

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## COMING OUT

This week the question of homosexuality has raised its ugly head again, and although the subject never seems to be far from the surface as a news item, it has hit the headlines once more. According to "The Times" and many other newspapers, Peter Tatchell, leader of the homosexual group called "Outrage" has written to the Bishop of London, inviting him to do the decent thing and "Come Out": declaring himself to be an active homosexual. Mr. Tatchell, (a former Sunday-School teacher in his native Melbourne and who stood recently here as an M.P.) spends a lot of his time in writing to "high profile" personalities, known to be homosexual, urging them to "Come out" and be counted as "gay". He claims to have written to 20 M.P.'s this week and 15 Bishops recently. The Bishop of London is the third most senior figure of the C. of E. and Mr. Tatchell feels that his "Coming out" would be a great spur and fillip to the British "gay" world.

In his letter to the Bishop (the Rt. Rev. D. Hope) Mr. Tatchell said, (Quote) "Your 'Coming out' and speaking out can give the campaign for lesbian and gay rights new credibility and influence, which will eventually contribute to legislative changes . . . By coming out and speaking out you can also ensure that the C. of E. begins to make a fundamental change with its past and present homophobia. It is within your personal power to be an agent for the liberation of lesbian and gay people - or you can continue to remain silent and passively collude with our victimisation. You are, however, not alone. There are ten other Bishops we named at Synod, plus five others we did not name (for various reasons). After our naming of the Bishops, two of them (John Satterthwaite and John Nicolls) issued ambiguous statements which some people have interpreted as a *de facto* 'coming out'. The Bishop of Wakefield has recently emphasised that having a homosexual orientation is not sinful, and is no bar to high office in the C. of E. It would, therefore, seem unproblematic for you and others to be open about being gay . . ." (Unquote). This is just part of the letter but is enough, perhaps, to show what the Bishop was asked to do. Apart from anything else, all this was good publicity for the lesbian and gay fraternity, and, in a T.V. interview, all the Bishop was prepared to say was that he felt slightly threatened by the letter and was not in any case, prepared to "Come out". He did say, however, that his sexuality was a "grey area". Mr. Tatchell maintains, nevertheless, that he has "a lot of detailed information" about the Bishop's private life and could have classed him with the other ten Bishops at the last General Synod.

### WHAT "SOCIETY" ACCEPTS

As can be imagined, the letter, and its response, has attracted close media attention and has been followed by numerous radio and T.V. programmes featuring talks and

discussions on homosexuality. Added impetus was given to this new wave of interest by the declaration of Cardinal Hume, speaking on behalf of the R.C. Church, that "the love" which exists between gay people should be respected but that no sexual acts should occur between "gay" people. One of the more interesting T.V. programmes was the morning Kilroy-Silk discussion where a whole collection of gay clergy had their say, including a Rabbi from the Jewish Gay Association. Such programmes are of interest, if only to hear how the issue is being interpreted by young people who, by this time, have been reared on the general supposition that homosexuality is quite 'normal' and a legitimate alternative to marriage. It is also interesting to hear the lengths to which the clergy will go, in trying to justify the unjustifiable. One Bishop (who said he was proud to have been an active homosexual all his life) tried to water-down the strength of the word "abomination". He had to admit that in the O.T. sodomy was regarded by God as an "abomination" but pointed out that men wearing women's clothes (and vice versa) was also listed in the O.T. as an "abomination". He pointed to a lady in the audience wearing slacks and said, "There's an example of it, and it's not so terrible is it"? This was the kind of logic coming from the gay Bishops, willingly disregarding the difference between a lady wearing 'slacks' (or, for that matter a man wearing a kilt) and a transvestite. When, during the programme, Lev. 18:22 was quoted, one clergyman said, "Let's forget about texts, and talk of the love of God. God loves and we should love: Men even loving men". This was the level of the discussion. Another Bishop tried the "modern society" argument, insisting that as we live in a modern society we can "accept" lots of things previously thought unacceptable. "Times have changed", he said "and homosexuality has now been accepted by society". Nobody in that group seemed to regard that statement as incredible, coming as it did from a man with a dog-collar. What "society accepts" is surely not the issue. GOD does not accept, and never has accepted, lesbians or sodomists. In due time, "society" will probably "accept" incest (and it's certainly moving that way in some quarters); and "society" winks the eye (in some countries) at bestiality, but all these things will remain, and will ever remain, abominations in the eyes of God.

The Hebrew word for "abomination" simply means something that God hates and can't abide: things which God vehemently despises and detests: and these include idolatry; false balance; human sacrifice; transvestitism; witchcraft; spiritism; pride; oppression of the poor; incest and many others. Homosexuality is also included for God, through Moses, said "**Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind, it is an ABOMINATION. Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith**". (Lev. 18:22). Nothing can change that: not even the passage of a few thousand years. All these things WERE an abomination to God: ARE an abomination to God; and ALWAYS WILL BE an abomination to God: i.e. things that God hates, detests and can't abide. "Society" will never change that situation; and neither will a million Bishops.

