

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

VOL.53 No.1

JANUARY 1985

☆☆

☆  
☆ **A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS** ☆  
☆  
☆ I asked the New Year for some motto sweet - ☆  
☆ Some rule of life with which to guide my feet: ☆  
☆ I asked and paused; he answered sweet and low, ☆  
☆ "God's Will to know". ☆  
☆  
☆ "Will knowledge, then suffice, New Year?" I cried; ☆  
☆ And, ere the question into silence died, ☆  
☆ The answer came: "Nay, but remember, too, ☆  
☆ "God's Will to do". ☆  
☆

☆☆

## REDEEMING THE TIME

Time like an ever rolling stream,  
Bears all its sons away,  
They fly, forgotten, as a dream,  
Dies at the opening day.

Whether we see Time as did the hymnwriter in the lines above, or whether we prefer the picture conjured up by the grisly old spectre of Father Time, with his scythe in one hand and hour-glass in the other, it matters little, for Time marches on regardless. We are all creatures of time; indeed we are all the veritable *slaves* of time. More than ever we are a world of clockwatchers. We all know people who keep looking at their watches and who say "Must be rushing away, now." As the poet Burns said, "Nae man can tether time nor tide". Time, indeed, waits for no man. There are, obviously, occasions, such as funerals when busy men, pre-occupied with the perplexities of the daily living, are forced to give some thought to the silent passing of time (and its consequences). I suppose January, and the New Year, is another such occasion when our minds turn to considerations of this nature. Time is *the most valuable commodity* given to man, more precious than gold, and yet we mostly squander it. The Bible has much to say about Time and how it ought to be used. Solomon said that "A wise man's heart discerneth the time, both time and

judgement” because to “every purpose” there is time and judgement. He also said that there is a prescribed time for “every purpose under heaven” and went on to enumerate just a few - “A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war and a time of peace.” (Eccl. 3). Other Bible writers talk of “troubulous times”, “ancient times”, “perilous times”, “times of refreshing”, “times of restitution”, “times of ignorance” (that God winked at), and “times of rejoicing”. *Time* is thus a worthy subject to reflect upon and a matter of great importance.

### Make Time - Take Time

We often complain about the pace and pressure of modern life. Business was never so exacting or pleasure so elaborate. We work and play under conditions of mental and physical tension. In the early days of typewriters one Company used to advertise with the slogan “To save time lengthens life” (now there's a thought). “To save time lengthens life” is true and false at the same time. When one thinks of all the time saved by modern computing machines one can well appreciate the trend towards an earlier age of retiral nowadays, and so time-saving machines ‘lengthens life’ in a sense. Time is released for doing other more important things. Often we sigh for some antidote to the rush and bustle that is in the world. By the very nature of things, however, nothing substantial can ever be accomplished in a hurry. Some men, by doubtful means, may claim to have “got rich quick” but it takes much longer to get wisdom or gain true self-esteem. Even Nature herself takes a long time to accomplish her works and produce her treasures. The best wines take the longest to mature. Nature's patience contrasts sharply with mans' haste. Destruction can take moments whereas construction can take years. A gale can destroy in seconds but it takes many years to produce a forest. A fire can take only a few hours to destroy an edifice that took years to build. We must *take time* to accomplish worthwhile objectives. The budding Concert Violinist must scrape away for hours, and for years, before he has any hope of reaching his goal. Anything worthwhile can only be achieved by the employment of much time upon it. We must *take time* and even *make time* for things of importance. With the rush and hurry of modern living family-members in some homes have barely time to converse with one-another; mothers have little time to spend with their children and so the seeds of social discord are sown and many of the neglected children of today become the vandals and bank-robbers of tomorrow. As far as the church is concerned great danger lies in members spending too much time watching television or reading the trivial. The armchair is our enemy. What can be more tempting after a hard day in the office, or workshop, than put our feet up at a warm fire and turn on “the one-eyed monster”. Certainly we must keep up with what's happening in the world, and many programmes are highly educational, but, given that, watching television can easily gobble up all our precious spare time. We must try and allocate time for *the study* of the scriptures, let alone a casual reading of them. After all, the Bible can only be understood by those who take the time to study it. Publishers have been known to produce books containing “Bible Lessons For The Busy Businessman” but really the Bible unfolds its secrets only to the disciples who brood over its pages.

In spite of what the typewriter slogan says about ‘saving time and lengthening life’ it is sadly true that we cannot increase our quota of time; merely use it more

wisely. A western immigrant once complained to an old Indian Chief that he had so little time. "Well" said the redskin, grimly, "I suppose you have all there is". We cannot lengthen life; we cannot extend the measure of time; we can but use it more wisely. Take time, indeed make time for the things we hold dear.

Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord;

Abide in Him always, and feed on His word;

Make friends of God's children; help those who are weak;

Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek.

