

# *The* **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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## **THE BIBLE AND THE MODERN WORLD**

### **III: THE CHRISTIAN AND WAR (1)**

THIS is a very difficult subject to deal with, for various reasons. On the one hand, in times of peace very few think of war and their attitude to it. On the other hand, when war threatens or comes, almost everyone is caught up in the war fever: love of country, patriotism, determination to defend ourselves against the aggressor come uppermost, and, even against their will, most people go along with the tide and are carried away by it. And once this tide gets into motion reason has little power or place. Jingoism, the clamour of "My country, right or wrong" holds sway and any voices to the contrary are ignored or suppressed. It is looked upon as cowardly to refuse "to defend one's country".

#### **Lack of Teaching on the Subject**

The question of the Christian and war is, too, a very difficult one for Christians. So often in times of peace the matter is not mentioned; we just hope the time will never come when we shall be called upon to show where we stand on this matter; while in times of war it has been regarded as unpatriotic and even heartless to keep apart from participation in war. The noble sentiments held by Christians have been subdued; their voices have been mute, and, if not agreeing with the general feeling, we have failed to stand apart. We say this not in judgement, but in understanding and sympathy. We have taken the line of least resistance by saying that the question is one of conscience, for each to settle for himself, when we know all the time that we are evading it for fear of being unpopular or even being treated as cranks. We have failed to guide young Christians especially at the very time when they were looking for light and help upon this question which so much concerns them.

To leave them to reach their own decisions when the experience and love and sympathy of older ones could greatly help them is unfair, even cruel. If it is a matter of conscience, that can be a guide only insofar as it is informed and taught. And the highest authority for such teaching and help is the Bible. This series has been given the title "The Bible and the Modern World" because we are convinced that on all matters of the relation of the Christian to his fellow men the Bible gives clear and relevant guidance.

### What The Bible Says

It is true that when we look into the Old Testament we are faced with difficulties. There we find that God commands his people Israel to make war (not only defensive but offensive) against their enemies. God is said to lead them into battle; He commands them to exterminate their enemies, man, woman and child and even cattle and possessions. Such happenings raise the questions within us "If war is wrong why does God at any time command it? How can it be wrong when God identifies Himself with it?" Such questionings are reasonable and legitimate. And if we try to explain them away we are in danger of justifying God in His dealings, which is arrogance. He is Sovereign and needs not to justify His ways to men. If He be God He cannot err nor be mistaken. If He be God, without the slightest doubt He does such things which pass our comprehension for perfectly good reasons and motives: He knows what He does, and why. We must simply accept, for He knows the end from the beginning. But let us remember that in the Old Testament, in Isaiah 2, we have the prophecy of the triumph of God's kingdom and of the gospel: in v.4 we are told that God "shall judge between the nations, and shall decide for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

The teaching of Christ and His apostles is of course the guide and authority for Christians. That we find in the New Testament. There we have not so much commandments forbidding to go to war or take any part in it — no "thou shalt" or "thou shalt not". The teaching is *positive*: it is not that things are *forbidden*, but that they are ruled out by what is "more excellent". The whole tenor of the teaching of the gospel is that our dealings with others are to be altogether in love. Earthly kingdoms must be supported by worldly, material, means. Among these means are war, carried on by deadly weapons. A friend once told me of his experience when he was leaving London for service in France in the First World War. Just before the train left the commander of the troops passed along and had a word with the soldiers in each compartment. His final word before they left was 'And don't forget, boys; you're in this business *to kill*.' I remember in the second World War reading the dreadful telegram of the killing of a fine young man in the Royal Navy. He had just reached the age of 21. The telegram read: "Deeply regret to inform you that your son...has been killed on active service." The mother was grief-stricken. But I remember too that I had often heard her say during quiet periods of the War, "Why don't they (our soldiers) get at them (the Germans)?" I thought, "You didn't think when you uttered those words that the Germans can do a bit of killing too", "You're in this business *to kill*" — and to be killed.