#### THE CRIME AND THE PENALTY

There was a time when physiological excuses were made for the practice of homosexuality, and it was alleged that these poor unfortunates were the unwitting victims of physical deformity at birth. Certainly a man born with some physical deformity, whereby he is scarcely one gender or the other, would receive a certain sympathy from most of us, and any judgement on the behaviour of such a person would be left in God's hands. Obviously these cases do occur. But it is very hard to believe that the many thousands, nowadays who seek one another out at "gay" bars and discos have any serious physical deformity. Indeed, it seems that most of them go out of their way to show, by their dress and posturing, how robust and masculine they are. Psychiatrists are also engaged to convince us that homosexuality, and deviant sexual practice, is caused by the upbringing and previous home environment of these

individuals, and various reasons are ascribed, including aggressive fathers, indulgent mothers etc., etc. Again it is difficult to believe that all the many thousands of homosexuals world-wide have been mentally crippled by their parents in this way. Many of us may have had aggressive fathers, or indulgent mothers, without us seeking out a 'rent boy'.

Homosexuality is not new but is as old as "the oldest profession in the world" and is as repugnant to God as incest or bestiality. Away back in the Book of Leviticus, when God charged that man "**shall not lie with mankind as with womankind; it is an abomination. Neither shall he lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith**" (18:22,23). He put homosexuality on a par with bestiality. Again (in 20:18) God repeats the charge and adds the penalty, "**If a man also lie with mankind as he lieth with womankind, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death: their blood shall be upon them**". Thus with God, homosexuality is not natural and healthy, gay or trendy, but vile, obscene, abominable and worthy of death. There were no mitigating circumstances and those found together were put to death.

Notwithstanding God's unequivocal prohibition of the practice, the children of Israel had a long and varied association with Sodomy. In 1 Kings 14:24 mention is made of the fact that in Rehoboam's reign, in Judah, "**The people provoked God above all that their fathers had done. For they built them high places and images and groves in every high hill and under every green tree. And there were Sodomites in the land, and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel**". These "Sodomites in the land" were tolerated until the 20th year of Jeroboam's reign, when Asa became king. "**And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and did as his father David. And he took away the Sodomites out of the land, and he removed all the idols that his father hath made**". (1 Kings 15:9-12). And so King Asa got rid of all the homosexuals but they soon crept back and it was left to Jehoshaphat, Asa's son, to get rid of "**the remnant of the Sodomites which remained in the days of his father Asa: and he took them out of the land**". (1 Kings 22:46). Notwithstanding these thorough purges it is remarkable to read that when King Josiah came to the throne of Judah the people had reverted to full-scale idolatry. Josiah spent his entire reign in restoring the written law, demolishing the groves, idols, and high places, altars and other paraphernalia of idolatry, "**And broke down the houses of the Sodomites, that were by the 'House of the Lord', where women wove the hangings for the groves**". (2 Kings 23:7). And so these male prostitutes (used in idolatry) were not only back in the land, but occupied housing given specially to them to be conveniently next door to the very temple. The clergy of today may smile benignly upon homosexuality but God condemned it and the good kings of Israel and Judah rooted it out.

#### AN OLDER, HIGHER AND BETTER CALL

Solomon said that there's nothing new under the sun and Mr. Tatchell is certainly not the first man to call upon people to "Come out". Almost 2000 years ago, the apostle Paul issued the same call: albeit under very different circumstances and for very different purposes. Paul (quoting the words of Isaiah fairly loosely, in which the prophet called upon Israel to forsake pagan pollutions) refers to Isaiah's call in his appeal to the Corinthian Christians to "Come out" from any entanglement with worldliness, and to separate themselves from the many forms of evil by which they were completely surrounded. Paul says, "**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 I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and My daughters saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God**". (2 Cor. 6:17 & 7:1). Clearly Paul's call to "Come out" differs greatly from Mr.

Tatchell's. The latter wants Bishops to "Come out" and declare themselves active sodomists whereas Paul wanted the Corinthians to come away from sodomy, and indeed every other form of evil practice. In short, the Bishops should not be coming out to admit homosexuality, but should be coming out FROM homosexuality: not affirming it, but RENOUNCING IT.

Quite apart from being "men of the cloth", Bishops and the clergy are supposed to be men of considerable learning and education, and how they can possibly believe that procuring the services of a 'rent boy' (and thereafter sexually abusing him in a most disgusting manner) is not hideously obscene and evil, must surely rank as the mystery of the age. Such behaviour is not to be found even amongst the animals. This call to the Corinthians was, of course, matched by a similar call to the Romans in which Paul quite specifically condemns homosexuality: and refers to the time when God gave mankind up "to vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust toward another: men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet". In the verse following Paul continues with a long catalogue of many other vices and ends by saying, "Who, knowing the judgement of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them". (Rom. 1:26-32). Paul and the C. of E. Bishops are, therefore, poles apart. Paul clearly describes lesbians and sodomists and calls them "vile" and "worthy of death": including not only "those who do such things" but also those who take "pleasure in them that do them".

#### AND SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU

We notice from Paul's "Come out" call to the Corinthians that he reinforced it with a brief description of what he had in mind: i.e. things similar to what Isaiah had in mind when he called upon Israel to "Come out" from amongst the heathen and to renounce idolatry. "Separate yourselves" says Paul. "From what" we ask? From all forms of depravity: and homosexuality is depravity. "Touch not the unclean" says Paul, and what could be more revoltingly unclean than sodomy? "Cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh" says Paul, and what could be more despicable than a man lying with a man as with a woman? One of the Bishops on the previously mentioned T.V. programme claimed that Jesus Himself never condemned homosexuality. But, by the same token, I suppose we could say that Jesus never specifically condemned such things as incest, bestiality, divination, (or, for that matter, human sacrifice) but Jesus condemned ALL unrighteousness and said to the woman taken in adultery, "Go and sin no more". If Jesus condemned a man for looking on a woman to lust after her, and equated it with adultery; what would Jesus think of a man looking at another man and lusting after him, one wonders? And what would Jesus say to the gay Bishop, one wonders?