### Purpose Of Time

To the businessman "Time is money". What, then, is time to the true disciple? Time is, to him, *opportunity*. The general increase in suicides is explained by the fact that 'modern living' is seen, increasingly, to be completely futile. If we were to think deeply about the matter we would, perhaps, agree that there is a certain futility about Time, and indeed about life itself, unless we consider these things *in the context of God's purposes*. Taken on their own (Time and life) there is a futility to them. Without God, life is indeed pointless and aimless. The true purpose of time is, therefore, that we might engage in the outworking of the purposes of God. The Year 1984 has proved that man, left to himself, has not changed for the better in any way. We have seen former workmates drop lumps of concrete on one another in the Miners' strike, and we have seen an Ethiopian government spend millions of dollars on weapons-of-war while six million of their own population starve to death. Here is surely a classical case of getting priorities wrong. No, man does not change - only the gospel can offer any hope in that direction. The *real purpose* of time is, therefore, a 'day of grace' granted to the world to 'set its house in order' - a 'Day of grace' destined to be withdrawn at some future date. Paul asked the disciples at Rome, "Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance". (Rom. 2:4). When Christ returns Time will be no more, but why does Jesus tarry? "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise (to return), as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9). This is the true purpose of time - that all should come to repentance. The world is in a rush, but God's concept of time is more leisurely - "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

### Importance of Time

Time can be looked at in three ways or has, as it were, three dimensions - Past, Present and Future. The Past is as water under the bridge and there is not much we can do about it. It has some value, however, in the sense that we can profit by experience and not repeat the mistakes of the past. Notwithstanding all around us, in politics etc. and even in the church we can see men busily engaged in repeating catastrophes of the past. The New Testament does not advocate that we spend too long commiserating about our failures of the past but to get on with the present. Indeed Paul said that, "...this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:13). The apostle was not, it seems, too preoccupied with remorse for the past but relished, it seems, future opportunities of making up for lost time. Occasionally, doctors have the awesome task of telling a patient that he has only a short time to live. Doubtless we would all dread receiving any such communication but doubtless we have all wondered how we would spend the time, if say, we had six weeks to live. They say that a real crisis concentrates the mind and I fully believe it. What a different conception we would have of time if we had but six weeks, or six months,

to live. Then our real priorities would truly come to the surface. We would count as precious each fleeting second. We would truly then accord to time its proper value. Such a thing actually befell king Hezekiah (II Kings:20). The prophet Isaiah was sent to Hezekiah to give him the news that his illness was terminal and that he should use the remaining moments to "Set his house in order". This crisis certainly 'concentrated the mind' of Hezekiah and his weepings and prayers moved God to give him a reprieve of 15 years. Thus Hezekiah was thereafter living on borrowed time and doubtless placed a new value on his remaining years.

We are all living on borrowed time. This, I believe, is what Paul refers to when he exhorts the Ephesian Christians to *redeem the time*. He says, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, *Redeeming the time*, because the days are evil." (Eph. 5:16). The word here rendered "redeeming" means to *buy back* from the power of another, and in this context it means to rescue or recover our time from idleness or waste. "Because the days are evil" signifies that there will be many allurements and temptations in the world encouraging us to squander our time. Time is given to us for the most valuable purposes and so should we regard it. The church is relatively small in numbers, (even minute) and all hands are required on deck. There is really so much to be done, and so few to do it, that time is at a premium. As Jesus remarked, The fields are white unto harvest but the labourers be few." The problem is twice compounded when those few labourers are not to be found in the fields, but in the halls of amusement, revelry, or even just snoring in the shade. The same apostle gave a similar exhortation to the disciples at Rome insisting that "*it was high time* to awake out of sleep" for "the night is far spent and the day is at hand" (Rom. 13:11). Yes, it is later than we think. The past is gone, the future might not, for us, arrive; we have but NOW to work in the vineyard and do the things well-pleasing to God. In every workplace there are the 'Artful dodgers' who succeed in convincing the boss of their studious application to their duties but we should count it a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. That is, perhaps, why the apostle Peter advises us "to pass the time of our sojourning here *with fear*" knowing that the "Father, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every mans' work." Let us resolve that, in 1985, if we should see it, we shall endeavour to accomplish more for the Lord than we did in the year just gone past. That we shall give time its true value (as those living on time borrowed) and that we shall find work to do in the Lord's vineyard. Let us truly Redeem the time. "So teach us, Lord, to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Ps. 90:12).

EDITOR

## BREAKING OF BREAD

Having been present at the Slamannan District Mutual Benefit meeting, I was aware that Bro Gardiner intended to write an article on this subject. I did not agree with his reasoning then and after reading his article, I still cannot share the conclusions he comes to.

By drawing a parallel between the feeding of the five thousand when Jesus broke the loaves into pieces, and when Jesus broke the bread at the institution of the Lord's Supper, he passes on the impression that when bread is broken, it must of necessity be broken into several pieces. The Greek word used, KLAOO, a verb, (the noun form KLASMA) is not thus limited as a check on the Lexicons will reveal. To quote but two, Thayer says, "A fragment, broken piece", while T. S. Green writes, "A piece broken off. a fragment".

