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# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

Vol. 57 No. 12

DECEMBER, 1989

## BUSINESS MEETINGS

In my mail the other day, I received a letter from a good sister in the Blackpool area which read, "Dear Bro. Gardiner, How weary we get of reading of the Superiority of Men! Did they have any choice in their destiny? or can they turn to the female sex and say 'There, but for the grace of God go I'? Your quotations regarding 'Women In The Church' are quite correct, we have read it, and heard it time and time again, and that goes over many years. Paul said:- Gal. 3:26-28 . . . There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither MALE nor FEMALE, for we are all one in Christ Jesus."

I greatly appreciate all the letters I receive in connection with our magazine and thank our sister for taking the trouble to write and express her views. I am, of course, very sorry if the "S.S." has been labouring the matter she mentions, and certainly would not want to weary readers with an over exposure of any subject or flog any particular issue to death. Certainly I, personally, have never ever written any articles on the subject, although I am ultimately responsible for what is printed. My understanding of the matter is, that, in the August issue, sister Rose Payne asked for some guidance as to the composition of those attending business meetings, and brother Roy Davison responded in the October issue. Also in the October issue, "Question Box" dealt with Eph. 5:22-23: in response to a question from a sister. Thus, any recent mention of the matter has been in response to direct questions from sisters, but I certainly apologise to our sister from Blackpool, and to any other readers, who may feel that we make undue mention of any particular issue. The Editor is restricted to printing the material he receives: and certainly could use a lot more than he ever gets.

Indeed, the Editor had hoped that more brethren would have responded to the reasonable question posed by sister Payne, but only brother Davison has, so far, offered any advice. I was grateful to brother Davison for his response (printed in the October issue) although I did not agree with all of his conclusions. My own humble comments of the matter, for what they are worth, follow.

### Not Slothful In Business

Brother Davison quoted 1 Tim. 2:11,12 and said, "Not only is a woman to be silent in the assembly (1 Cor. 14:34,35) but she is also forbidden to teach a man or to have authority over a man". This is, of course, generally true but, as has been pointed out, Priscilla taught Apollus "the way of the Lord more perfectly." Some sisters were also prophets in the church (Philip's four daughters were all prophets)

and one can hardly imagine them fulfilling this office silently or without teaching the males. Obviously we must define terms like 'silence' and 'teach'. Sisters are hardly silent when singing in the congregation, and one of the purposes of singing hymns is to teach and exhort (one-another.) We have many wise and gifted sisters, knowledgeable in the scriptures, and merely in conversation with such it is difficult not to learn something. Is it suggested that such conversation should cease in case a woman is found to have taught something to a man? Here at Haddington the church has a 'Discussion Group' on Wednesday evenings, which is open to all, members or otherwise, and all discussion centres on the scriptures. This also provides opportunity to several sisters (who have no husbands at home) to ask the kind of questions they might ask their husbands if they had them. Who is to say that in these meetings (wittingly or unwittingly) women do not teach the men as much as the men teach the women, or would some say that such discussions are unscriptural? Surely this is not what Paul had in mind in 1 Tim. 2:11,12. Indeed MacKnight renders it **"For I do not allow a woman to teach in the public assemblies; nor in any manner to usurp authority over a man: but I enjoin them, in all public meetings, to be silent."**

The New Testament never talks of 'Business Meetings' as such, just as it never talks about 'Discussion Groups' or 'Gospel Meetings'; 'Special Missions' etc. as such, but there are two or three meetings mentioned in the Acts where the Lord's business was transacted, and brother Davison mentioned them in his article.

#### (1) Appointment of Replacement Apostle (Acts 1:15-26)

During the few days waiting period, in Jerusalem, while the apostles tarried for the coming of the Holy Spirit, it was needful that a new apostle be appointed to replace Judas Iscariot. The apostle Peter took the initiative in this matter and described the necessity to the assembled disciples. **"And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of the names together were about an hundred and twenty). Men and brethren, this scripture ..."** From this we learn that Peter addresses 120 of the disciples, (doubtless many referred to in the previous verse 'with the women'), and that he addressed them as "Men and brethren". J.W. McGarvey says that those 120 disciples were not all the disciples that Jesus had at that time, but "probably all that resided in Jerusalem at that time". These assembled disciples selected two candidates and prayed to God to show which of the two He had chosen. Then the same disciples drew lots and the lot fell upon Matthias. Thus we learn that the 120 disciples (male and female) all participated in the selection of the two candidates and the casting of their lots. Again, J.W. McGarvey (Comm. on Acts p.16) says, "It should be observed that the disciples did not themselves select Matthias, but, having first put forward the two persons between whom the choice was to be made, they prayed the Lord to show which one He had chosen ..."