### What War Is And Does

But in war it is not only the killing which is so horrible. There is the breakdown of moral, and especially spiritual, values. It has been well said that "The first casualty in war is truth." Thomas Hobbes said 300 years ago, "Force and fraud are in war the two cardinal virtues." To gain the ends of one country against another lying and deception, bribery, corruption, immorality, violence, suspension of liberties and rights, hatred, indoctrination of evil, the ignoring or renouncing of what is right, the infliction of cruelty and suffering — all these are demanded, not only in the military sphere, but of civilians. That is what total war, means. And because war is acknowledged by even warring peoples as evil, these evil material, moral and spiritual weapons are its necessary vehicles. God is left out except when things seem to be getting to a desperate pass. Then special days of prayer and of confession to Almighty God are called for.

How can a Christian have any part in these things and yet be guided by the

gospel. How can he honour such teachings as "My kingship is not of this world; if my kingship were of this world my servants would fight..."; "Whatever is true... pure...lovely...gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things"; "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by doing so you will heap burning coals upon his head", if, as in war, he is to lie, deceive, take revenge, use violence, treat those as enemies of whom he knows nothing whatever, inflict suffering instead of ministering to those who are in need?

Once in war, humanity and sympathy are stifled. Some forty-five years ago J.L. Garvin, then editor of the *Observer*, wrote something like this: "To talk about humanising war you might as well talk about humanising hell." Lord Nugent in his *Memorials of John Hampden* wrote of him that "He knew that the essence of war is violence, and that moderation in war is imbecility."

#### Futility Of War

It is a hopeful sign that, while war was in the past more or less looked upon as heroic, and the "glories of war" were heralded, we hear very little of such jingoism today. Even by those who try to justify it and regard it as legitimate, it is realised and admitted that it is a last resort because of its horror, disruption and bestiality. In a speech in 1880 General W.T. Sherman, of American Civil War fame, said, "There is many a boy here today who looks on war as all glory, but boys, it is all hell." There spoke a professional soldier who had experienced the agonies of war. Edward Young, the English poet who lived from 1683 to 1765, wrote ironically of war,

"One to destroy, is murder by the law;  
And gibbets keep the lifted hand in awe;  
To murder thousands, takes a specious name,  
War's glorious art, and gives immortal fame."

With all the preparations for war rulers and politicians are coming more and more to realise its futility and that it settles nothing, except that "might is right", and that each war sows the seeds of another. Especially now that a conflict in some remote part of the world can set alight a fire resulting in world conflagration, is it realised that everything possible must be done to keep off war. It is coming to be regarded as one of the worst, if not the worst, of all evils. We have no hope that the teaching of Christ and His apostles will be accepted and obeyed until wars shall be no more, but we can see that this teaching and example are proving that the Bible is right in what it says concerning war, as upon all other things. EDITOR.

(God willing, we hope to deal with other aspects of this vital subject in the next issue of the Scripture Standard.)

## THE INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN'S RESPONSIBILITY TO THE LOCAL CHURCH

THE First Epistle to the Corinthians is the most comprehensive study of the local church in the New Testament. Perhaps the central characteristic of a local congregation is best described in Paul's admonition: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10).

With that verse in mind, a local church may be defined as *a group of Christians meeting in one place who have love for and fellowship with one another and who have agreed to speak and do together those things which God has given them to speak and do collectively.*

The term "church" is a collective noun and therefore one Christian is not "the church" (universal) or "a church" (local) (cf. 1 Cor. 12:12-14, 18-20). Each Christian is, however, a member of the body (1 Cor. 12:15-17), and important to it as a working part (1 Cor. 12:21-27). Each Christian is given *personal* responsibilities to be carried out individually, and he is given *collective* responsibilities to be carried out together with other Christians. One may not isolate himself from other Christians in his general locale without avoiding many important responsibilities given to him by God. The idea that I may be a Christian and not a member of a local congregation, if one exists near me, is false to the core. If faithful brethren are joined in the Lord's work in the area where I live, I must fulfil my collective responsibilities. If a church does not exist near me, I must attempt to teach men the gospel and thereby bring one into being.