This I believe is exactly what Jesus did at the institution of the Supper. He broke to partake and so instructed his disciples, "This do ye". No, He did not

"pluck" a piece from the loaf, neither does anyone else who breaks the loaf thus. You may "pluck a hen", "pluck an apple from a tree", you may even "pluck" the ears of corn from which the loaf is made, but you never "pluck" a piece from it. You break a piece, a fragment from it and eat it. Vine commenting on "This do" says, "i.e. The act of giving thanks and breaking the bread, each one for himself". To so do is certainly in keeping with the teaching elsewhere given relative to observing the Lord's Supper. In Acts 2:42 we are told that, "They continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and in fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers". The word "THEY" has reference to those three thousand souls in the previous verse who accepted the Gospel message. Bro. Gardiner says that, 'there is a vast gulf between BREAKING something and EATING IT'. Not here, the idiom or expression, "BREAKING OF BREAD", implies not only *BREAKING*, but also *EATING* the bread, as it does on other occasions. He quotes the example of Paul in Acts 27:35. I don't find where it says he broke the bread or loaf into pieces before eating. It could simply mean, as the Greek word allows, that he broke a piece off and ate it. However let us go back to the Lord's Supper. In 1 Cor. 10:16-17 we find that it specifically states that each of the brethren in that church or congregation broke the bread for themselves. "THE BREAD WHICH WE BREAK". There does not appear to be any question of the ONE LOAF being broken into many pieces for distribution here. In commenting on the word "WE" in this verse, Vine says, "We should notice the pronoun 'we'. Each believer breaks the bread for himself."

I am really surprised to learn that Bro. Gardiner doesn't know of any brethren who try to break the bread "in the middle", because since I first became a member of the Lord's church some thirty years ago, I have never known it to be broken any other way, at least in any church I have visited, except Wallacestone and Tranent in recent years. In fact I was always given to believe that this is how it should be done.

Some brethren express doubts as to whether Jesus would eat and drink that which was representative of His body given at Calvary and the blood He freely shed there. I don't know why. The Lord says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways", Isa. 55:8, and He did suffer John to baptize Him with a *baptism of repentance for the remission of sins*. Mark 1:4. He who was sinless and had nothing to repent of.

Let me close by assuring those who may not know me, that Bro. Gardiner and myself are and always have been beloved of each other in the Lord and that nothing in this article is a personal attack on him. I do however reiterate what he urges in his last paragraph, because, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, *for correction*, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works".

JAMES GRANT, Wallacestone, Scotland

## GLEANINGS

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

### WE QUOTE PETER MACKENZIE

"Oh, the marvellous power of the tongue! What a power the orator has over his audience! The prince rules his people by the tongue; the officer controls the army by it; the advocate pleads the cause of his client through it; and the judge decides the case by the same little member. If I had you with me down the beautiful valley of the Wye, I could take you far away down to the Monmouth Bridge, then onward to the picturesque moss-covered cottages of old Chepstow, and to the many scenes

of interest in the neighbourhood, but it would be no use my taking you in the dark - say, at twelve o'clock at night, because you couldn't see anything at that dark hour. We need the sun to enlighten us with his rays, and when his beams fall upon the land they sweep away the fog, and all the charming scenery of road and rail and river comes out, in its verdant beauty and natural grandeur. So it is with speech. It unlocks the closet of the breast, dispels the darkness of superstition, and sweeps away the mental fog of ignorance; it reveals the beauty of mind and heart, and gives voice to the aspirations of the human soul. It makes our thoughts visible, and our ideas palpable; it is the magician by whose transcendent power our poets

Give to airy nothings

A local habitation and a name;

it is the diver who brings up glistening pearls out of the mighty lake of emotion, and it may fairly be called the fingers on the clock of time - the hand on the dial which tells you the time of day."

### TOUCHED WITH THE FEELING

"If it is bodily weakness, sickness, or pain, how very sweet it is to know that we have to do with Jesus, who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." (The word is the same that is elsewhere translated sickness: John II:2-4.) Don't you sometimes find it very hard to make even your doctor understand what the pain is like? Words don't seem to convey it. And after you have explained the trying and wearying sensation as best you can, you are convinced those who have not felt it do not understand it. Now think of Jesus not merely entering into the fact, but into the feeling, of what you are going through. "Touched with the feeling" - how deep that goes! When we turn away to Him in our wordless weariness of pain which only He understands, we find out that we have to do with Him in quite a different sense from how we have to do with any one else. We could not do without Him, and thank God we shall never have to do without Him."

Frances Ridley Havergal.

### PLAY ON, PLAY ON

"There was a famous violinist, Ole Bull by name, who had a friend named John Errickson. This man did not care for music, and could not be constrained to listen to the playing. One day the musician took his instrument and went down to the friend's place of business. And as he handled his instrument and explained its construction, and talked over tones and semi-tones, he took the bow in his hand and began to draw it across the strings. Soon the room was filled with a burst of melody. Workmen left their work, and gathered to listen to the great player. By-and-bye the music ceased, and the men went back to their work. As the tears streamed from the eyes of Errickson, he turned to the musician and said, "Play on, play on, I never knew what was missing in my life before." So it is with each one of us. As we look into our own hearts, we will realise that the One whom we need more than all else is the blessed Christ. Our lives will never be attuned to the melodies of heaven until we receive Him."

H.G. Harward

### YOU ARE JEALOUS?

"You came to be ministered unto. And because he has been ministered unto, and not you, you are jealous!"

J.H. Horsburgh

### WHAT IS A FRIEND?

"What is a friend but one whom I can trust; one who, in sorrow's hour will mingle his tears with mine; one on whose support I can reckon when my back is at the wall?"

