* is the Greek for *Sprinkle*  
*Sprinkling* is *Rantism*  
*Cheo* is the Greek for *Pour*  
*Pouring* is *Cheism*

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Cape Town, R.S.A.:** Now here are some brief news items, but must first mention that in my last news items published in the S.S., during May month 1981, when I has mentioned about in total up till April 1981, 5 precious souls were baptised, “and *said with the hopeful* looking forward to many more precious being baptised.”

Well it just happened as we hoped, and I'm sure along with your prayers too, that it was after the final closing hymn was sung (in a home where we conduct a meeting on Tuesday evenings) a man and his wife expressed their desire to be baptised, they live close by to our school room meeting place, at Bokmakirie Athlone. So along with a few members I fetched this couple Wednesday afternoon 12th August 1981 and baptised them, and we can indeed see how true God's word is that “his word shall not return unto Him void but that it shall accomplish its end unto where it shall be sent.”

This couple have a young daughter, who seems interested, and I'm certain it will not be long when she shall “follow in the steps of Mom and Dad (Lord willing). The young daughter, now attends our Bible study on Wednesday evenings, also in a private home. To the Glory of God the “progress is slow but sure.” That in total we have had now 7 precious souls for 1981, and that since I have been labouring with them from April 1979, to August '81 along with the 7 we have had along with 8 others (15 in all over the 2 years).

Last of all we now average on Sunday a.m. 29, Sunday evenings 26, Tuesday evening cottage meetings 24, Bible study Wednesdays 17. As we labour here, we pray that your labours wherever you may be, “shall give cause for great rejoicing.”

— T. W. Hartle

**KIRKCALDY.** On 8th September, Betsy Roberts confessed Jesus as her Lord and was baptised. At the same time her husband John was restored to fellowship. May God bless them in their christian walk of life.

Robert Hughes.

**Slamannan District, Scotland.** The quarterly "Mutual Benefit" meeting was held on Saturday 12th September, in the Scout Hall, Dalmellington, when Jack Nisbet occupied the chair. The speakers were brother David Chalmers and Ian Davidson. The subject was an enquiry into why churches of Christ do not recite what is commonly referred to as "The Lord's Prayer." The speakers dealt well with the subject and, as usual, an hours discussion followed. It was pointed out that the "Lord's Prayer" so-called was given as an example at the time to a request from the disciples "Teach us how to pray" and that it was no longer relevant to pray "Thy kingdom come" since the kingdom "came" shortly after the prayer was made. There is also a vast difference in between praying and merely "saying a prayer." In any case if there is a "Lord's Prayer" it is in John 17:1.

H. Davidson.

wounds sustained during his lifetime work of gardening involved him in medical attention and hospital treatment — a time of much suffering, culminating in an accident which proved fatal. He died in Pembury Hospital. Sister Venn has cared for him, and has lost a life companion. We have lost a useful brother. Members of Kentish Town and Tunbridge Wells churches with relatives and friends attended the service at Teddington Cemetery.

R. B. Scott.

**Hindley:** Once again we have passed through the valley of Sorrow. Sister Clara Ainscough fell asleep in Jesus on July 15th after a long life of trust and faithfulness to her Lord and Master. Although unable to attend the meetings at the latter end, she was ever concerned about the church and never failed to contribute to its resources. She had a loving nature, and was always ready to appreciate and encourage the brethren.

To her loved ones who tended so faithfully to her, and to all who thought so much of her, we offer our sympathy and prayers on their behalf, that they may be upheld by the everlasting arms and find peace and comfort in the Lord Jesus Christ.

— Tom Kemp.

## OBITUARY

**KENTISH TOWN/TUNBRIDGE WELLS.** We regret to report the departure to be with Christ of our brother Leslie Venn on Lord's Day, August 23rd at the age of 74. Baptised when 42 years old he took a keen interest in the work of the church, taking a share in speaking and presiding, opening his home for Bible study, and serving the churches at Brighton and Reading in company with his brother. He was married to Sister Lawrence of Tunbridge Wells four years ago and was worshipping there. Trouble from

**Haddington, Scotland.** We regret the sad passing of brother William Logan after a long and arduous illness bravely borne. Brother Logan and his wife were baptised in 1951 and have been faithful servants of the Lord since that time. Brother Logan had been ill since his retiral from work. He was one of nature's gentlemen and will be sadly missed by all who knew him. We commend sister Logan and son, John, and all friends and relatives to our Heavenly Father, in their sad time of mourning. Brother Tom Nisbet officiated at the funeral at the home and graveside.

Ruth Nisbet.

## COMING EVENTS

**KENTISH TOWN.** Hope Chapel was opened on October 5th, 1871. We invite visitors to our 110th anniversary meetings on Saturday, October 3rd, for thanksgiving, and encouragement for continued service. The plea has not changed. Brother Leonard Morgan has kindly agreed to be with us and speak on Saturday and the Lord's Day.

R. B. Scott.

**Church Social — Newtongrange.** Saturday, 31st October 4 p.m. Speakers: Bro. H. Davidson, Motherwell. Bro. J. Morgan, Wigan. Chairman Joe Currie. A hearty invitation is extended to all churches and friends to be with us.

seriously in seeking to win souls for the kingdom of God — but it is God's kingdom and not our kingdom and it is God Himself who must attract. We see a stream of men and women week by week confess faith in Christ and put Him on in baptism. We encourage the new believers to continue their discipleship in local congregations. In establishing new congregations we believe that we are implementing the Great Commission. At the latest count, there are 45 congregations in the northern areas of Zambia and southern areas of Zaire. If this is "empire building," it is empire building for God — men and women believe in Jesus Christ and form local companies of believers. Chester and Angela Woodhall, Church of Christ Mission, P.O. Box 22297, Kitwe, Zambia.

## EMPIRE BUILDING FOR GOD

Are we empire building in Zambia? If "empire building" means buying converts with money or favours, real or imagined, then we deny the charge. We have had denominational empires offered to us if we would take over paying the preachers and provide funds for capital and recurrent expenditure and we have refused every time. It is our conviction that our message of Christianity as it was in the beginning is our only attraction. We are engaged

## AND THIS IS FAITH

To wait a while within the dark,  
 To walk alone,  
 Calm in the faith a star will shine  
 As other stars have shone;  
 To know, when sorrow stays our feet,  
 That we can lean  
 On Him who gives us strength to walk  
 Into the storm, serene.

S. L. Armes

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