Not every responsibility of the Christian is in the realm of collective action. It is true that my personal responsibilities sometimes affect the church collectively either for good or bad, but that does not imply that the church has done what I have done.

Now, understanding that as a member of a body acting together, I must function with the others, and understanding that acting personally as a Christian my works may affect the church, I feel a grave responsibility to the local church of which I am a member. First Corinthians will serve as a guide in viewing that responsibility.

*1 My responsibility to the local church is to be free from divisiveness (1 Cor. 1).* Churches need to be united within themselves upon the word of God. The church at Corinth was literally torn apart by the attitudes of the member parts. They *wished* to be divided. Theirs was not a question of doctrinal belief. They simply would not get along (1 Cor. 1:10-16; 11:17-21; 4:6-7; 6:1-7). Some are so self-willed that they will divide the body of the Lord over trivial, meaningless questions, or over matters which are purely determined by judgment or expediency. The attitude of many is: "I will have my own way or I will tear up the church". The words of Paul, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Phil. 2:3) are timely for churches today.

*2 My responsibility to the local church is to stand upon the revealed word of God (1 Cor. 2).* In matters which involve human preferences within the realm of lawful selection, the Christian must bend his desire many times to accommodate others; but in matters involving Truth there can be no bending, Paul addressed the Corinthians with the proposition that faith is directed by the revelation of the mind of God and that the words of man's wisdom can only destroy.

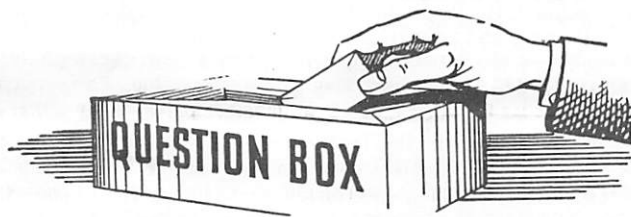
Many churches could have been saved from digression in the past twenty-five years if Christians had only been strong enough to stand upon the truths of the New Testament. I owe that to my brethren with whom I worship. They may not always appreciate it, but it will be to their good. I cannot be compromising in dealing with God's revealed word. I may cause my brethren to be lost.

*3 My responsibility to the local church is to labour for the building up of the body (1 Cor. 3:4).* Paul uses first his own example — how he diligently worked to build at Corinth (1 Cor. 3:1-10). He then turns to the responsibility of each man and woman there to build upon the foundation, which is Christ. Their work should be an abiding one (1 Cor. 3:11-15). And then, in chapter four, he discusses further his stewardship and its place in their growth.

Saving souls by leading them to the Saviour is the primary work of the church. We have been saved and we must help others to be saved. If any local congregation is to grow, each member must put himself to the task of talking to others about the Lord and teaching the Truth to all we can. This takes persistent effort. It takes getting folks out to the meetings. It has often been suggested that every Christian should try to convert one soul to Christ each year. This is not an unreasonable request. If we were all as interested in souls and giving our best to the task of converting them, we would be doing more than that.

4 *My responsibility to the local church is to lead a righteously moral life* (1 Cor. 5:7). At Corinth there was fornication (chapter 5), public defrauding of one another (6:1-14), more immorality (6:15-20), and uncertainties about the proper marital and home-life requirements of God (chapter 7). Now how could the Corinthian church grow with the world seeing all that? If the church of which I am a member is to be what it ought to be, each member must be a Christian in every sense of that word. We want the congregation to radiate a wholesome influence in the community. We must show the light of Christ in our lives. None of us is so insignificant that our example cannot hurt. What we do reflects upon other brethren either for good or bad. When the world sees our evil, they associate it with the church. When the other brethren see it, they are discouraged and some even imitate us. Paul said that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" and therefore must be purged out before its effect is felt. On the other hand, the influence of a godly life will do as much for the well-being of the local church as any other single factor. *to be continued.*