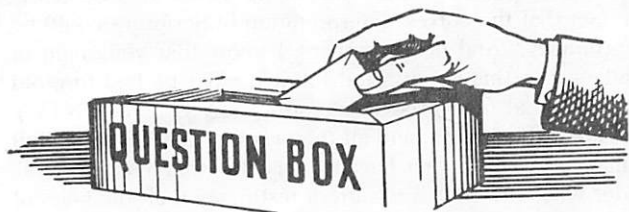
Guthrie

## WHAT IS HE AT HOME

"A woman, enlarging on her husband's peculiar changefulness, said, "At a Liberal meeting he's a Liberal, and at a Conservative meeting he's a Conservative." Some one asked, "But what is he at home?" She replied with emphasis, "He's a perfect demon!" "

T.W.T.

SELECTED BY LEONARD MORGAN




---

 Conducted by  
 Alf Marsden
 

---

**"On the programmes of some special week-end meetings I have seen advertised the subject of Hermeneutics. Would you please explain something about this subject?"**

I don't know if the questioner has looked at the dictionary definition of this word but if he/she will have seen that this says 'interpretation, especially of Scripture'. If one also looks up the definition of 'interpretation' then one will see that this is, 'to explain so as to understand'. So from the religious point of view, the plural noun 'hermeneutics' means, quite simply, the interpretation of Scripture so that it can be explained and understood. Having used the phrase 'quite simply' I am, of course, referring to the definition only; there is nothing simple about the interpretation of Scripture, as a matter of fact, it has been one of the most troublesome subjects ever to afflict the Church. However, there are certain guidelines which, if followed, can assist us greatly in interpreting the Scriptures.

Interpretation of Scripture is still much influenced by what is known as 'the School of Antioch', the main points of which were:

- (a) Careful grammatical treatment of the text - paradoxically, in an age when education is available to all on a scale never before seen, the knowledge of the grammar of a language is seemingly less understood. This obviously negates a careful grammatical treatment of the text by many who read and study the Bible.
- (b) Discernment of the literal sense of the text - this means that unless there is anything to indicate to the contrary, words must be given their normal meaning. You will no doubt recall how Nehemiah records that Ezra and the Levites read the Law to the people, "So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading" (Neh. 8:8). This is basic to the learning process.
- (c) Fixing the text in relation to the context - this is absolutely essential. Far too many people pick out passages of Scripture which seem to support some long-held personal theory and quote such passages without any reference to the context in which the words are found. This is tantamount to textual vivisection.

These three main points, however, are still fundamental to proper interpretation. It will now help us to explore some of the methods which the Bible uses in order to explain Itself.

#### Interpreting by Fulfilment of Prophecy

Peter records, "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:20-21 N.I.V.). This is why we can take all the Messianic prophecies of

the O.T. and receive them in complete trust, never doubting their truthfulness. As Jesus pointed out to the two on the road to Emmaus, 'O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory' (Luke 24:25-26). The Lord is uttering a strong rebuke to the two; they *should have known*, and by inference He is also saying that the truth concerning Himself was readily discernible from the Scriptures.

Furthermore, after Peter had healed the lame man at the Beautiful gate of the Temple, he testified to the fact that the correct interpretation of Scripture could be seen in the fulfilment of prophecy, "And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer" (Acts 3:17-18 N.I.V.). Later on in this discourse Peter added, "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days" (v24). Sometimes we wonder why with such a wealth of testimony that 'the heirs of the prophets' went wrong. We are also amazed that men today with an equally great wealth of testimony go wrong. Could we say that too many people rely on 'private' interpretation?

Paul also shows that interpretation by the fulfilment of prophecy is basic to *his* understanding (See Rom. 1:1-4). Also, when he wrote his first letter to Corinth, he stated the essence of the Gospel in these terms, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3-4). The consummation of all the Messianic promises are contained in an expression used by Paul in his second letter to Corinth, "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (2 Cor. 1:20).

Interpretation by the fulfilment of prophecy is a very important method, as testified by Matthew's frequent allusions to it. If we examine the first three chapters of Matthew's Gospel we find such references as, Matt. 1:22-23; 2:5-6, 15, 17-18, 23; 3:3, 15, etc.

### The Allegorical method of Interpretation

This is a method of describing one subject under a guise of another. The facts stated are applied to illustrate principles. A good example of this is to be found in Galatians 4:22-26. Abraham had two sons; one by a bond-woman and one by a free woman (Hagar and Sarah). The bond-woman bore Ishmael, the free woman bore Isaac. The women, says Paul represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: this is Hagar. Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to earthly Jerusalem which is in slavery with her children. Sarah stands for heavenly Jerusalem which is free, and which is the mother of the free. Paul then goes on in verse 28, "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bond-woman and her son: for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free" (Gal. 4:28-31).

What is Paul here explaining to his readers (and to us)? He is saying that the Old Covenant should be cast out, but the New Covenant, based on the New Jerusalem, the Church, is to remain. In connection with this let us read the writer to the Hebrews, "But ye are come to mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (read to



the close of the chapter). You will perhaps notice that the allegorical meaning does not do away with the literal meaning; in this particular case the literal sense can be found from the Genesis record of the historical events, and can be testified to by other Scriptures, as we have shown. It is also important to remember that the spiritual principles directly related to the historical events can only be properly discerned by a proper interpretation of the text.