To these same Corinthian Christians Paul could say, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor EFFEMINATE, nor ABUSERS OF THEMSELVES WITH MANKIND, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God". (1 Cor. 6:9). Our friend the Bishop should note that, again, this is obviously not a comprehensive list and some evil things are never mentioned (e.g. murder is not mentioned; neither is incest, bestiality, divinations and much else) but transvestites *are mentioned* (effeminate) and so are homosexuals (abusers of themselves with mankind). Indeed, Paul says that all forms of unrighteousness will keep us out of heaven. "And such were some of you" says Paul, and we note his use of *the past tense*. Truly some of them had been thieves, drunkards, idolators, etc., and HAD BEEN effeminate and homosexuals, but they

were no longer. They had "Come out" from all involvement in such things. **"But ye are washed"** says Paul, **"but ye are sanctified; but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God"**. Yes, the Corinthian Christians *had previously* been engaged in all of these malpractices but had come out from the works of darkness and **"had been washed"** and cleansed in the blood of Christ and in the waters of baptism. They were now part of the "Called out" community of Christ; the Church. The Body of Christ, consists of those "called out" from the world, and who have embraced **"the calling of God"** (Phil. 3:14). Having been washed, Paul says that they were now **"sanctified"** (set apart for God's holy use) and were also **"justified"** (pardoned or considered "just" in God's eyes).

### CONCLUSION

The conclusion is not difficult to see. Paul never suggested, as some of the Bishops do, that we must "come to a better understanding" of homosexuality, for Paul *understood it only too well* and classed it, as we have seen, with every other vile thing. We must never be influenced by the pathetic platitudes which fall from the lips of some clergy, like one the other morning on radio, who said it was time for the Church to re-examine its attitude to this subject because ". . . there is a freshness and richness about all the variants". Surely when God angrily rained down fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah it was not because there was any element of "freshness and richness" about sodomy, but because it was unnatural, depraved, disgusting, obscene, repugnant, degrading, dissolute and indecent. Sodom and Gomorrah are mentioned also by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Zephaniah in the O.T. and by Christ, Paul, Peter, Jude, John (in the Rev) in the N.T. and it is so well documented that most members of the public, let alone clergy, know all about it. Paul says that **"It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret"**.

And so, while Mr. Tatchell continues to call upon Bishops to "Come out" in support of lesbians and homosexuals, we surely cannot do better than to repeat the call of the apostle Paul, a call, after all, not only directed to the gay clergy but to all men and women everywhere, and those who would have no hope, some day, of entering into heaven and life everlasting. **"Wherefore COME OUT from among them, and be 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 be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God".** ( 2 Cor. 6:18).

EDITOR.

(Since writing this article, the Bishop of London has been promoted from third most powerful figure in the C. of E. to the second most powerful, and is now an Archbishop: the Archbishop of York. This illustrates the truth of the Bishop of Wakefield's statement that no homosexual orientation is any bar to high office in the C. of E.)

## GLEANINGS

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

**"FAITH IN ACTION – NOT BY WORDS ONLY**

James 2:17-20: **"Even so faith, if it hath not works is dead, being alone**

**Yea a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works. Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.**

**Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble.**

**But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?**

**Was not Abraham our Father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?**

See'st thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?  
And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?

For as the body without the spirit is dead, even so faith without works is dead also".

#### WHAT IS FAITH

##### "THINGS HOPED FOR – THINGS NOT SEEN"

Hebrews 11:1 "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (AV).

Hebrews 11:1 "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (RSV).

Substance – Assurance "of things hoped for". Confidence of things hoped for. Certainty which produces action.

"Things not seen" – Faith does not operate in things we can see.

Speaking of Moses, the writer to the Hebrews says: chapter 11:27 RV "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible".

"Seeing the invisible! That is faith".

We can thank our Heavenly Father that there are still millions of devoted Christians, who love the Lord Jesus, who can rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls".

And we rejoice with the apostle Paul when he said: 2 Cor. 1:18 (RV) "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal".

#### THINGS HOPED FOR - THINGS NOT SEEN

O Saviour, precious Saviour,

Whom, yet unseen, we love,

O name of might and favour,

All other names above.

We worship thee, we bless Thee,

To Thee aloud we sing

We praise Thee and confess Thee,

Our Holy Lord and King.

F. R. Havergal.

#### "THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY HIS FAITH"

##### RESOURCES WITHIN

I have precious resources within

To help me strive against sin;

O what would I do

Dear Lord, without you

And precious resources within".

Tom Kemp.

MY GRACE: (2 Cor. 12:9) "is sufficient for thee".

MY STRENGTH: (2 Cor. 12:9) "for my strength is made perfect in weakness".

MY LIFE: (John 10:10) "I come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly"

MY PEACE: (John 14:27) "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid"

**MY JOY:** (John 15:11) **“These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full”**

**MY GOD:** (Phil. 4:19) **“But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Jesus Christ”**

**MY HELPER:** (Heb. 13:6) **“So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will fear not what man shall do to me”**

**MY REWARD:** (Rev. 22:12) **“And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, I give every man according as his work shall be”**

**MY COMFORT:** (2 Cor. 1:3-4) **“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God”**

Selected by Leonard Morgan.