COLLY CALDWELL *Truth Magazine.*




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Conducted by  
James Gardiner

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**"Could you please comment on Exodus 20:5, especially on the last phrase, 'visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me'..."**

Perhaps I can begin by quoting the verse in full, and *also quoting* the following and the previous verses: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in the heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments"

#### THE SETTING

The above words are spoken by God to the children of Israel and form part of what is known as the decalogue or ten commandments. The first commandments are strongly put and concern idolatry. God does not intend to share the affections of His people with other "gods" of wood or stone. God demands of His people their single-mindedness in worship: "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Again and again throughout the Old Testament God had occasion to repeat this prohibition, and to give notice that He would not, could not, tolerate men bowing down to worship inanimate objects. Idolatry was in effect a complete and total rejection of God, and we cannot be sur-

prised that God would be very angry at its practice. We can but express surprise that the people of God, who had been rescued from Egypt in such a spectacular way and had witnessed the sheer power of God in the Red Sea, could so soon defect from His worship and attempt to find satisfaction in bowing down before carvings of the sun, stars, fish etc. Even while Moses was in the mount writing God's commandments upon tablets of stone, the children of Israel were collecting items of gold, such as earrings and brooches, that they might melt them and form a golden calf. Can we wonder at the kindling of God's wrath? The worship of such "gods" was, then, understandably an abomination to God. Nevertheless, idolatry was practised by the Israelites for most of their history: and even in New Testament times the apostle Paul is aware of the tendency of the Jews to indulge in such things, and many times exhorts his hearers to "flee from idolatry".

In Exodus 20:5 and elsewhere, God made it very clear that those who defiled themselves in the practice would incur His undisguised disfavour, and God would *visit* his disfavour upon them. In fact, as the quotation maintains, He went farther and said that He would extend His disfavour to *the third and fourth generations* of any such.

### Suffering Because Of Forefathers

It is, of course, a matter of casual observation that children do very often suffer the consequences of their parents' sins or crimes. If a family is evicted from a house because the parents don't pay the rent, then the children suffer too. An illegitimate child can suffer the stigma of being such, although no fault lies with the child. If because of laziness or extravagance on the part of parents poverty comes to a family, then the children suffer, again through no fault of their own. Children of those convicted of treason lose all rights and title to property. In a sense this would apply in the case of the statement we are considering in Ex. 20:5 and that when God extended his disfavour to those who took to idolatry their children would logically suffer the consequences. In a wider and national sense I suppose we could say that children are suffering today the legacy of the last world war, especially in Japan where the atomic bombs were dropped. Each generation, by what it does, commits and affects those who come after it. Each generation to some extent blames its predecessors for the state of the nation or of the world. We hear and see plenty of that today among the "angry young men". To be more specific I suppose that each generation of the Israelites, very often with good reason, blamed the generation which went before it for the conditions prevailing at the time. The children of the captivity, for instance, could rightfully say that they suffered captivity because of the sins of their fathers and forefathers. Later generations of the Jews suffered many things, including the fall of Jerusalem, because of the sins of Manasseh (see 2 Kings 24:3,4 etc.). Many of Israel's kings brought ruin and suffering upon the contemporary and later generations.

### The Justice Of God

I think that the reason for the question before us is that it seems unjust and unfair that generations should suffer for the sins of their fathers or forefathers, and that such an injustice is out of keeping with the nature of God.

