

# *The* **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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## **BOUNDARY LINES**

EVERYBODY likes to know exactly where they stand respecting every aspect of life and man is constantly concerned with drawing boundaries – they are oftentimes called by other names but are in essence boundaries just the same. They range from marriage contracts to Treaties amongst Nations. If we think about it for a moment we will, perhaps, come to the conclusion that all of man's problems stem from an encroachment into the boundaries surrounding others. Lawyers spend much of their time either drawing up legal boundaries or investigating the alleged violation of boundaries already established. The Courts and jails are full of men and women who have overstepped social and legal boundaries. There are at least a dozen major wars going on in the world at this present time associated with boundary lines between nations. Indeed most wars have begun over disputes of this kind. The I.R.A. commit horrible murders every day in Ireland because of the boundary line which runs between Ulster and southern Ireland. Family feuds and litigation between normally friendly neighbours are substantially because of disputes over demarcation lines between properties. Britain's present industrial troubles are basically over demarcation lines and Union's efforts to have industrial boundary lines revised, especially in connection with output targets and the wage for the job. Boundary lines have always been regarded as important, and even sacrosanct. In Britain, in many towns there is an annual trek around the parish boundaries just to re-affirm to all and sundry the extent of the boundary. In England this old custom of 'Beating the Bounds' is still kept up in a few Parishes and the villagers, clergymen and Town Officials, traverse the boundaries, small boys placing willow wands here and there on the boundary line and sometimes being 'whipped' at intervals 'to make them remember' the boundary lines. The counter-part of this custom in Scotland is still carried out locally here and is done on horseback, called 'Riding the Marches (Boundaries)'.

God was the first to make boundaries, as we read in the early chapters of Genesis, and it was by a violation of the boundaries set by God that sin entered the world. Man was not made in the form of some kind of robot or machine but was endowed with entire freedom of choice, and Adam, prompted by Eve, chose to violate the demarcation lines drawn by God. Neither did God erect a great wall around man but gave him complete freedom of movement throughout creation. Thus when man loves God and remains within the boundaries set by God, God knows that this love springs from man's freedom of choice and is genuine. Indeed it is only when boundaries are set that trespass is revealed. There is no trespass if there is no boundary. In Scotland the law is such that there is no law of trespass albeit landowners, to scare the unlightened, place signs upon their land stating 'Trespassers Will be Prosecuted', but trespassers

can not be prosecuted, and can only be accountable if they do any damage to the property. Without law there is no offence. People are commonly heard to say that 'the line must be drawn somewhere'. In every sphere and facet of life God has drawn the line. God has not always drawn the same line but He has drawn a line. The line does not help us, the boundary does not help us, the law does not help us — it is merely informative. The writer to the Hebrews says that even Moses' law could not excuse; it could merely accuse. The parishioners paid their local clergyman the doubtful compliment that they had not really known what sin was until he had come along. Paul, in Romans 7, says that without law sin is dead but once we are enlightened sin revives. The restraints of the law brought to his attention his own sinful nature. I know that in this epistle to the Romans Paul sometimes refers to law in general and is sometimes referring to the law of Moses, but the point I am trying to make is merely that the law in function is neutral. Although amongst men there are quite often bad laws (and there are even some ludicrous laws on the Statute Book) but all of God's laws are thoroughly good and are designed for man eventual health and happiness, never-the-less the law, in itself is impartial, it is merely informative. "What shall I say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet". God then has drawn boundaries and we are circumscribed thereby. We have a responsibility to remain within the confines of the lines drawn by God, but we have all fallen short and some are dead in 'trespasses and sins'. The law did not cause our downfall, it merely revealed it.