### **The Typological method of Interpretation**

This is the method of using O.T. types in the Christian message (when used thus they are known as antitypes). It takes the literal sense of the passages of Scripture as the basis, and there is a very close affinity between the literal sense and the actual reality. The example we can take is of Adam and Christ, and the passages of Scripture to be considered are Rom. 5:14-21; and 1 Cor. 15:22, 45-49. Adam is the type, and Christ is the antitype. You will notice in Rom. 5:14 that Adam is the 'figure' of 'he who was to come'; that person is identified in v15 as Jesus Christ. We then have contrasted in quick succession sin and grace; offence and righteousness; disobedience and obedience; the law and Christ. Typical and antitypical. Each expressing in sensible typology those particular doctrines which apply to them. The spiritual application is to be found in 1 Cor. 15 and compares closely with the literal appreciation of the Roman passage.

### **Conclusion**

It is argued in some quarters that an emphasis on 'getting back to the first century' does not allow for an acceptable interpretation of the Scriptures to modern man. But what does modern man want? Does he want to abandon the fundamental doctrines of the Bible, e.g. the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection? It would seem so from recent statements made by prominent religious leaders. This will not do. Who are we trying to please, God or man?

Having said that, there *is* a problem. How do we relate predominantly Jewish ideas such as covenant relationship, the Atoning work of Christ, sacrifice, ransom, redemption, which are deeply set in O.T. theology, so that they are intelligible to modern man. This, I believe, can only be done by interpreting the unchangeable truth of God into the language of man of any age. This demands serious study and application on the part of the one who purports to interpret, and that is why I believe that the interpretation of Scripture should be taught as an essential part of the training programme in every Church of Christ.

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

## **WORLD-WIDE UNITY AND BRITISH CHURCHES**

Churches of Christ do not acknowledge national boundaries. They cannot avoid differences in language and cultures nor differences due to either, but a plea for unity on the basis of SCRIPTURE must be universal. There are quite a number of differences which are accentuated among readers and supporters of the Scripture Standard, of whom I am one. So I am daring to set out what I think to be a fair statement of my own stand (in some of which I may be peculiarly British).

I stand for the simplest things. — The shared loaf and cup at the Lord's Table, unaccompanied singing, mutual ministry of brethren in worship including prayer of course, sisters not to lead in public worship and to wear a covering on the head, public reading of Scripture as a definite part of meetings, no support from outside the membership, contributions taken in covered containers to avoid show of money,

strictly moral and seemly behaviour at all times. The Saviour's teaching and example prohibits service in the armed forces. Some of these points are mainly recognised as normal, but some will arouse apposition and condemnation by many of the brethren. I do not condemn or disfellowship on that account, recognising the duty of love of the brethren and especially tolerance of conscientiously held convictions.

Matters in which there are widely held differences, and where already the churches in general have moved away from the original position are, for instance, "individual cups" on the Lord's Table and no covering for the sisters heads except their hairdress. General acceptance of these changes makes it necessary to discuss them openly and honestly, but the deciding factor must be "What saith the Scriptures?" The difficulty we must acknowledge is just that. Does scripture demand the shared cup, and does scripture demand the head covering? My answer is "Yes" - many brethren as honest as I, say "No". Can we agree to differ? Surely not! if we continue to plead for obedience to the divine will?

My own view is that only discussion of interpretation can justify apparent disobedience. Look first at the cup question. Take the words and actions of Jesus and we cannot escape their import. He took the cup. He blessed the cup. He gave it to the disciples, and told them to drink out of it. He said it was the new covenant in His blood. Do and say the same things and there is not a dispute or an interpretation. There is not mistaking of word or action until we argue, "He did not mean just what He said". So let us not argue. Eve began her fall with a doubt. Here there is no need for one. Nor was there then! Shall we not take exactly the same approach with the head covering question? *Man is not* to cover. *Woman is* to cover the head in worship. Obey without interpreting anything. All is clear. Are the differences based upon what we like to do - or think we can do without offence to God? All the extra words in scripture only reinforce the demand. Obedience worth the name is prompt and ready! A similar view can be taken with regard to unaccompanied singing. We have a command to sing. We have no command to play. So we sing. Let us sing together then in our praises to God - no argument or interpretation is necessary.

We readily admit there are many matters on which we have no direct guidance, and there are regions where differences need not divide if the measure of loving tolerance is sufficient - and we think *demand*ed by scripture. Modern life is vastly different from New Testament times. It is those times and the revelation of the gospel which are responsible for every beneficent habit of present society. we cannot realise the extent to which the gospel has changed society for the better. We know it is still a dark world distraught with evil-doing, but there has been a measure of social reform benefitting mankind in general. Mankind will never admit that the leaven of the life and work of Jesus for three and a half years is alone responsible for what is good.

The above was prompted by enquiry from America relating to the British Churches. The British Churches remained united in a free and loosely-knit Cooperation from 1842 to about 1920 when they accepted into cooperation about 12 churches planted by "the Disciples" with buildings, ministers and organs. Negotiations between these and the British "Cooperation" had been continued for some years, the disunity being a source of dissatisfaction, but remaining a matter of principle from the British side. From that time churches considered the move against "Old Path" interests, and many brethren courageously opposed innovations in conference after conference, but could not stop the drift into digressions of various kinds. The name was changed to "Association" and became progressively weaker in doctrine and practice, and churches and brethren withdrew and formed an Evangelist Committee for raising funds for "Old Path" adherence and evangelistic effort, including the training of evangelists by Bro. Crosswaite. The funds were held by the Committee and functioned until the teaching that all committees are unscriptural came from the U.S. churches, and was accepted conscientiously by the British evangelists who

ceased to serve under the Committee and so it ceased to function; the evangelists then accepting help from the U.S. Meanwhile the official "Association" declined for lack of support and finally divided into groups of churches seeking either union with the United Reformed Church, or a new "Fellowship of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland" now continuing to plead for New Testament teaching under the new name, but not joining with the now independent churches, who adhere to the view that every church must stand on its own with a mutual trust and cooperation and much help, financial and otherwise, from across the Atlantic, and with a general world wide connection. The Evangelist Committee still exists and has printed some leaflets for general use, but otherwise does not operate.