Bro. Davison admits that there 'might' have been women amongst those disciples, but feels that because Peter addressed them as "Men and Brethren" that he was solely referring to males. He rightly states that the word 'and' (Men and Brethren) is an interpolation, and deduces from this that "Men, Brethren" refers to the same people (only to males). I doubt that Peter was, in effect, saying "Men, Men" and indeed most versions of the N.T. simply use the term "brethren", (and in fact the N.E.B. renders it "My friends"). The term "Brethren" occurs about 200 times and mostly refers to the disciples in the church (male and female). We never encounter the term "men and women" or "brothers and sisters" but "Brethren". For the most part, it is used to refer to the church (men and women). and, indeed this is how it is used here by Peter (from the Greek *adelphoi*). Similarly we never read of "sisterly love" but "brotherly love" (including male and female). When the same apostle was preaching the gospel "to all that dwell in Jerusalem" (Acts 2:14) he used the same expression "Men and Brethren" (2:29) but surely we do not imagine that he was preaching the

gospel only to males, or when he said, "Ye men of Israel" (2:22) that he was excluding females? James also used the expression "Men and Brethren" when addressing the whole church (multitude) in Acts 15:12, 13), to be mentioned later.

### (11) Appointment Of The Seven Deacons (Acts 6:1-6)

As the church grew rapidly in numbers the apostles soon found themselves increasingly involved in attending to the temporal welfare of the new converts. They had to give up preaching to 'attend tables' and eventually had to call upon 'the brethren' to look out from among themselves, seven men good and true, with certain specific qualifications, to appoint "**over this business**" (thus a 'business' meeting). The suggestion "**pleased the whole multitude**" and they chose seven men "whom they set before the apostles". The apostles prayed and laid their hands upon the seven men, setting them apart for this work.

Clearly the whole church (men and women) were involved in making this choice, but brother Davison believes that whereas "the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples" they instructed only "the brethren" (the males) to do the choosing, and adds "that women were present does not mean that they participated in the decision-making". One wonders how, or why, we can exclude the women from the decision-making process in this case when "the church" was asked to choose seven men. Surely women are as much a part of the church as men. Yes, the church was addressed as "Brethren" and once again this is from *adelphoi* and means men and women. J.W. McGarvey (Comm. on Acts p.104) remarks, "It seemed good to the apostles and to the Holy Spirit that **the whole multitude of the disciples** should take part in the selection of these officers, the apostles doing no more in the matter than to prescribe the qualifications. No ingenuity of argument can evade the conclusion that gives the authority of apostolic precedent for the popular election of church officers. In what way the choice was made by the multitude, whether by balloting, or by viva voce vote, and whether with or without nominations, we are not informed: and consequently in reference to these points every congregation is left to its own judgement.

### (III) Decisions on the 'Gentile' Question. (Acts 15:1-31)

This meeting (in fact there was more than one) was necessitated by Judaizing teachers coming from Judea and claiming that Christians required to be physically circumcised, if they would be saved. Paul and Barnabas argued vehemently against this doctrine but to no avail and so it was decided that Paul, Barnabas and a few others should go to the church at Jerusalem to discuss this matter. "**They were sent on their way by the church**" (RSV) and were received at their destination by "**the church**" the apostles and elders. Similar teaching was encountered at Jerusalem: some Pharisees who had become Christians were also teaching that circumcision was necessary to salvation. "The apostles and elders were gathered together" (RSV) to discuss the matter (v. 6) but this seems to have been still **in the presence of the church** (v. 12). "All the multitude" kept silence to listen to Paul and Barnabas. Peter and James also gave their opinions. Thus after the views of Paul, Barnabas, Peter and James had been expressed, the assembled company, including **the church**, agreed upon a certain mode of action: i.e. that chosen messengers be sent to the Gentiles. **The church** (men and women) were involved in the decision.