God's law then, is as neutral as a looking glass. If we look into a hand mirror and see a few warts or scars do we accuse the mirror? Law merely brings knowledge. It's the knowledge that brings responsibility, and accountability. In any event the law holds terrors only for them likely to break it. Paul says in Romans 13 that lawmakers "are not a terror to good works, but to the evil", i.e. we don't need to worry about the law until we intend to break it. In Saudi-Arabia, and many of the other Arab countries, merchants can leave large display-cases of gold ornaments in the marketplace quite unattended, and money-lenders can leave large quantities of money pinned to boards in the street, also unattended, because they know no-one will dare to steal any of their wares. The punishment for theft in these lands is to have one's hand, or both, chopped off. The severity of the punishment deters the thief but need not worry anyone not disposed to steal. And so Paul makes the point (in Rom. 7) that the law is not the problem; the problem is sin. Law does not produce sin, or even cause sin — it merely defines it. "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual but I am carnal, sold under sin". And so Paul exonerates the law from any blame for our state but ascribes it to sin and our sinful natures. Indeed in the following verses he says, "For that which I do I allow not; for what I would, that do I not: but what I hate that I do. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good". In the following verse Paul describes the feeling, shared by us all, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do". And so the apostle correctly adduces that we, like him, with the mind serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord". Our only hope therefore in overcoming our tendency to trespass the boundaries set by God, lies in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and in His shed blood. And so the law can not clear us of guilt but merely accuse. It is the blood of Christ which cleanseth us from all sin.

And thus we may be able to echo the sentiments just expressed by the apostle Paul and be able to confess that many times we have erred and found ourselves on the wrong side of God's laws. Many times we have trespassed the boundaries ordained by God and many times we, all, like sheep have gone astray and have turned, everyone, unto our own ways. The good news contained in the New Testament is that there is a remedy for such a sorry state of affairs. To those who have not, as yet, obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ, the remedy is to

"Repent and be baptized (immersed), everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." (Acts 2:38) or to "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins..." (Acts 22:16). thereafter endeavouring to walk wellpleasing to God. To those who have obeyed the gospel and thereafter fall short in their faithfulness to God the word of the apostle John must be welcome, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins. He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness". (1 John 1:19). God takes very seriously the lines He has drawn and the boundaries He has prescribed and man must take them equally seriously. The Devil sets no boundaries. In all things we should remember that God has also set boundaries between the eternal abiding places to which men will go, to Heaven or to Hell, and that even in the intermediate state "there is a great gulf fixed". This gulf will be of immense proportions (Luke 16) and as a barrier or boundary will make the Berlin Wall pale into complete insignificance.

EDITOR.

## NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

WHETHER or not we believe in Seasonal observances, which are frowned upon in Gal. 4:10 and seemingly condoned in Romans 14:5, nevertheless the New Year is a time when we cannot but engage in reflections not only upon the past and present but also upon the future; although in the latter connection we cannot but colour our thoughts by the wisdom of our Lord's remarks in Matthew 6:34.

Be that as it may, the old year has gone and has been replaced by the new. For a time at least the old Adam has been subdued and a spirit of newness pervades our whole being, reminiscent somewhat of our experience at our new birth, when all things became new, and still are to the Christian.

Ill-will has been forgotten; good-will spreads around us. It is like Winter followed by the Spring. New life awakes from the old, cold gives place to warmth, darkness to sunshine. It is like a parable of what our lives should be, not only for a season but forever. We are vividly reminded of Tennyson's lines:

Ring out the Old, Ring in the New  
 Ring happy bells across the snow  
 The Year is going, let him go  
 Ring out the False, Ring in the True.

Ring out the slowly dying cause  
 And ancient forms of party strife  
 (shades of parliamentary debates)  
 Ring in the nobler modes of life  
 With sweeter manners, purer laws  
 (a reflection on the permissive age?)

Ring out the thousand wars of old  
 Ring in the thousand years of peace  
 (My peace I leave with you, said our Lord  
 — not as the world giveth)

Ring out old shapes of foul disease  
 (a prophecy of National Health Service?).  
 Ring out the narrowing lust for gold  
 (a reflection on exorbitant pay demands?)

Ring in the valiant man and free  
 (are we slaves to bureaucracy?)  
 The larger heart the kindlier hand  
 (where has neighbourliness gone?)  
 Ring in the Christ that is to be.

Such was the change prophesied by Tennyson on the birth of Christ. The old would give place to the new, darkness to light, evil would be replaced by good. Men and women as a result of that momentous happening would become better in their lives, replacing the dross and sin in their natures by something higher and nobler, something that was more like Him, "full of grace and truth".