Numerous U.S. Evangelists have preached and campaigns been prosecuted - (and are being planned) with cooperation of the British churches and Bible School at Corby. The yearly and other conferences planned by and for the Evangelist Committee have long since ceased, the only remaining meetings of that kind being those of the Slamannan District churches under the title "Mutual Benefit Meetings". "The Christian Worker" keeps news of efforts for special evangelistic work in which members of local and nation-wide churches can congregate for wider fellowship. Some British churches have increased their numbers and their work, others keep going with varying success and failure, much in accordance with the general Christian-professing religious bodies in this country, where all religious interest seems to be declining.

There are now several different types of "Churches of Christ" in London; one or two using instrumental music, individual cups, and general denominational practices; one remaining along with what we regard as old-type; two being promoted by Free-Correspondence Courses; another more in line with U.S. type 'ministerial' lines; and yet another with more modern psychological pressures; yet another with new emphasis on locally-based family effort. This is a somewhat confusing scene from the general public's view, we think. This seems likely to spread all over the country as more campaigns are begun. We hope we may say - "What then! notwithstanding - Christ is preached!" There is no intention to merely find fault. One U.S. London cause has taken the title "Central London Church of Christ". When considering the London scene and the divisions from which they come, the title seems "impudent", however well intentioned. No Londoner would dare to claim to know what "Central" means in relation to the enormous 'Colossus'. It can only confuse if connected with Westminster Cathedrals or Methodist Central Hall. It may be that such an assembly should be begun, and we remember one was planned to begin in 1846 but nothing came of it. There was not sufficient money among the few churches of Christ then functioning in the metropolis and around the country. Some struggled for a short time, and members being poor and few, records were lost. Perhaps they are recorded in a better way (James 2:5). It may be well to remember the brethren who stood with Brother Crosthwaite and bravely stood for the 'Old Paths', and some are still with us. While for a time the help from across the sea was warmly received and is still appreciated, the divisions brought with it have increased as have confusion and the differences due to varied cultural habits of thought and action. Here we go back to our introduction - Churches of Christ do not acknowledge national boundaries. If the plea for unity is no longer feasible we must try to maintain a plea for kindness amidst diversity. Sadly it seems for truth's sake we do find places where we agree to differ. May the Lord bless us with that wisdom which is from above.'

R.B. SCOTT

THE trouble with blowing one's own horn is that it seldom leaves any wind for climbing.

IT'S easier to get folks to agree to do better tomorrow than to get them to do their best today.

# IMITATION

C. S. Lewis wrote: "In the New Testament, the art of life itself is an art of imitation ... Our whole destiny seems to lie . . . in being as little as possible ourselves, in acquiring a fragrance that is not our own, but borrowed, in becoming clean mirrors filled with the image of a face that is not ours".

By "the art of imitation" Lewis of course does not mean the production of something fake or pretended, but rather the reproduction of the characteristics of another in one's own life. Imitation of this sort occupies an important place in the Scriptures. Let us note first an exhortation from Paul to the saints at Corinth. He writes, "Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me". 1 Cor. 4:16. The word *mimetes*, here translated "followers", is from *mimeomai*, to mimic, to imitate, to follow an example. In the preceding verses, the Apostle had spoken of his constant toil in earning a living as he preached the gospel, and the accompanying suffering and abuse he endured for Christ. Now he calls upon the Corinthians to imitate his dedicated labour and patient endurance in serving the Lord. In Thessalonica some members instead of working for a living, were meddling in the affairs of others. Paul therefore describes them as disorderly (*ataktos*, neglectful of duties or undisciplined). He says, "withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow (*mimeomai*) us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample (*tupeos*, model or pattern) unto you to follow (*mimeomai*) us". 2 Thess. 3:6-9; c.f. verses 10-15. While the apostle frequently urges others to imitate his example, it is never his purpose to exalt or glorify himself. His aim is always that Christ may be seen in him and be glorified through his example. His love for others is Christ's love exhibited in Him. He seeks not his own profit "but the profit of many, that they may be saved". 1 Cor. 10:33. In the next verse therefore he says, "Be ye followers (*mimetes*) of me, even as I also am of Christ". 1 Cor. 11:1. This idea of imitating Christ is expressed in various images and figures. Paul, for example, instructs the Roman Christians: "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof". Rom. 13:14. "The word rendered 'put ye on' is ...commonly employed in reference to clothing or apparel. The phrase *to put on* a person ... means to imbibe his principles, to imitate his example, to copy his spirit, to become like him ... In all respects the Lord Jesus was unlike what had been specified in the previous verse (i.e. Rom. 13:13). He was temperate, chaste, pure, peaceable and meek; and to *put him on* was to imitate him in these respects". Albert Barnes.