J. W. McGarvey (Comm. on Acts p.60) says, "There was however, between these two public meetings" (involving the church) "a private meeting of Paul and Barnabas with the three apostles, who were in the city" (Paul mentions this meeting in Gal. 2:6-10). Also (on p.62) brother McGarvey says, "With this information as to the perfect understanding between the inspired apostles before us, we can plainly see that a second public meeting of **the whole church** was called, not for the purpose of bringing about an agreement between the apostles, but for the purposes of enabling the apostles to bring **the whole church** into agreement with themselves" and (at p.69) he adds,

"Although the document (written to the Gentile converts) was in 'the name of the apostles and elder brethren' (v.23) yet 'the whole church' (v.22) was present and the expression of (v.25) 'having come to one accord' refers to the apostles having brought **all the members of the church** to the judgement in which they themselves had previously united." And so **the church** (men and women) were directly involved in this decision, and if the decision had been one merely on the part of the apostles and elders, the church need not have been consulted or involved.

#### Conclusion

How then, does all this affect what we call 'Business Meetings' of the church. Business meetings should be taken seriously. We generally give much greater attention to the business of our employer than we give to the Lord's business: and indeed if we gave to our employer the kind of attitude we give to the Lord's business we might soon get "the boot." Jesus was quick to see the necessity of "being about His Father's business." Each congregation is completely autonomous and can decide for itself how it will conduct its business meetings. Some churches have elders and deacons: some have elders: many have neither elders or deacons, some have few males; some may have no males. These churches we have just considered, in the three situations briefly referred to, had the presence of apostles as well as elders and yet **the church, the multitude, the brethren** were all involved in the decision-making of the business at hand. Brother Roy Davison suggests the fact that sisters were present at a meeting (in Acts 6) does not mean that they participated in the decision-making: but surely, by the same token we have no reason to suppose that they were excluded from such decision-making. Indeed the terminology used freely during these three incidents: i.e. '**the church**', '**the multitude**', and '**the disciples**' surely indicates men and women: and if '**the church**' reaches a decision we understand that women are as much members of the church as men. In fact, in congregations having no male members: the sisters would have to do everything required of them in preaching, teaching, exhorting and spreading the Lord's Table. Paul said to the "**Brethren**" at Rome, "**Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another. Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord,**" (12:11). Surely no one suggests he was speaking only to the men in the church. Thus women, like the men, were not to be slothful in business, and if they were not to be slothful in their own business it follows that they certainly were not to be slothful in the Lord's business. In short, sisters, as well as the brothers, were to take an active interest in the Lord's business. For what it's worth, the church at Haddington has always urged all members to attend 'Business Meetings' and each member is encouraged to express their views. In fact I can't remember ever being at a business meeting, at any of the churches I have attended, where the whole church was not invited. Phebe was a 'servant of the church' and the brethren were instructed to assist her "**in whatever business she hath need of you**" (Rom. 16:2), and surely Phebe was allowed to decide what these needs were. My space has more than gone. By all means let us be about the business: the 'Father's business.

EDITOR.

## GLEANINGS

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

### HE IS PRECIOUS

"Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but to them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner." (1 Peter 2 : 7).

**JESUS IS PRECIOUS**

“Peace like a river is flooding my soul, Since Christ, my Saviour maketh me whole;  
Sweet peace abiding My portion shall be — Jesus my Saviour, is precious to me.  
Joy is abounding — My heart daily sings, Cleave I the heavens — mount up on wings  
Christ hath exalted — My soul He set free — Jesus my Saviour, is precious to me.  
O precious Jesus, how lovely Thou art! Come and abiding rule in my heart;  
Break every fetter — Thy face let me see, then thou shalt ever be precious to me.  
Chorus:- Precious to me, Precious is He; Jesus shall ever be precious, so precious  
to me.”  
(Redemption Songs 804).

**CALVARY**

“My Saviour, I can never know what Calvary meant to Thee;  
But teach me more and more, I pray, of what it means for me,  
My pardon, freedom, all, Thy grace, Thy cleansing and Thy power  
Were purchased there at Calvary for me in that dread hour.”

C.G.