As John said, He came a Light to lighten our darkness but men prefer darkness to light (how true of conditions nowadays). He came and lived in our midst, so kind and humble and good and true — a Friend of Man He was called and what gracious words fell from His lips. Even His enemies were constrained to say, "No man ever spake like this man". The Scribes and Pharisees had no answer for Him. Pilate, his judge said, "I have found no fault in him". The Centurion at the cross exclaimed, "Certainly this was a righteous man".

Peter to the Christians of his day said, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, who when He was reviled reviled not again when He suffered He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously: who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin should live unto righteousness. By those stripes ye are healed".

When we compare that to our own lives, how poor we are; how far we fall short and yet that is the example we have to follow, if we are to lead higher and nobler lives. For Peter prefaces his remarks by the words addressed to all Christians: — "Hereunto are ye called (the answer to suffering? W.B.) because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in His steps".

What resolution then can we make for New Year and indeed for all of the remaining years of our very brief lifetime, which would make our lives, and the lives of those around us, better and more like His? should it not be to do our best to "follow in His steps"?

What a change it would make in our lives, if, every time we were faced with a decision we said to ourselves. "I wonder what He would do in these circumstances"?

Would it not stay the angry word? Would it not halt that foolish action we were about to take, bringing shame and pain not only to ourselves but to others? Would it not cut out the selfishness in our lives and seek some way whereby we might help others for a change?

"So ought ye to wash oneanother's feet", said our Lord, as He humbled Himself: the Lord of Life and Creation washing His disciples feet. "Love ye oneanother", He said, "As I have loved you".

Ask and it shall be given unto thee  
 Seek and ye shall find  
 Knock and it shall be opened unto you  
 For everyone that asketh receiveth  
 And he that seeketh findeth  
 And to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

How true these words are, as experience shows. The oftener we ask the greater inward strength we receive to fight the good fight of faith. The oftener we seek the more we find of that nobler and higher life He would have us all to live: the more gracious and kindlier we would become, the greater happiness we can spread in a life given in service not to ourselves, but to others. The oftener we knock the more and more is the door opened to that way which leadeth to life eternal — to that Day of Days, that Resurrection Morn, when there shall be no more death, neither sorrow or crying. Neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things will

have passed away and we shall walk the golden streets, and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. What resolutions, if any, have you made for 1979? Resolve to Ask, Seek and Knock. Resolve also to Walk – to walk, that is, in His steps. W. BROWN, Aberdeen.

## GLEANINGS

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

OUR THEME – GOD’S REFRESHING GRACE

OUR TEXT:– “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness”.  
2 Corinthians 12:9

Cruden has defined grace as the “free and eternal love and flavour of God, which is the spring of all the benefits which we as recipients receive from Him”. Man can present no claim to God’s favour: grace, though absolutely unmerited, is very freely bestowed, especially in redemption and sanctification. It was according to the eternal purpose of God “that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus”. Ephesians 2:7.

SOMEONE HAS SAID:– “The acts of breathing which I performed yesterday will not keep me alive today; I must continue to breathe afresh every moment, or animal life ceases. In like manner, yesterday’s grace and spiritual strength must be renewed, from moment to moment in order to my enjoying the consolations, and to my working the works, of God”.

GARDNER MILLER:– “You may not receive what you want, but God will prepare you to do without it. He may not lift your burden but He will give you strength to carry it. No true prayer is ever unanswered. “My grace is sufficient for thee”. Our impatience and our impotence throw us against the thorn-hedge until, weakened and spent, we look up and then we see One, thorn-crowned, who learned obedience by the things He suffered, standing by our side. God’s refusals are often His tenderest answers”.

Amazing grace ! how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me;  
I once was lost, but now am found;  
Was blind, but now I see.

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“My grace is sufficient” – exhaustless in measure,  
Though millions appeal in their need;  
My Saviour, I praise Thee, I take of the treasure,  
Thy grace IS sufficient indeed”!

J. H. JOWETT:– “Grace is too commonly regarded as a pleasing sentiment, a soft disposition, a welcome feeling of cosy favour entertained toward us by our God. The interpretation is ineffective, and inevitably cripples the life in which it prevails. Grace is more than a smile of good-nature. It is not the shimmering face of an illumined lake; it is the sun-lit majesty of an advancing sea. It is transcendent and ineffable force, the outgoing energies of the redeeming personality of God washing against the polluted shores of human need”.