Peter, employing a different figure, also enjoins such imitation. With regard to patient endurance of abuse unjustly inflicted by men, he says, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps". 1 Peter 2:21. To imitate Christ is of course also to imitate God. Hence to the Ephesians Paul writes: "Be ye therefore followers (*mimetes*) of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us..." Eph. 5:1-2. In the preceding verse, Eph. 4:32, God is said to be kind and forgiving. His children are to imitate Him in these qualities. And in so doing they walk in accordance with Christ's example of love. Again Peter makes it clear that God demands imitation of His character when he says, "But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy". Finally we note that imitation is as inseparable from reflection as the two sides of

a coin. To the degree that we imitate God, to that same degree we reflect His character before the world - i.e. glorify Him.

It is then, as Lewis intimates, the face of Christ, who is the image of God (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15), that is to be continually mirrored in us. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord". (2 Cor. 3:18; c.f. Rom. 8:29).

DOUGLAS JONES, San Antonio, U.S.A.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

### FEBRUARY 1985

3—Deut. 13:1-11	Matt. 7:15-29
10—Lev. 14:1-29	Matt. 8:1-17
17—Ex. 14:15-31	Matt. 8:18-34
24—Hosea 6	Matt. 9:1-17

### BY THEIR FRUITS YOU SHALL KNOW THEM

I Know a number of the fruitgrowers on Clydeside. They are hard-working people in difficult times. When they talk with me about their seasonal successes and failures I cannot help but recall Jesus's own words on fruit. This passage in Matthew especially comes to mind (7:15-20).

Alexander Campbell in his preface to the book *Evidences of Christianity* - a record of his debate with Robert Owen - wrote: "When we ask, What has Christianity produced in the soil of our fallen nature? or what has Christianity done for man? we do not institute a comparison between a Christian and a hypocrite, but between a sincere Christian and a sincere pagan or between a sincere Christian community and a sincere infidel community. We do not institute a comparison between a half-converted Christian and a half-bred infidel. We ask for a well-developed Christian and a well-developed infidel; and will then, without debate, submit the question to a well qualified and disinterested umpire. We are willing to test the tree by its fruits". Campbell could write that because of the simple criterion the Lord gave (7:20).

Speaking of fruit, I am led to reiterate the words of the apostle Paul to the saints of Galatia: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22,23). This fruit should be compared with the "works of the flesh" detailed in the prior verses. What a comparison!

### HEARING AND DOING

Jesus gives us a comparison in the latter verses of Chap. 7 between two kinds of people: "Whoever hears these sayings of mine and does them" (7:24), and "everyone who hears these sayings of mine, and does not do them" (7:26). Dear reader, in which category are you found?

A point to emphasize here is that what is done for Jesus has to be done in the right way. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, and done many wonders in your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you who practise lawlessness.'" I deliberately quote these words because I find them so thought-provoking. How devastated some are going to be on that day (the judgment day) when, having thought they belonged to Jesus they shall hear condemnation from His very lips.

A Christian is not saved by faith alone. He is saved by faith at work. James wrote: "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2:17). His words, of course, should be read within their context.

Abraham and Rahab are then given as examples of faithful servants. James went on to say:

"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." Could it be any clearer than that?

### A LEPER HEALED

Leprosy is a chronic disease of man characterised by lesions of the skin and superficial nerves and also possibly involving the eyes, the mucous membranes of the nose, and pharynx. Today reported cases of leprosy worldwide number at least two million, and the actual number of infected individuals may be as high as ten million.

In Leviticus chapters 13 and 14 we read of the laws in discerning leprosy and of the rites and sacrifices in the cleansing of the leper. Leprosy, therefore, is a disease with a long history.

The amazing thing in this incident between Jesus and the leper was the fact that "Jesus stretched out his hand, and touched him" (8:3). You see, a leper then was an outcast from human society and one who had to go about crying out: "Unclean, unclean" (Leviticus 13:45). But Jesus, out of love and compassion for this man, broke with convention and touched him to heal him. The leper was rewarded for his faith, confidence and reverence for the Master. He must have felt much the same as Naaman of old who was also cleansed from "the living death" (2 Kings 5).

### A GOOD MAN'S PLEA

Most of us have seen on television Sergeant-Majors at work on the parade grounds. They are all pretty tough on the poor private soldiers. Centurions in the Roman army held an equivalent position. They were responsible for the discipline of the regiment, and they were the cement which held the army together. In peace and in war alike the morale of the Roman army depended on them. William

Barclay has pointed out something interesting about centurions. Every one mentioned in the New Testament is mentioned with honour.

This particular centurion was anxious about his sick servant (slave). That in itself was rather exceptional. You see, slaves in those days were commonly regarded as living tools. They really did not matter. It was of no importance to anyone if they suffered, and whether they lived or died.

The centurion believed in Jesus and His power. "Lord, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed" (8:8). He deeply impressed the Lord. "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" So the Master spoke, and the healing was done.

One writer put it this way: "It is quite clear that this centurion was an extraordinary man, for he loved his slave. It may well be that it was his totally unusual and unexpected gentleness and love which so moved Jesus when the centurion first came to Him. Love always covers a multitude of sins; the man who cares for men is always near to Jesus Christ."

### PALSIED MAN HEALED

Peter once said this of Jesus: "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves also know..." (Acts 2:22). The Greek word for miracle is *dunamis*. It simply means power. That is how we get our English words dynamite and dynamo. What power was shown here in the raising of this palsied (Greek *paralutikos*, paralytic) man! Surely this was a sign that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah.