First of all let me say that God did not visit the iniquity upon the *children* of the third and fourth generations (innocent babes), but the adult *descendants* to the third and fourth generations. We should also note that God said He would "*visit*" the iniquity of the fathers upon the future generations and much depends upon *the form* these visitations would take. For instance, after the Israelites had worshipped the golden calf while Moses was in the mount, Moses tried to appeal to God for clemency on their behalf (Ex. 33:31-35). God said, "Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold mine Angel shall go

before thee: nevertheless in the day when I *visit* I will *visit* their sin unto them. And the Lord plagued the people because they made the calf, which Aaron made." On this occasion, then, God's '*visitations*' consisted of plagues. One would need to examine critically the whole O.T. to enumerate the form and frequency of all of God's visitations, and their far-reaching effects. In many instances His visitations involved the *withdrawing of blessings* which otherwise would have been bestowed: for example withholding His aid in battle and allowing the Israelites to be defeated. Most of God's visitations (indeed all of them as far as I know) were of a *temporal* nature and innocent generations of the Jews never suffered *eternal* loss because of the wickedness of previous generations. A righteous man of *any* generation, although incurring temporal disadvantages from previous generations, individually was well beloved of God. Many a righteous Jew surrounded by idolatry and other evils sat down and wept at the state of the nation. The nation would receive God's visitation, *and he with it*, but he as an individual would be well beloved of the Father. And so, although God's visitations would be to the third and fourth generations of them that hated God the innocent of those generations would, although sharing the visitation, be as acceptable to God as though they had lived in a righteous generation. Therefore I suggest that the disadvantages suffered by the *innocent* in the third and fourth generations was in temporal and physical things. The *guilty* in such generations suffered temporally, of course, but eternally as well. To me, God's justice in this stands quite unimpaired.

#### Ezekiel's Explanation

I commend to the questioner, and all interested in the question, a reading of Ezekiel chap. 18, which admirably deals with the ethics involved here. The chapter is too long to quote in full, but I shall try to paraphrase it and give the gist of its contents. (see also Ezek. 14 and 20):

A cynical proverb was common amongst Israel at this time: "the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge". The implication was, of course, that because the fathers were evil the children, who had not eaten sour grapes (or been evil) were suffering the consequences. By the proverb Israel were in fact accusing God of rank injustice. The proverb angered God and He instructs Ezekiel to give Israel His rejoinder. His answer to Israel is also an admirable answer to the question before us. God here emphasises *individual responsibility to Him, no matter in what generation we live*, third or fourth or any other. "All souls are mine," says God (v.4) whether father or son, and *the soul that sinneth, it shall die*". It does not matter what our father, or forefathers were like, or indeed what our sons will be like, it is what *we* are like, that matters. Only *the souls that sin* will die, not their sons, or sons' sons. If a man is just and righteous he will be well pleasing to God in any generation (vs. 5-9). If this good man has an evil son, the evil son will die (be condemned) (vs. 10-13). If this evil son, has in turn, a good son, this good son will be well pleasing to God, notwithstanding he had an evil father (vs. 14-17).

(v.19) "Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father?" God gives His answer: "When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. *The soul that sinneth, it shall die*. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."

There is nothing wrong here with the *justice* of God. But God goes on to show in the rest of the chapter that He is also a *merciful* God, and the way of repentance is always open: (v.21) "But if the wicked will turn from all the sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall

surely live and not die;" (v.23) "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God; and not that he should return from his ways and live;" (v.25) "Yet ye say. The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?" And so God's answer to the proverb is that no man's teeth can be set on edge unless he personally has been eating the "sour grapes".

In summing up I think we can say that Ex. 20:5 certainly refers to God's threat to "visit" His displeasure upon the descendants (to the third and fourth generation) of them that hate God but that only temporal and physical disadvantages, serious enough, would accrue. Those who hate God are referred to, and God (as in Ezek. 18) still would make exceptions to all the righteous amongst these evil generations. Or as in Ex. 20:6, "showing mercy unto the thousands (thousands of generations," Deut.7:9) of them that love me, and keep my commandments."

God's mercy runs deeper than His wrath.

(Questions please to James R. Gardiner, 88 Davidson Terrace, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland.)

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

SEPTEMBER 1972

|                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 3—Psalm 22:1-24   | Phil. 2:1-18      |
| 10—2 Kings 6:8-23 | Phil. 2:19-30     |
| 17—Isaiah 43:1-13 | Phil. 3:1-16      |
| 24—Psalm 33       | Phil. 3:17 to 4:7 |

### "TOILING, REJOICING, SORROWING"

This heading is the comment of the poet on the life of the village blacksmith, but our readings this month make it a fitting comment on a life of so much wider an influence — Paul's. Here is a trinity of human experience inextricably mingled in a life full of service for Christ.