JOHN L. BIRD:– “We must never rely upon the spiritual experiences of yesterday, but on the promised grace for each new day. Each day is different. There are new people we have to meet; there are new situations we have to face; there are new problems to overcome. We must trust God for the day in which we are living now”.

C. H. SPURGEON:— "Grace in all its forms He freely renders to His people: comforting, preserving, sanctifying, directing, instructing, assisting grace, He generously pours into their souls without ceasing, and He always will do so, whatever may occur. Sickness may befall, but the Lord will give grace; poverty may happen to us, but grace will surely be afforded; death must come, but grace will light a candle at the darkest hour. Reader, how blessed it is as years roll round, and the leaves begin again to fall, to enjoy such an unfading promise as this "The Lord will give grace".

CAMPBELL MORGAN:— "All the wind that blows, the rain that splashes, the changes of atmosphere that tell upon the oak, are child's play compared to the mental anguish and heart-break that have swept across your life, and yet you have endured".

SAMUEL RUTHERFORD:— "We are all obliged to love heaven for Christ's sake. He graceth heaven, and all His Father's house, with His presence. He is a Rose that beautifieth all the upper garden of God, a leaf of that Rose of God for smell is worth a world. O that He would blow His smell upon a withered and dead soul! Let us, then, go on to meet with Him, and to be filled with the sweetness of His love".

Selected by Leonard Morgan.

### "EVERYBODY'S DOING IT"

One of the most frequently used excuses for engaging in questionable conduct is, "Everyone else is doing it. Why shouldn't I?" Young people are not the only ones that ask this question. Those in the older generation sometimes use it to try to justify cheating the government, beating an insurance company, stealing from an employer, or committing some other sin.

Nearly every teenager has said at some time or other something to this effect, "Aw, Mom, why can't I? Everyone else at school is doing it. I will be the only odd ball in the crowd." In some matters of custom this statement may largely be true. And wise parents will allow their children to fit into wholesome company. But if a thing is wrong or *even tends toward sin*, the excuse "Everybody is doing it" is not logical or valid.

Right and wrong cannot be decided by majority vote. When Adam was chided by God for his sin, he could have said truthfully, "Well, everyone else (Eve) was doing it!" But that would not have made it right.

Had Noah done what "everyone" was doing, he and his family would have been destroyed with that generation.

A majority of Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery. A majority of the Israelites rebelled against God and Moses in the wilderness. A majority transgressed God's laws in the days of the prophets. The faithful often were referred to as a "remnant" of the nation. And it was a majority — a unanimous mob — that crucified Jesus Christ. If you had been there, would you have "got in on" what everybody else was doing?

If one lived in an area where most people were cannibals, would that justify cannibalism? If one were in a heathen culture, would that warrant heathenism? The Biblical fact that everybody has sinned does not excuse sin. Every moral issue must be decided by principle, not by vote nor deed. True morality must be based on God's Word.

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil," 1 Thess. 5: 20-21.

Even if everyone else in the world should do wrong, God still wants YOU to do right. But the simple fact is that everyone else IS NOT doing wrong. Many fine young people do not smoke and do not intend to start. Millions of young people know that drinking alcohol is sinful and foolish. Many refuse to gamble, to cheat, or to swear. Thousands do not dance because they do not want to be tempted or to lead others into temptation. Millions of wise teenagers flatly disapprove of narcotics, immodest apparel, reckless driving, and other ridiculous behaviour. It always has been so.

The young Joseph was faithful to God when far from home and under trying circumstances. Daniel overcame temptation and hardship when others were yielding to sin. Esther bravely pleaded for her people, the Jews, when others were trying to destroy them. The list of godly young people in the Bible is long, and there are many today who place truth and righteousness above pleasure and popularity.

God knows that there is much sin in the world. There has been since the earliest generations of humanity. Therefore the Lord always has demanded a certain separateness of His people. He called Abraham away from his background and family in order to develop the Jewish nation out of his descendants. He called the Jews out of Egypt to live in their own land separate from pagans and infidels.