## THE PASSOVER – WHAT’S ALL THE FUSS ABOUT? CONCLUSION

The law of Moses was imposed on the sons of Israel (Ex. 20:22) to be kept by them when living in the promised land (Ex. 23:31) and the feasts and the calendar they were to keep revolved around the agrarian cycle in the promised land. In that geographic area the demands of the law are theoretically possible to be met by a perfect man. The Law required absolute adherence to it in every minute detail for them to obtain righteousness (Deut. 6:25). As Christ lived and died under the Law of Moses without sin (2 Cor. 5:21; Act 3:14; 1 John 3:5; 1 Pet. 2:22). It is imperative to show that Christ kept to the letter every requirement of the Law. For this reason it was necessary to demonstrate that each and every requirement of the Jewish Passover was kept by Him whilst he was still on this earth. The prime purpose of the detailed review that has been presented has been to show that Christ lived and died so that **“we should have a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens”** (Heb. 7:26).

As the Law of Moses was for application to one small geographic area it was possible to define the seasons of the year to the cycles of the sun and moon. It was practical to demand annual events be kept to a particular sun-setting-time at one place. The historic demands of the Passover and other festivals could be repeated year by year without dispute. The New Law of Christ however is designed to be proclaimed throughout the world (Mt. 28:19) where in one place the sun never sets, whilst in another it never rises, where it is summer in one place and winter in another. In these circumstances it would be impossible to keep, on a world wide basis, any feast, to cycles of the sun and moon. Under Christ then we all have freedom to treat days equally or not (Rom. 14:5): with the caution that we must not take them too seriously (Gal. 4:10,11). We also are not to judge another on such matters (Col. 2:16). Our remembrance of the Lord’s death has been left for us, not as an annual event but, **“as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till He come”** (1 Cor. 11:26). Our recall of the sacrifice of the Passover lamb is each week as we partake of the Lord’s supper.

### EARLY CONTROVERSY

With these instructions, why has the timing of our Lord’s death and Easter been such a contentious issue down the ages? A look at the findings of the council of Nicea may help in finding some answers to this question.

The council was called and paid by the Roman civil authorities to consolidate the independent church authorities around the world under a head in Rome. It was then a religious gathering organised and headed by Constantine, an unbaptised person,

whom the church at that time would not have considered eligible to be involved in any church business. The central theme being to unify belief and practice under Constantine. Such views allowing freedom of action on celebrating days was then seen as divisive. But the matter has more serious overtones than that.

Since the earliest of times men have sought (wrongly, I believe); to condense the key truths of Christianity into a few words into what we now call creeds e.g.

**Ireneas** (c170) “. . . the passion, and the resurrection from the dead, and bodily ascension of the flesh of His beloved Son”

**Tertulian** (c190) “Jesus Christ . . . the third day rose again from the dead

**Origen** (c215) “. . . Jesus Christ was born and suffered death common to all, in truth, and not only in appearance, He was truly dead; for He rose again truly from the dead, and after His resurrection . . .”

**Nicene Creed** (347) “Jesus Christ . . . suffered, and the third day rose again, and ascended into heaven . . .”

It will be noticed that earlier creeds mention the death of Jesus, which however, is omitted altogether from the Nicene creed. This may be taken to be read, but, taken in the strong reinforcement that Origen puts on the fact that Jesus had died, it seems strange that no mention is made in the words chosen to summarise the Christian faith specially in the light of Paul’s statement:- “. . . if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved” (Rom. 10:9). “. . . all of us who have been baptised into Christ Jesus have been baptised into His death. Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we might walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:3).

### RELATIONSHIPS AND REASONS

In writing the creed considerable time was spent in determining the relationship of the Son to the Father. As a master politician Constantine managed to get agreement on this point by defining the relationship, with a word not found in the New Testament itself, but with a Greek one, that had only been coined a few years previously, if not at the council itself. The gospel then was summarised for the Roman Church by a Roman civil leader inventing a Greek word to harmonise the dissident factions within the church at that time! Whilst all the concern was focused on the Father-Son relationship, a creed was accepted leaving out any reference to Christ’s death! This in spite of Paul’s letter to the Romans using nearly 60 phrases that highlight the fact and necessity of the death of our Lord.

Apart from defining a creed for the new Roman Church they also at Nicea spent much time in discussing the question of the keeping of Easter. Here again they sought to move the Church away from concentrating on remembering the death of Christ to that of His resurrection. As Son of God His going to heaven would not have been so remarkable (as He had come from there) had it not been for the fact that **“For the death that He died, He died to sin, once for all”** (Rom. 6:10). The added suggestion that Christ ate the Passover supper after the sacrificial lambs had been killed denies the picture that **“Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed”** (1 Cor. 5:7).

The picture that was left by the New Testament writers is of becoming Christians by being immersed into Christ’s death so that we might be united with Him in His resurrection. (Rom. 6:4). However, shortly after the removal of any reminder of Christ’s death in the Nicene creed, the symbolism of our being united in His death in baptism was also removed by the replacement of immersion with sprinkling. The figure of death being shadowed by that of life as new born infants were ‘given’ the Holy Spirit by anointing with oil or water.