We know well that Paul was no professional preacher. He did certainly receive funds and presents, and was sometimes well provided for. He could not otherwise have lived in "his own hired dwelling" (Acts 28:30). But there was no certainty of salary, He was sometimes hungry (4:12). He was sometimes abundantly supplied (4:18). He was a working man, and was glad to be so. Read for this his testimony in 1 Thess. 2:9; 2Thess. 3:8; 2Cor. 11:9. It is clear that tent-making, which may also have involved leather work, was hard work for the hands, and the hands which plied the needle also bore chains at times.

"Toiling" well describes such work, but the mental and spiritual effort in pleading for Christ and witnessing for truth is a harder task. We meet this in 1:22 and the word "striving" in Col. 1:29 representing "agonising" is applied to "warning, teaching and presenting every man perfect in Christ". He always carried a heavy load — "the care of all the churches" (2 Cor. 11:28), Is this not something which all Christians should be sharing? However, in his work for and with the Philippians joy preponderates. He writes (1:25,26) "your progress and joy of faith"; (2:17) "I joy and rejoice with you all". He calls them "my joy and crown" (4:1). Their gifts by Epaphroditus gave him great joy. (4:10).

The mixture of joy and sorrow in Paul's life is in line with the Saviour's own experience — and it should be in every Christian's. The word "committed" has come to be used to distinguish between one and another. How fully it applies to the lives of all saints, this latter title tells. If we are not "committed", what are we? Paul could well say, "Be ye imitators of me" (3:17). He anticipated his final joy to be his reward "in the day of Christ"; even if it meant his life being offered with the sacrifice and service of the Christians he had been instrumental in bringing to the same work as himself. The suffering which they endured would bring them joy also (2:17).



### An Epistle of Joy

The final message of this letter is certainly "Rejoice in the Lord" (3:1; 4:4; 4:10). These saints were not living in a friendly world but in the midst of bitter enemies of truth and righteousness. They had come out of the darkness of godlessness, gross sins and superstition into the pure and holy light of Christian love and fellowship. They were required to exhibit "moderation" to all around them (4:5), and the gentleness and forbearance this entailed left them open to ill-treatment not to be resisted — "sheep in the midst of wolves" (Matt. 10:16). In a world where, largely, might was right, this would be regarded as weakness and taken advantage of. But they would still be rejoicing in the Lord, for their eternal destiny was safe. Enemies were at hand but so was the Lord (4:5). It is no less so now.

We have mentioned the burdens of Paul, and a few of these appear in the chapters we are reading. The joy which he had in Timothy's working with him, like a faithful son, was clouded by a deep sorrow that he was the only one like-minded. So many who should have been otherwise were too selfishly occupied in their worldly concerns to be trusted to show unalloyed love for the brethren. Then he still had his enemies who were perverting the gospel, and insisting on observance of Jewish customs and the law as conditions of salvation. He was himself a Jew of Jews, but knew well how useless was the fleshly relationship or the fleshly observance to gain acceptance with God. The solemn if not harsh warning was necessary even in Philippi (3:2), and an even greater sorrow appears where we read of some who were professing Christianity but not walking in its ways. Their bodily appetite ruled their lives, and they were only concerned with the present life. Imitation of Paul's own life and a realisation that "our citizenship" is in heaven are essential if the church is to stand for the "cross of Christ" (3:18).

Another point of special interest is the story of Epaphroditus. This man was evidently sent (and had willingly come)

to Paul in Rome. He had not only found him and as its messenger, delivered the gifts of the church at Philippi, but had become his "fellow-worker and fellow-soldier" in the gospel. A very serious illness brought him near death's door so that his life was despaired of, but "God had mercy on him", and thus on Paul and others. Who wants a good and useful man to die? The news of the sickness had somehow reached Philippi, and the brethren were deeply concerned. What a lovely picture of Christian fellowship and concern this presents to us! Into the darkness of cruelty and misery the light of love was shining.