Christ has called his disciples out of worldliness into righteousness. The word "church" is translated from a Greek word that literally means "called out." Christians are *in* the world, but we are not to be *of* the world. This means that if all of the world sins, we are not to follow the world. We are to follow Christ (1 Peter 2:9-10; Ephesians 4:1; Colossians 3:1-11).

"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" (Romans 12:1-2).-

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall by my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Corinthians 6:17-18).

Are you willing to stand up for Jesus even if others do not? Are you brave enough to be a Christian, even if the crowd is determined to do wrong? Are you mature enough to bear a cross of loneliness and rejection if need be in order to live as Christ would have you to? Being right is a thousand times more important than being in "the majority."

Christ called on his disciples to enter the narrow gate and to travel the difficult way that leads to heaven. Other ways are easier and more pleasurable, but they lead to destruction (Matthew 7: 13-14). Christ did not promise ease or pleasure. He calls for self-denial and dedication. Christianity is not for sissies — those too cowardly to buck the crowd. It is for those who are man enough and woman enough to do right and to trust God to see them through.

Can you meet the challenge — even if "everybody else" is doing otherwise?

— from a tract by Owen Cosgrove.

## IN THE MIDST

'MIDST' is an old word seldom used in today's language. In the dictionary it reads: "Midst — a noun; in the midst of; surrounded by; among."

We today would perhaps use 'the term, 'in the middle'; 'in the centre'; Looking to the Bible we find this intriguing word used often, and as Christians this word is important to us. Paul the Apostle tells us in Colossians that Christ is the first in creation, in resurrection, in Scripture and in the Church. This is truth and likewise Christ should be first in the believer's life. Col. 1:18 tells us Christ is to have pre-eminence. Christ is to be the centre figure — in all things, He is to be in the midst. Jesus is in the midst of Salvation.

John 19:18 reads "They crucified Him and two others with Him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst. Is it not wonderful that in our redemption Jesus is central. He had to be in the midst to be effective. He suffered, the just for the unjust. In salvation, it is a must that Jesus be in the midst and as brethren in the Lord, we know this full well. Even in instruction we can find Jesus the centre.

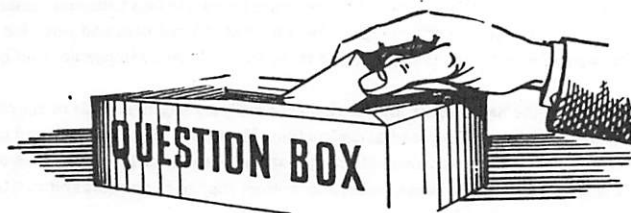
Luke 2:46 "And it came to pass that after 3 days they found Him in the temple sitting in the midst of the teachers. This scene from the childhood of Christ should help us to understand that He has the authority. Note: to teach us. Christ does not just answer questions, He asks them. In authority — Jesus is the centre.

Revelation 1:13 reads — "And in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like the Son of Man". The place of authority in the Church is reserved for Christ alone. Brethren, in worship and fellowship Jesus should be found, in the midst if it is to mean anything at all.

Matthew 18:20 reads — "For where two or three are gathered together there am I in the midst. Is this not wonderful? The promise of the Saviour to be with us is, of course, realised through the medium of the Holy Spirit. This should add a new drive to our service. In the old worship, Israel gathered round the tabernacle, we have Christ, we gather round Him: Christ in the midst if we let Him. Not only in His name but in His person.

John 20:19 reads – “Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and said unto them, peace be unto you”. Even in trial, distress and confusion Jesus can be (or should be) in the midst. Is it not true, that this is our failing. We tend to let Jesus be withdrawn from the midst. Jesus today is in the midst of an ungodly world. We are in the midst of an ungodly age. To be effective, we need Jesus and He needs us to spread the Gospel news. Together great things can happen. Brethren, to give Jesus His rightful place as the pre-eminent One, will result in much joy afforded to us, as we accord Him this honour. We will reap the benefits of His perfect will, faithful care, and complete provision. Brethren, is Jesus in the midst of your life. If not, He should be.

Andrew Sharp, Newtongrange.




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Conducted by  
Mr Marsden

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“Could you please give scriptural reasons against the use of musical instruments in church worship?”