### THREE SYMBOLS

The Holy Spirit left us with 3 symbols of Christ’s death, the Passover/Easter



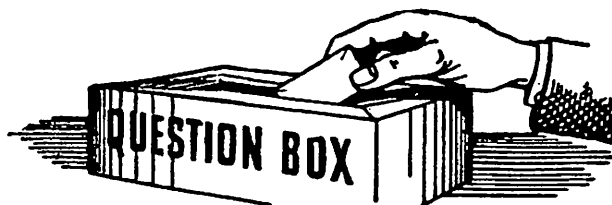
connection, Baptism, and the Lord's supper. All three have been tampered with by the Roman Church. The sacrificial Jewish lamb disassociated from the lamb of God. The immersion into Christ's death changed to a sprinkling. The bread being broken as a picture of His body being broken for us changed to the use of individual wafers. The central core of our faith is that we cannot seek a righteousness of our own (Rom. 10:3). Our salvation depends wholly on Christ whom God made sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (Rom. 5:21). **"We are redeemed, with the precious blood as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ"** (1 Pet. 1:18,19). Our future hope in heaven is:- **"the Lamb in the centre of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them to springs of the water of Life; and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes"** (Rev. 7:17). **"Let us rejoice and be glad and give glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come"** (Rev.19:7). **"And I saw no Temple in it, for the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb are its Temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and the lamp is the Lamb"** (Rev. 21:22,23).

The significance in understanding correctly the events surrounding Christ's death are then:-

1. to show that Christ lived a sinless life in accordance to all the demands of the Law (Rom. 5:18).
2. to understand the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah (1 Pet. 1:10).
3. to know assuredly that our sins have been washed away by the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7:14; Eph. 1:7).

Let us be continually on our guard against any creeping tendencies towards Rome and away from the thing of first importance **"that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures"** (1 Cor. 15:3).

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Conducted by  
Aif Marsden

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**"Gamaliel's advice: 'If it be of men it will come to nought'. This does not seem to be true of Islam and some other world religions. Any comment?"**

The incident relative to this question is recorded in Acts 5; it is advisable to read the whole chapter. The pertinent portion to the advice of Gamaliel is given in verses 38,39, which reads, **"Refrain from these men (Peter and other Apostles), and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it: lest haply ye be found to fight against God"**. Gamaliel was a doctor of law, and of good reputation and standing among the people. He was giving advice to the Jewish Council.

In support of this advice he cites two leaders of past popular uprisings; Theudas and Judas. There is much speculation as to who Theudas really was, but not so regarding Judas. He was Judas of Gamala, a city East of the Jordan (Josephus). He rose up, says Gamaliel, in the days of the enrollment (See Luke 2:2), so that would be about A.D.6. Gamaliel says that he came **after** Theudas, so he must have been

active some time before A.D.6. I mention these two, cited by Gamaliel, because they were both insurrectionists, i.e., in revolt against the occupying power, Rome. They and their followers were slain or scattered, but out of the followers of Judas, there were to arise the Zealots, who largely contributed to the disturbances which provoked the Jewish War of A.D.66-70.

We must understand the advice of Gamaliel against that background. What he seems to be saying is that if Peter and the other Apostles were intent merely on inciting revolt, then that would inevitably come to nought against the power of Rome. But if what they were saying and doing were of God, then they, the Council, would be seen as opposing the God whose representatives they claimed they were. Sound advice indeed. That is an explanation of the incident, but what does it portend for our relationships with major religious groups of today?

### THE INVIOABLE RIGHT

It is the inviolable right of any person or group to believe what they want to. They can also practise what they want to provided such practice does not contravene any secular law, and does not violate the rights of others. It is also true to say that **Divine** law can be violated, both by belief and practice. In the case of secular law, retribution can be quite swift; in the case on contravening Divine law, ultimate retribution may be delayed for a very long time. Simply because retribution **hasn't** happened, that is no reason for thinking that it **will not** happen.

Many of the world's great religions are nationally, geographically and culturally based. Islam, for example, is both historical and rigidly monotheistic. The unforgivable sin is in associating anyone, or anything, with the Almighty. Therefore, belief that Jesus was the Son of God is anathema. Muhammad is the true mouthpiece of the Almighty. There is no necessity for any historical event. The Buddhist believes in the transience of all things, and the mystery surrounding suffering. Guatama forsook the luxury of his princely life, his family, and became an ascetic; he later meditated in solitude. After this he started out on a pilgrimage to share his knowledge and 'Enlightenment' with others. Therefore Buddha is not a god or saviour, but a supreme teacher and example.

Adherence to any of the world's religions may be by birth or choice; even those born into a religious family have, ultimately, to choose whether or not to persist in that religion. The point is that everyone has the right to choose and, within the constraints mentioned earlier, the right to practise and promote their religion if they want to.

I know you will understand when I say that we Christians must not fall into the trap of thinking that the Christian religion is absolutely right, and that other religions are absolutely wrong. I am a Christian along with many others, because I and they have chosen to be; many others have responded to different beliefs. We in Britain have undoubtedly been influenced toward the Christian religion because we were born into families living in a so-called Christian country, nevertheless, we have individually had to make our choice somewhere along the line. And remember we are born into the world as individuals; we live as individuals, even though we combine with others; and we die as individuals. It is then that we, as individuals, will face whatever or whoever is on the other side of this life. **Then**, and only then, shall we finally **know** if what we have believed is right.