So toil, joy and sorrow were bound up together in the bundle of life. The great-hearted apostle to the Gentiles had accumulated a fund of fellowship which bound together so many souls all around the world, and in Philippi hearts beat with his; Christ reigned in the church there, producing fruit in a widening circle of redeemed men and women, caring deeply for one another, and developing pure and holy lives to the honour and glory of the Saviour. May it be so too in our assemblies that the catalogue of good things in 4:8 will be our catalogue of character.

R.B. SCOTT

### THE HOLY SPIRIT AND BAPTISM

"WHY is it that, while in Acts 2:38 repentance, faith in Jesus, baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit are all mentioned, this is by no means always the case in other narratives which describe subsequent conversions?"

We could explain that baptism is not always mentioned if we accepted that, where the Spirit could be presumed to have been already given, baptism was not required; a possibility suggested in the case of Apollos (Acts 18:24 ff.) The story of Cornelius (Acts 10:44ff.) however, and in all probability that of Paul (Acts 9:17 f.) show that Luke knew the gift of the Spirit was no substitute for baptism.

Luke's failure to include a reference to repentance on each occasion cannot be attributed to any belief on his part that repentance was at times unnecessary!

Luke felt he was not required to repeat each time all the elements of the 'complex'. Unless..he specifically states that one of the elements was missing, as he does in the account of the Samaritan converts (Acts 8:14ff.) he leaves it to his readers to infer that all of them were present. The literary value of Acts would have been sadly diminished if its author had mentioned repentance, faith in Jesus, baptism in His name and the gift of the Spirit on each and every occasion that strict accuracy required their presence.

By way of preliminary conclusion, it may be said that where (1) repentance, (2) faith in Jesus, and (3) the readiness to be baptized in His name (rather than the act of baptism) are accepted as the normal preconditions in Luke's view for the gift of the Spirit, the relationship between baptism and the bestowal of the Spirit in Acts is considerably clearer than it has been held to be. For the distinction between the readiness to be baptized and baptism itself means that Luke sees no inconsistency and indeed, that there is no inconsistency in the reception of the Spirit sometimes before and sometimes after baptism.

This is not for one moment to say that Luke regarded baptism as unimportant a meaningless rite that could just as easily have been discarded. As F.F. Bruce says, "The idea of an unbaptized Christian is simply not entertained" in the New Testament. Nor did Paul regard as baptism as an optional extra, so to speak, when he wrote, "Christ did not send me to baptize, but to proclaim the gospel" (1 Cor. 1:17). Nonetheless, despite the high place Paul assigned to baptism..he still held, as his words he imply, that preaching was the more important part of his work. It was so because it produced repentance, faith in Jesus and the readiness publicly to acknowledge Christ as Lord, the preconditions for the gift of the Spirit.

J.H.E. Hull: *The Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles*, pp.98-100. Lutterworth Pr. 1967. £1.75)

### THE BRIDGE BUILDER

An old man, going a lonely way,  
Came in the evening, cold and grey,  
To a chasm, vast and deep and wide.  
The old man crossed in the twilight dim:  
The sullen stream had no fear for him.  
But he turned when safe on the other side  
And built a bridge to span the tide.

"Old man", said a fellow pilgrim near,  
You are wasting your strength by building here.  
Your journey will end with the ending day;  
You never again will pass this way.  
You've crossed the chasm deep and wide:  
Why build a bridge to the other side?"

The builder lifted his old grey head:  
"Good friend, in the path I have come," he said,  
There followeth after me today  
A youth whose feet must pass this way:  
This chasm, that has been naught to me,  
To the fair-haired youth may a pitfall be.  
He too must cross in the twilight dim.  
Good friend, I'm building this bridge for him."