THIS is a question that has been debated many times, and the debates have been fierce and long, but we must not forget that new members are always coming into the church and many of them, who may have come from denominations which do use musical instruments in worship, cannot understand why Churches of Christ do not favour this practice. The plea of Churches of Christ has always been for a return to N.T. christianity as it was in the beginning, and the assertion “We speak where the Bible speaks, and are silent where it is silent”, has been and still is a unique and uncompromising stance against the defamation and textual vivisection which God’s word has been subjected to. This always prompts us, like the Bereans of old, to search the scriptures to see if there is any authority for those practices which well-meaning, but sometimes misguided, christians would want to introduce into the church. It is in this spirit that we shall attempt to answer this very important but sometimes emotive question.

#### History

Departure from God’s word in the realm of worship took place quite early in the history of the church. It would seem that the first organ introduced into the worship by people who claimed to be christians was by Pope Valilian 1 and was some 670 years after Christ. The introduction threatened the unity of the Catholic Church at that time and so the offending instrument was removed, only to be re-introduced at a date some two hundred years later. The Greek Catholic Church rejected it at this later date and continued to oppose it subsequently.

When John Wesley was asked about the use of the organ in church worship he was reputed to have said, “I have no objection to the organ in our chapels provided it is never heard nor seen”. John Calvin, the originator of the Presbyterian Church, said of the use of the organ in worship. “It is no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of tapers or revival of the other shadows of the law. The Catholics foolishly borrowed it from the Jews.”

Bringing the question into line with the great restoration movement, Alexander Campbell said when asked about the inclusion of musical instruments in worship, “to all spiritually minded christians such aids would be as a cowbell in a concert”. J.W. McGarvey also said, “We cannot adopt the practice without abandoning the only ground upon which a restoration of New Testament Christianity can be accomplished”. These men were great Bible scholars and they realised that the mechanical aids used in worship were in no way authorised by the Bible.



### The New Testament pattern.

The use of musical instruments is nowhere mentioned in the N.T. as an aid to worship. In Rev. 5:8 we have a picture of the four and twenty elders who fell down before the Lamb, "having each one a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints". People have used this scripture to advance the argument, "Well, instruments of music are used in heaven to worship God, so what is good enough for heaven is good enough for the church". Fair enough: if God allows harps in heaven then it is His prerogative to do so, but He has never authorised the use of musical instruments in the Church! We must be consistent. If we want the harps of heaven in the church, and we appeal to the Revelation passage to support this, then we must also have the incense; but many who would support instrumental music in the church draw the line at burning incense. If the words are to be taken literally then let's have the incense with our prayers, but I think the passage is figurative anyway.

In his letter to Ephesus, Paul appeals for understanding of God's word, "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:17-19). This passage specifically indicates speaking and singing and nothing else. Words alone are used both to speak and to sing; according to Paul the melody is to be made in the heart, and this is fully consistent with those who are 'filled with the Spirit'.

Speaking and singing we understand, but the making of melody, some say, can only be accomplished by the addition of a musical instrument, so in order to fulfil something that God has never commanded in the first place, they add something to His word. Paul's appeal to the Corinthian brethren was "that you may learn by us to live according to the scripture" (1 Cor. 4:6). Would that many today would live according to that teaching.

The expression 'making melody' is the Greek word *PSALLO*, and this means to pluck a stringed instrument with the fingers; in the O.T. this referred to the harp, and so they psalmed the harp. In the passage of scripture under consideration Paul tells christians to psallo, and what he means is that when christians sing they psallo the heart — they make melody in their hearts by the singing. This is the spiritual use of the word. Quite often in the New Testament we find the literal contrasted with the spiritual so that the spiritual meaning can be shown. Literal circumcision was a cutting of the flesh; spiritual circumcision is of the heart. The Lord mentioned the eating of his flesh and the drinking of his blood; what he meant, of course, was the spiritual feeding on him. Consequently here, literal psalming is plucking a literal object; spiritual psalming is the action on a spiritual object — the heart; we sing and make melody in the heart unto God.

All that the christian is commanded to do is to sing. In the N.T. we read, "And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives" (Matt. 26:30) "And at midnight. Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God" (Acts 16:25). "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also" (1 Cor. 14:15). "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. In all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God" (Coll. 3:16). Singing is the limit of the command. It ought also to be the limit of the practice.