### PROCLAMATION OR JUDGMENT

It is right that I should judge myself against what I have believed and practised; this is something called self-analysis. It is not my remit to judge others, irrespective of whether I consider them to be right or wrong in what they have believed. It is extremely sad that the world is so religiously divided, but for us, that is the way it is. Perhaps the division is as a result of issues which are too deep in history, and too

complex to understand. Religious unity seems almost impossible to achieve in **any one** religion, let alone across the spectrum of the world's religions.

I believe the only thing we as Christians can do is to proclaim the message as we have understood and believed it ourselves. It is not up to us, nor is it wise, to tell people that **we** are right and **they** are wrong, such an attitude will obstruct the message. We can rest assured that if there are sincere seekers, then ultimately the **truth** will expose the error. If at the end of the day the message we bring is rejected, so be it: I cannot **force** it upon others, neither should I try. If the message is not received intelligently, and if, being understood, it does not produce sincere belief and obedience, then perhaps I have to look for more fertile ground.

### IN CONCLUSION

Our problem in understanding is greatly influenced by our concept of time; we are born 'into' time and we die 'out of' time. An eternity of existence is something that we may **believe** but in most cases fail to understand. The fact is, though, that we Christians have placed our lives in the hands of the **Timeless One**. With Him a thousand years is but a day, and a day as a thousand years. We look for solutions to problems 'in time'; with God, even by the crude example of 'a day as a thousand years', some of the world's great religions have only been in existence for a couple of 'days' or so. You follow what I mean? Insurrection against the State – as in the case of Theudas and Judas – would be put down by the State almost immediately; it is different with God.

Furthermore, we ought to remember the parable of the Wheat and the Tares (See Matt . 13:24-30). God **does** allow people of different religious persuasions to exist together in the earthly 'field', but in the final analysis **He** will decide which is the 'wheat' and which the 'tares'. Isn't that how it should be? Perhaps with our imperfect knowledge we would do more harm than good. Aren't we also taught in Rom. 12 that God doesn't want us to take action **on our own**. To paraphrase Rom 12:19-21 God says, "Leave it to me; don't you get yourselves into a sin by your own actions: I'll attend to matters in due course because I'm the only One who really knows". Have you ever considered how loving and protective God is? I'm quite sure you have.

Well, I trust that what I have said will help. I look upon myself as a problem-solving catalyst. In my monthly meanderings I may hopefully present an idea or two which will help people resolve questions in their **own minds**; after all, that's usually the place where most questions and problems are best resolved (with a little help from our friends). There **can** be nothing wrong with Gamaliel's advice.

(All questions, please, to Alf Marsden,  
20 Costessy Way, Winstanley, Wigan. WN3 6ES).

## COMMUNION WITH GOD

A great source of consolation for the Christian is **communion with God**. When Christians meet together in public worship they commune with God, because the various items of public worship each constitutes a communion.

Another meaning for communion is "joint participation", and implies action between two parties. This "joint participation" is what the Christian has when he worships God. The first Christians communed with God 2000 years ago when "**they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers**" (Acts 2:42).

### PRAISE

When Christians assemble themselves together to sing praises to God, and when God receives the adoration offered to His name, there is a communion. "**Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord**" (Eph. 5:19).

Music has its place and purpose in the worship service. This place and purpose has been created by Divine authority, and singing is the only music provided in the New Testament plan. **“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord”** (Col. 3:16).

From this the Christian learns that his heart must accompany his singing and be thoroughly in accord with the sentiment of the song being sung. In other words, it must be done in all sincerity, and directed as praise unto God and not for mere entertainment.

### THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper is specifically referred to as a communion. **“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not communion of the body of Christ?”** (1 Cor. 10:16).

The Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ, and delivered unto the apostles. **“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you”** (Matt. 28:18-20). It was the practice of the assembly of the church on the first day of the week. **“And upon the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them”** (Acts 20:7).

This practice of close communion with Christ is undertaken by the Christian that he may examine self. (1 Cor. 11:28). To eat the Lord's Supper regularly and worthily is to maintain spiritual vigour.

### PRAYER

It is also true that the Christian receives consolation when he communes with God in prayer. Actually Christians when praying are talking to God, pouring out their hearts to Him with assurance that He hears them. Indeed prayer is as necessary to the Christian as the air he breathes.

The supreme example to follow in prayer is Jesus. Even Jesus needed to pray to His Father in heaven to fortify Himself against the great emergencies in His life.

Christians have a greater need to follow His example in order to obtain the extra help and consolation in overcoming the trials and temptations in their own daily lives. **“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much”** (Jas. 5:16). A direct communion with God prayer is . . . **“good and acceptable in His sight”** (1 Tim. 2:3).

### PREACHING

In the scripture-reading and the message that explains it, readers and listeners learn more of God's will for them. He is telling them what to do and how to act. Here again the Christian communes with his God as he studies the Divinely inspired book – the Bible.

From the Old Testament scriptures two lessons of supreme practical importance stand out – the first being that God always rewarded and blessed those who were obedient. The second lesson is that God condemned and punished those who disobeyed Him. From a study of those 2000 years of history in the Old Testament it is plain to see God's word is steadfast and is not to be trifled with.

The New Testament scriptures containing God's will revealed through Christ and His chosen ambassadors, who were guided and confirmed in their message by the Holy Spirit, constitute a complete and perfect rule of faith and practice for God's people today. **“Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard”** (Heb. 2:1).