**WE SEE JESUS**

“Christ is our Way; we walk in Him.”  
“He is our Life; we live in Him.”  
“He is our Lord; we choose Him to rule over us.”  
“He is our Master; we serve Him.”  
“He is our Prophet; we listen to Him.”  
“He is our Priest; having atoned for us.  
“He is our Advocate; ever living to make intercessions for us.”  
“He is our Saviour; saving to the uttermost.”  
“He is our root; and we grow from Him.”  
“He is our Bread; and we feed upon Him.”  
“He is our Shepherd; leading us into green pastures.”  
“He is the Water of Life; we slake our thirst from Him.”  
“He is the Fairest among ten thousand; we admire Him.”

C.G.

**SIR NEITHER WOULD I**

“A newspaper columnist who visited India tells of a missionary working alone  
with a few native helpers; maintaining an asylum for lepers. As he watched her, he  
said, “I wouldn’t wash the wounds of these lepers for a million dollars.” Filled with  
the Spirit of Christ, she said, Sir, neither would I.”

C.G.

**“AND SITTING DOWN THEY WATCHED HIM THERE” Matthew 27 : 36**

“Him . . . there.” What a paradox! Who is this person? Sovereign of the skies,  
Lord of flaming worlds; the Son of God, full of tenderness, the Healer of broken  
hearts, the Burden Bearer, the Lover of the sons of men; sinless, spotless, selfless,  
the Impeccable Christ . . . there! Fastened with nails, crowned with thorns, mocked  
and put to shame there. At the place of the Greatest Load, the Greatest Love, the  
Greatest Loneliness. How can we be unmoved before that great sight?”

J. Boyd Nicholson.

**SOMEONE HAS SAID**

“God does not measure our success by what we have gained, but by what we  
have lost for His sake,”

Samuel Thompson.

## ONE OF THE MARTYRS

“John Ardley, one of the Martyrs, being told by the cruel Bishop Bonner of the pain connected with burning, and how hard it must be to endure it, with a view of leading the martyr to recant, he nobly replied, “If I had as many lives as I have hairs on my head, I would lose them all in the fire, before I would lose Christ.”

(Acts and Facts)

## WORTH TELLING

“How are you today, sir? The speaker, a fine, stalwart young man, bent pitifully and reverently over the bed beside him as he spoke. The elderly invalid smiled faintly, but oh! so gently “My head is resting very sweetly on three pillows,” he replied, while a gleam of light illumined the sunken eyes — Infinite power, infinite love, and infinite wisdom.”

L. O. Cooper.

Selected by Leonard Morgan.

## A GOOD NEIGHBOUR

No words express greater appreciation and praise of another than for one to say “He, (or she) is a good neighbour.”

Being a Christian involves much more than being a good neighbour. As a matter of fact, being a good neighbour is just half of being a Christian, and the second half at that. But it is certainly true that no one can be a good Christian without being a good neighbour.

The law of Moses defined most inter-personal conduct in terms of conduct towards one’s “neighbour.” The last five of the ten commandments relate to man’s duty to his fellow-man in general. In two of them the word “neighbour” is used: “**Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour**” and “**Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour’s.**” In the additional statutes and ordinances that spell out the terms and the penalties of the law, the word “neighbour” is used with respect to the other three commands that relate to man’s dealing with others. In all the word occurs 36 times in the laws and ordinances of Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy.

In the midst of a list of fairly typical Old Testament ordinances, and consisting of only part of a verse as man has made those divisions, there occur some words that are later to be seen as much more highly significant than their position in the chapter might indicate: “**Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.**”

This verse, called “the royal law” by James, and described as the second greatest commandment by Jesus, is quoted or plainly alluded to 11 times in the New Testament, always in a context which places great significance upon it. When one combines the parallel accounts in the gospels, Jesus still refers to this commandment at least four times, and emphasis is given to it three times in the epistles.

When a rich young ruler asked Jesus which commandments he should obey in order to have eternal life, all of the commandments Jesus quoted to him were from the ten commandments except “**Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.**” Then, when Jesus was asked, “Which is the greatest commandment in the law?” he replied “**Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.**” Then Jesus added, as the next verse records, “**On these two commandments hang all the law and prophets.**”

### LOVE AND LAW

The apostle Paul twice makes basically the same affirmation as Jesus makes, using the expression, **Love fulfils the law.**” In the Galatian letter, after calling the brethren to their liberty, he commands, **Only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another: For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.**” And again we read, **“Owe no man anything but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet: and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is a fulfilling of the law.”**

No wonder it is such a wonderful thing to be or to have a good neighbour. A good neighbour does no harm but rather seeks his neighbour’s good. And when he loves his neighbour as himself, he seeks his neighbour’s good as zealously as he seeks his own.