When we sing, we sing songs. The Greek word *ODE* is always used in the N.T. and is in praise of God or Christ. W.E. Vine in his Expository of N.T. words explains that the word 'song' is generic, i.e., we can sing any kind of song. In Eph. 5:19 and Coll. 3:16 the adjective 'spiritual' is used to describe the sort of song which the christian should sing. The spiritual song given voice in praise unto God from a spirit-filled life will lift the heart to heights of melodic ecstasy; surely this is what the Bible teaches. Can you recall those all-too-rare occasions when you have come from a meeting and said "The singing was great tonight, wasn't it"? It was then that the melody of God had blended with the voices to produce something almost divine. That is enough, isn't it?

The very fact that the N.T. is absolutely silent on the use of musical instruments in the worship of God should be enough to convince everyone that God never-intended them to be used for this purpose. He does not want the mechanical aid; what He requires is the praise from spirit-filled lives which speak His name. Let us give this to Him.

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

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

MARCH 1979

4—Psalm 16	John 19:38 - 20:10
11—Gen. 45:1-15	John 20:11-31
18—Ruth 1	John 21:1-14
25—Ezek. 34:1-16	John 21:15-25

At the time of going to press, Bro. R.B. Scott's article had not arrived.

### WE WILL GO ON WITHOUT YOU BUT!

Yes, we will go on without you, but what a wonderful work we could do if we had you! We will continue to meet for worship, have campaigns, and hold Bible studies but seemingly without you.

But what good things we could do with you! How many could be led to the Lamb of God if you were faithful. If only we had 100% co-operation in the work of the Master, what wonderful heights we could attain for Him and what blessings would flow to us. We could easily double our membership every year if we all worked together.

It has been proved a thousand times over that the people who do the work are the ones who are loyal. The churches that are really growing are the ones that have a high degree of consistent attendance. You cannot imagine the power of a church where every member is present at every service. The condemnation of one-hour-a-week Christian will be that they worked against, by their absence, what faithful Christians were working for, by their presence.

Since the church is a body, a family, a vineyard, each member must function, each son must do his work, and each branch must

be fruitful. We shall be eternally lost if we fail, but God's work will go on. Yes, "thou shalt be missed because thy seat shall be empty" (1 Sam. 20:18). But why must the work of Christ go on in spite of you? Determine today that you will seek first the kingdom of God in faithful service to Christ.

Mac Layton (Adapted)

### QUOTES — on Atheism

A little philosophy inclineth a man's mind to atheism; but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds to religion.

Sir Francis Bacon

Atheism is rather in the lip than in the heart of man.

Sir Francis Bacon

By night an atheist half believes in God.  
Edward Young "Night thoughts".

Atheism is the vice of a few intelligent people.  
Voltaire

An atheist is a disbeliever who prefers to raise his children in a Christian community.

Phil. H. Tuseth

O Reader! hast thou ever stood to see  
The Holly Tree?

The eye that contemplates it well perceives  
Its glossy leaves

Ordered by an Intelligence so wise,  
As might confound the atheist's sophistries.

Robt. Southey

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Peterhead, Scotland: Greetings from the church here at Peterhead. Since my last letter to you we have had two more baptisms. Norman Slessor was baptised on the 10th of December '78. We rejoice to see him and his wife united in the Lord. She was added to the Church in November. They are both deaf.

Fenella McLean who is ten years old was baptised on the 17th December '78. She is the daughter of Jack and Alexa McLean, who became christians a year ago. She is a great help to her parents who are both deaf.

We ask for your prayers for these new christians.  
W. M. Strachan, Sec.

**Slamannan District:** The New Year Social of the Slamannan District churches in Scotland was cancelled this year for the very first time in its long history, due to most of the country being snowbound. The speakers were to have been brother Mark Plain (Jnr.) Tranent and brother Thomas Nisbet, Tranent, the chairman brother J. R. Gardiner, Haddington.