### GIVING

Giving is also an element of worship, and in giving there is communion with God. In the New Testament scriptures the Lord has presented a plan for financing of the work of the Church. As in the case of every other plan God has given, it must be put into operation by faithfulness on the part of the Christians. The obligation is an individual one.

This New Testament plan has four characteristics. They are:

First – *Periodic*: “**Upon the first day of the week**”.

Second – *Personal*: “**Let each one of you**”.

Third – *Provident*: “**Lay by him in store**”.

Fourth – *Proportionate*: “**As he may prosper**” (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

Fifth – *Purposefully*: “**Everyman according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give. Not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver**” (2 Cor. 9:7).

When Christians give of their means and their time to the Lord’s work they are consecrating their giving to the glory and honour of God, and they are in complete communion with Him.

Let us **commune** with our Maker in His way revealed in the scriptures, and receive His blessings.

B. Moodie.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

June 4	Numbers 21:1-9	John 3:1-21
June 11	Malachi 3:	John 3:22-36
June 18	2 Kings 17:24-41	John 4:1-26
June 25	Isaiah 55:	John 4:27-45

### THE NEW BIRTH

Jesus told Nicodemus: “**Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. . . . Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh: and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit**” (3:3,5). A lot of people today talk about being a “born-again Christian”. Is there any other type of Christian? Other passages of Scripture come to mind here: “. . . **not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing (bath) of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit**” (Titus 3:5). “**Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides for ever**” (1 Peter 1:23). The word of the Spirit is equated with the word of God. What the Spirit does the word does and what the word does the Spirit does.

Birth involves a change of state. Campbell has written: “There is a state of existence from which he that is born passes; and there is a state of existence into which he enters after birth . . . The state which he left was a state of

condemnation. The state which he enters is a state of favour, in which he enjoys all the heavenly blessings through Christ . . . All this is signified in his death, burial and resurrection with Christ; or his being born of water. Hence the necessity of being buried with Christ in water, that he may be born of water, that he may enjoy the renewal of the Holy Spirit and be placed under the reign of favour”. Dear reader, I would firmly suggest to you that if Spirit means Spirit in John 3:5, the water means water. In other words, both terms should be taken literally and not symbolically.

Baptism in water is a controversial subject for a lot of folks. Why this is the case, I do not know! It seems to be a stumbling-block to many. It is interesting to note that Jesus’ ministry began with baptism and ended with baptism. He, of course, was baptised of John in the river Jordan “**To fulfil all righteousness**” (Matt. 3:15); and at the conclusion of Matthew’s gospel we read: “**And Jesus came to them and said. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age**” (28:18-20, N.I.V.).

Paul later wrote to the Ephesians: “**There is one body and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your**

**calling: one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all"** (4:4-6). The baptism he mentions here is, I believe, the immersion into water unto the remission of sins. F.F Bruce, who was from a Brethren background, agrees with me on this one. He wrote: "The sevenfold credal summary of Ephesians 4:4-6 is divided into three rhythmically equivalent sections (3+3+1), each of which is dominated by one of the Persons of the Godhead ('one Spirit . . . one Lord . . . one God and Father'). If the 'one baptism' were baptism in the Spirit to the exclusion of baptism in water, it would naturally have to come in the section introduced by 'one Spirit' whereas it comes in the section introduced by 'one Lord', alongside 'one faith'. This is appropriate to baptism in water, which involves a confession of faith in our one Lord."

#### **JOHN'S TESTIMONY ABOUT JESUS**

John the Baptist had many great things to say about Jesus. His testimony is strong. For example, he said: "**He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life: but the wrath of God abides on him**" (3:36). So we learn that believing in Jesus is really a matter of life and death. To ignore Him is to do so at one's peril. To know Him is to enjoy "everlasting life" now and through eternity. You see, "everlasting life" is the very life of God Himself. The phrase speaks more of quality than quantity. Personally, I am so glad that, although once I was dead in trespasses and sins, I am now alive to God through the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is alive in '95, and He is alive in me and in all fellow-believers. Jesus spells LIFE.

#### **JESUS**

#### **AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN**

In Jesus's day, the Jews hated the Samaritans and the Samaritans hated the Jews. Things were so bad that they stayed out of each other's country. Jesus, however, was above the strife and bitterness and was willing to pass

through the land of the Samaritans.

The Samaritans were a people of mixed race. They were neither Jews nor Gentiles, but midway between them. They lived in the centre of the land of the Jews, they possessed part at least of the Jewish writings and their worship was modelled after the Jewish pattern. Their holy mountain is Mount Gerizim near Shechem, and to them it is the equivalent of Mount Moriah (Genesis 22:2). (I write in the present tense because there are Samaritans living in Israel today who still offer sacrifices on Mount Gerizim).

I enjoy reading the one-on-one encounters that Jesus had during His ministry. They are clear indication of the importance of every living soul on earth. The meeting with the woman at the well produced a fascinating conversation, which she, I am sure would never forget. She soon realised that this man was someone very special because of His insights into her private life. "**Sir I can see that you are a prophet**" (4:19). She was quick to learn that He was the greatest prophet of all, none other than the promised Messiah Himself. "**The woman said to Him, I know the Messiah is coming – he who is called the Christ. When He comes, he will tell us everything! Jesus said to her, I who am talking to you am He**" (4:25-26, Goodspeed). Later this woman's testimony had such an impact on the Samaritans in the town that they came to believe in Him. I like their words to her: "**Now we believe, not because of your saying: for we have heard Him ourselves and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world**" (4:42). It must have been a wonderful experience to hear Jesus at close quarters for "**never man spake like this man**" (John 7:46).