Other evidence was in the fact that Jesus declared forgiveness of sins. To the paralytic he had said: "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven" (9:2). The Jews knew full well that only Jehovah could forgive. If this man Jesus was proclaiming pardon then he must be

Jehovah in the flesh. The scribes could not bring themselves to acknowledge that. (There is none so blind as he who will not see.) Indeed they rejected him. They said within themselves: "This man blasphemeth!"

I am reminded at this point of the words of C.S. Lewis. "We are faced, then, with a frightening alternative. This man we are talking about either was (and is) just what he said or else a lunatic, or something worse. Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a friend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God. God has landed on this enemy-occupied world in human form." Lewis came to that conviction from atheism.

### THE SOCIAL CHRIST

Jesus ate with publicans (tax-gatherers) and sinners. The Pharisees criticized Him for it. The response was clear: "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick" (9:12).

"To save" in the New Testament scriptures is the Greek word *sozo*. This word has to do with health. At times it is used to mean quite simply "to heal" or "to cure". So we have this lesson. Jesus's forgiveness brings to a man health of life and health of soul. Sin is the sickness; sin is that which takes the health out of life. In forgiveness sin is defeated and man is restored to health of soul.

Dear reader, have you been cured by the Great Physician?

IAN S. DAVIDSON, Motherwell

### "JUST A MINUTE"

I have only just a minute,  
Only sixty seconds in it;  
Forced upon me, can't refuse it;  
Didn't seek it, didn't choose it;  
But it's up to me to use it.  
I must suffer if I lose it,  
Give account if I abuse it:-  
Just a tiny little minute,  
But eternity is in it.

THE angels broke into song when Jesus came. So into every life comes song with the coming of Jesus into it.

### HOW LONG WOULD IT TAKE..?

TO make my community really Christians if every other follower of Christ worked at and prayed about it just as I do?

To make this nation Christians if all Christians gave prayers, efforts and money towards it just as I do?

To make disciples of all nations if all other Christians were to give this object the same place in their lives as it has in mine?

Have I any moral right to ask or expect of other Christians, preachers and missionaries any service or sacrifice for Christ that I am unwilling to give myself?

### PAIN & CRIME

Pain and suffering *strengthens us* for this life which God has given unto us.

Crime and that which is evil *pushes the Christian* into fruits of righteousness that in the end we shall experience unspeakable glory.

The atheist will say that if God is all powerful why does He allow crime, war and evil to exist and that if there is an all benevolent God why does He allow pain and illness that leads to death? We must remember that our knowledge is limited and our conclusions are not always accurate.

We do know that God's way does not bring crime and evil; we must also recognise that death is appointed unto all men and we must NEVER FORGET that Christ is coming again and that He will take those that are His into a "Land that is fairer than day" and that in that place called Heaven *there will be no crime* nor will there ever again be illness or pain.

T.W. PHILLIPS II, Rosemead, California

---

MAN may dress a wound, but God heals it.

---

“THE ABSENTEE’S ALPHABET” begins-

“I’d like to go to church but...”

- A is for Auntie, who will come to tea,
- B is for bed, which won’t release me.
- C is for car-“we need the fresh air”-
- D is for dinner that Mum must prepare.
- E is for enthusiasm, which I haven’t got,
- F is for foursome, which golfs quite a lot.
- G is for garden, much “nearer God’s heart”,
- H is for husband, who won’t play his part.
- I for intruders who sit in my pew,
- J for the jealousy shown by a few.
- K is for knitting, which Mum likes so much,
- L the old language, it’s so out of touch.
- M is for money, they always want more,
- N for new tunes that I’ve not heard before.
- O is for overtime, double on Sunday,
- P the preparing I must do for Monday.
- Q for queer noises which come from the choir,
- R for the rector, he ought to retire.
- S is for sermons, as dull as can be,
- T for the telly I really must see.
- U for unfriendliness I always find,
- V for the voice of the woman behind.
- W for weather, too much rain or snow,
- X is for extras, too busy to go.
- Y for young rowdies who sit at the back,
- Z is for zeal-and that’s just what I lack.

On the Old Clock of Chester Cathedral there is a rhyme that goes as follows:

When as a child I loved and wept, time crept.  
 When as a youth I dreamed and talked, time walked.  
 When I became a full grown man, time ran.  
 And later as I older grew, time flew.  
 Soon I shall find when travelling on, time gone.  
 Will Christ have saved my soul by then?

Amen.

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is published monthly.

PRICES PER YEAR - POST PAID BY SURFACE MAIL

UNITED KINGDOM and COMMONWEALTH ..... \$5.50  
 CANADA & U.S.A. .... \$10.00  
 AIR MAIL please add £1.50 or \$3.00 to above surface mail rates

DISTRIBUTION AGENT & TREASURER:

JOHN K. KNELLER, 4 Glassel Park Road, Longniddry, East Lothian, EH32 0NY  
 Telephone: Longniddry (0875) 53212 to whom change of address should be sent.

EDITOR: JAMES R. GARDINER, 87 Main Street, Pathhead, Midlothian,  
 Scotland EH37 5PT. Telephone: Ford 320 527

“The Scripture Standard” is printed for the publishers by Walter Barker (Printers) Ltd.,  
 Langley Mill, Nottm. Tel. Langley Mill (0773) 712266