### THE CLERGY

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

1878, *Ecclesiastical Observer*

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

**JESUS CHRIST GAVE ALL**

He gave His head to the crown of thorns; His back to the cruel lash; His cheeks to those who struck Him; His face to those who spat upon Him; His shoulder to the robe of mock royalty; His clothes to His executioners; His mother to John; His hands and feet to be nailed to the cross; His blood for the forgiveness of sins; His body for the life of the world; His Spirit to God; Himself unto death.

**JESUS CHRIST GAVE EVERYTHING**

"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was rich, yet for our sakes became poor"; "He loved *me* and gave himself for *me*."

**NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES**

**Mayfield, East Lothian:** We are happy to announce Mrs Dunn a dear old lady of 78 years, who has been faithfully attending the meetings for some time, was baptised on July 19th, in a meeting at Newtongrange, with Bro. J. Morris officiating.

We trust and pray that the Lord will greatly bless our dear sister and make her remaining years a joy. A.P. SHARP

**"SCRIPTURE STANDARD"**

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS, 9TH AUGUST 1972 (All debts cleared)

| INCOME                      |        | EXPENDITURE           |        |
|-----------------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|
|                             | £ p.   |                       | £ p.   |
| Cash in hand at January 1st | 79.66  | Printing              | 380.70 |
| Cash in bank                | 217.13 | Postage               | 43.94  |
| Subscriptions               | 357.05 | Reading cards (1,000) | 14.17  |
| Gifts                       | 59.93  | Cash in hand          | 64.75  |
|                             |        | Cash in Bank          | 210.21 |
|                             | <hr/>  |                       | <hr/>  |
| <u>Total</u>                | 713.77 | <u>Total</u>          | 713.77 |

Seven churches, taking a total of 83 copies a month, have yet to pay for 1972; one of these (3 copies) has not paid for 1971. Eleven private British subscriptions are still awaited; twenty-seven have yet to be received from overseas; thirty copies are sent free to various missions in Africa; 139 copies are sent abroad; 57 direct in Britain; 353 distributed by church agents. Thus, total circulation is approx. 550, and we print 750 — the lowest practicable figure for printing. There is a balance of £275 in hand. Monthly expenditure averages £55.

**"S.S." DISTRIBUTING AGENT**

AFTER many years' service in distributing through the post copies of the "S.S." Bro. Ronald Maiden has resigned from the task. We most warmly thank our brother for having carried out this responsible and important work with devotion and zeal. We appreciate the ability and work he has put into this service.

As will be seen in the notices on the

back page of the "S.S." our young brother CHARLES GRANT, 45 KIRKWOOD AVE., REDDING, FALKIRK, SCOTLAND has agreed to become distributing agent. He is the eldest son of Bro. & Sis. James Grant, who have long been warmhearted supporters of the "S.S." and what it stands for. We pray that our young Bro. Grant will find interest and joy in this new work he undertakes. EDITOR

# TO ALL WHO ARE INTERESTED IN THE "SCRIPTURE STANDARD"

A MEETING TO DISCUSS ALL ASPECTS OF THE  
"SCRIPTURE STANDARD"

will be held (God willing) on SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30th 1972  
commencing 2.30p.m. in the meeting-house at

**JACKSON'S SQUARE, SCHOLLS, WIGAN.**

CHAIRMAN: R.B. SCOTT (Kentish Town)

Buffet Tea will be provided and it is hoped to arrange an EVENING MEETING  
commencing 6 o'clock for those able to stay.

Speaker: ALLAN ASHURST (Stretford)

URGENT: It will be appreciated if Church Secretaries will please give an estimate  
of the number of persons hoping to attend from their congregations to:-

C. MELLING, 133, LONG LANE, HINDLEY, VIA WIGAN, LANCS. TEL. 0942-56301  
Come and show your interest and offer your suggestions for the future of the  
"SCRIPTURE STANDARD"

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NOTICES. (Coming Events, Births, Engagements, Marriages, Thanks), 3 lines  
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