#### **THE DISCIPLES REJOIN JESUS**

The disciples were surprised to find the Master in conversation with a woman. Rabbis in these days simply did not speak to women because they despised them. A famous saying was

"Better that the words of the law should be burned than delivered to woman". So Jesus, as ever, was breaking down the social barriers.

The disciples on this occasion spoke of physical food, but Jesus of spiritual food. He said: "**My food is to do the will of Him that sent Me and finish His work**" (4:34). He was a man with a mission and nothing was going to divert Him from the path that was clearly laid out before Him. Food and water feature strongly in this particular portion of Scripture. They were important then, and they are still important today. No wonder Jesus used them to convey vital spiritual thoughts.

Society then was basically an agrarian one. I find it no surprise, therefore, to read of Jesus speaking of the sower, harvest and the reaper. Again, Jesus is trying to get across to His disciples spiritual lessons in terms familiar to them. Here is a lesson for all teachers everywhere.

Ian S. Davidson,  
Motherwell.

### TEST YOUR BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE

1. Who was Timothy's mother?
2. How many men did Joshua send to spy on Jericho?
3. Who was Aaron's wife?
4. At what age did Methuselah die?
5. How many jars of water did Jesus turn into wine?
6. In which city did King Herod die?
7. During the ninth plague, how long did the total darkness cover Egypt?
8. Which Assyrian king invaded Judah in the days of Hezekiah?
9. Whom did Michal despise as she saw him leaping and dancing?
10. How many pieces of silver did each of the Philistines promise to give Delilah if she would betray Samson?

## COMING EVENTS

### ANNIVERSARY MEETING

Kentish Town, London  
Our 124th Anniversary Meeting  
on 7th October, 1995 at 3 p.m. & 6 p.m.

### BUCKIE SOCIAL

Saturday, 6th May, 1995  
Speaker: Jack Strachan, East Kilbride  
All Welcome

## OBITUARY

**Beulah Road, Kirkby-in-Asfield:** It is with the deepest regret that we have to report the passing of our oldest member, Bro. Fred Longden on 28th March. Bro. Fred was widely known throughout the Churches and well respected by all who had contact with him. He served his Master faithfully over many years and his place was rarely empty at the Fellowship and Gospel meetings, only illness or untoward circumstances kept him away. He served the Lord and his Church well both as deacon and in his desire to lead his brethren in song. He was ever cheerful and had a ready welcome for visitors. Having achieved the age of 93 years he takes with him a good record, and we echo "Well done good and faithful servant". He will be sadly missed by all, especially by his close family to whom the deepest sympathy is extended. We thank God for his life and witness.

The funeral service was held in the Church building and later at the Crematorium being conducted by Bro. Graham Gorton whose words touched all his hearers.

On behalf of the Church,  
Tom Woodhouse (Sec.).

Death is not a period but a comma in the story of life.

At death we leave behind all we have and take with us all we are.

**GHANA REPORT**

The work in Ghana is going well thanks to the efforts of the contributions received. Brother Kyei Enoch who suffers from "Ca Harh" has sent me a letter from Dr. Mahama Abudurahamani stating that he has diagnosed 'Bilateral Maxillary Sunisitis' and he requires an operation which will cost £120. From the Ghana Appeal Funds we sent £130 to cover this cost. This illness causes severe headaches. Remember him in your prayers. We have also sent money to print tracts in Ghana in Accra North. We have used a computer to reproduce a Ghanaian tract and sent this to be published in Glenrothes. Initially 2000 will be sent out to Takoradi. We have sent money for some outreach preaching in a new area of Ghana. Money for gas lamps to help in night time Bible studies has also been dispatched. Finally we have given Odumasi £150 towards buying a P.A. system for open-air preaching. There have been many requests for P.A. systems but funds have limitations.

Thank you once again for your support and encouragement, both are very much appreciated. Graeme Pearson 13 Fairways, Dunfermline, Fife. KY12 0DU. Tel.: 01383 728624.

**LIVING EPISTLES**

Four preachers were discussing the merits of various translations of the Bible. One liked the King James version for the beauty and simplicity of its language. Another the Revised Version, because of its accuracy to the Hebrew and Greek. Another Moffat's, because of its-up-to-date vocabulary.

The fourth preacher remained silent. When asked to express his opinion he replied: "I like my mother's translation best". The others were surprised, not knowing his mother had translated the Bible. "Oh yes she did", he said. "She translated it into everyday life, and it was the most convincing translation I ever read.

Religious Digest.

**THIS SHALL BE OUR PURPOSE**

To serve God and His Kingdom. On Him we depend for every grace, and to Him we pledge our first and highest loyalty.

1. Eunice (2 Timothy 1:5).
2. Two (Joshua 2:1).
3. Elisabetha (Exodus 6:23).
4. 969 (Genesis 5:27).
5. Six (John 2:6).
6. Caesarea (Acts 12:19-23).
7. Three Days (Exodus 10:22).
8. Sennacherib (2 Chronicles 32:1).
9. David (2 Samuel 6:16).
10. 1100 (Judges 16:5).

**ANSWERS**

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