**Dennyloanhead, Scotland:** The church which meets here were greatly encouraged recently by the addition to their number, on November 12, 1978, of Alister Scobbie. On his making the good confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, he was immersed into His ever blessed name and born anew. Alister is the son of brother and sister Andrew Scobbie and we hope and pray that our young brother will be encouraged to grow in grace and the knowledge of Jesus his Lord. The power and simplicity of the gospel of Christ has once again been demonstrated and we give thanks. To God be the glory - great things He hath done; so loved He the world, that He gave us His Son. J. M. Malcolm, Sec.

## OBITUARY

**Burns Street, Ilkeston:** It is with deep regret that the church here has to record the passing of its oldest member, Bro. Reuben Gregory, on Monday 4th December, 1978, at the age of 85 years, after a short illness.

Bro. Gregory had been a Christian for 70 years, and was a faithful servant of the Lord. Very rare were his absences from the Lord's table and he sacrificed much to be there. He shouldered his responsibilities well and was an elder of the church for almost 30 years. He contended earnestly for the faith and engaged in teaching and preaching not only to adult but to the children in the

Sunday Schools. He was an energetic precursor of the hymn tunes, leading the singing with no uncertain sound.

We commend the family, who are left, to the kind mercies of our Heavenly Father, in this their third bereavement this year. "The Lord is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms".

The funeral service was held in the Burns Street meetingroom on Friday, 8th Dec. and this service, and that at the graveside, was conducted by the writer.

TOM WOODHOUSE

**Hindley:** With deep sorrow we report the passing to a higher life of our dear sister Elizabeth Barker after a period of intense pain and suffering, which she so patiently bore "as seeing Him who is invisible".

For a long number of years she has been a faithful and loyal servant of Jesus, both at Albert St. Newton and here at Argyle St. She never intentionally ever missed a meeting, and her desire to remember her Saviour was so great that on her last appearance at the Breaking of Bread she had to be taken home.

To her dear husband and family we tender our sincere love and sympathy and know that their faith in Jesus will uphold them through this trying time.

Closely following on the above, the dear husband of sister Foster, a former member of the Ince Church, was laid to rest. Although he was not a member of the church he manifested a faith in God during his painful illness.

We know our sister and her family will find comfort in the Lord Jesus.

Our hearts have been further distressed by the death of the husband of our dear sister Sutton after two very serious operations. Although he was not a member of the Lord's Church he was interested in our position and plea and had attended some of the meetings of the church.

To our dear Sister and her sorrowing loved ones we tender our sincere love and sympathy, and commend them to a loving heavenly Father who is able to heal and comfort each stricken heart.

TOM KEMP

## COMING EVENTS

Tranent, Scotland: The ANNUAL SOCIAL will be held (D.V.) on Saturday, 17th February 1979, at 4 p.m. in the meetingplace.

Speakers: Tom Kemp, Wigan.  
Robert Hughes, Kirkcaldy.

Chairman: Thomas Nisbet, Tranent.

This social will mark the commencement of a week's mission at Tranent.

Meetings: Sunday - 6 p.m.  
Monday, Wednesday - 7.15 p.m.  
Friday, Saturday - 7.15 p.m.  
Sunday - 6 p.m.

Speaker: TOM KEMP, Wigan

ALL WELCOME.

## READING CARDS

Now that the Scripture Reading Cards for 1979 are available I am sure that readers of the 'S.S.' would like me to thank our brother R.B. Scott for the invaluable work he does in the making up of the year's readings. Thoughful people will realise the hard work involved in the production of these cards and appreciate them all the more. ED.

## BOUND VOLUMES 1976 - 1978

Twenty bound volumes are on order and will be available shortly.

Price post paid £4.50 each.

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4, Glassel Park Road, Longniddry,  
East Lothian, Scotland.

## NEW SUBSCRIBERS

If any readers can help to increase the numbers of those who subscribe to the 'S.S.' we shall be more than grateful. New readers are always welcome and obviously the more readers we have the more cheaply we can produce the paper.

New Readers are always coming along however, especially from countries abroad (mainly America) and we warmly welcome them. I thank all those who wrote at the New Year wishing the 'S.S.' well, particularly the brother who wrote anonymously. Ed.

## WANTED

Urgently wanted - Bound volumes of the Scripture Standard for the years 1952-53 and 1954-55. If you can assist please send copies and prices to brother James Sinclair, 62 North Seton Park, Port Seton, East Lothian, Scotland. EH32 0BA.

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