Paul not only repeats Jesus’ sentiment that love fulfils the law, however; he also declares that love is defined by the law. **“Love works no ill to his neighbour;”** that is plainly the reason why **“Love is the fulfilment of the law.”** Both Jesus and Paul clearly believe that “ill” to one’s neighbour is defined in the law’s terms. To commit adultery, to steal, to bear false witness; these things work ill to one’s neighbour, and because they do, love will avoid them. That is why and how love fulfils the law. This is one of the major points at which “situation ethics” goes wrong. Situation ethics says love is the only law and leaves love undefined except as the one loving defines it for the situation. Hence it expressly states that adultery, lying, or stealing may in a given situation be the loving thing. The Bible says that these things by their very nature and by the nature of Christian love, are always, in every situation a violation of love.

James adds his voice to Jesus’ and Paul’s in this regard. He declares, **“If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well.”** Then he goes on to specify that violations of the laws against murder, adultery, and respect of persons are violations of this royal law and therefore are sin.

### WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR ?

One important question, though, still remains unanswered at this point: **Who is my neighbour? Who is it we are to love as ourselves?** It is interesting to note that this question was raised by a lawyer, who with remarkable insight saw that the law could be summarised just as Jesus would summarise it. He first asked Jesus **“What shall I do to inherit eternal life?”** Jesus usually answers questions with either another question, a scripture, or a story. In this exchange, in which he is asked two questions, he employs two of these methods. First he responds with a question, **“What is written in the law?”** The lawyer replies with two summary commandments: Love God supremely; love thy neighbour as thyself. Jesus not surprisingly replies, **“Thou hast answered right: This do and thou shalt live.”** But the lawyer is not quite content. He wishes to “justify himself”, either for asking such a foolish question which he could so easily have answered himself, or for his conduct in confining his love to his own class and kind. **“He, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?”**

Jesus answers this time with a story, with one of the greatest stories ever told. It is told not just as a story, the telling of an incident, but a parable, a story with a message, “an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.” It is the story of the good Samaritan. But only this parable told by Jesus, would ever have put together the words “good” and “Samaritan”. The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans, as a Samaritan woman once reminded Jesus. The Samaritans were hated and despised: hated as a mongrel race, despised for their mongrel religion. But Jesus told, not of a

Jew helping a Samaritan, which would have been shocking enough, but of a Samaritan helping a Jew, who had been neglected by his own religious leaders, surprising for the Samaritan, considered degrading to the Jew. When, however, Jesus drove the point home with the question, "Which . . . was neighbour to him that fell amongst thieves?" the lawyer had to reply: "He that showed mercy upon him." Jesus' injunction, "Go and do thou likewise," clearly crystallises Jesus' answer. Who is our neighbour whom we are to love as ourselves? Whomever we see who is in need of our neighbourliness!

**"If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? . . . And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others."** It is not that one is nearby, or likes us, or good to us that makes him our neighbour. It is his need. "Love thy neighbour as thyself."

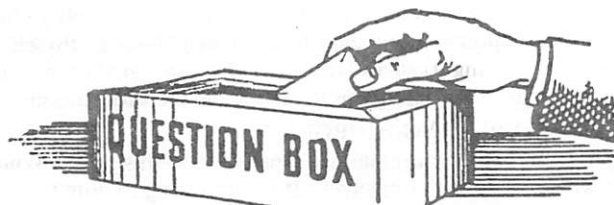
Are you a good neighbour?

C. May.

**("QUESTION BOX"** — I know from letters, and from general conversations with other brethren the 'Question Box' is an essential feature of this paper, and greatly enjoyed. Readers will be very sorry to learn that brother Alf Marsden has recently suffered a heart attack, and sister Edna has not been well. Alf is, however, now home from hospital and slowly making progress. I also know that all our readers will want me to wish them both every blessing and a steady improvement in health and this I do. In the absence of Alf's article, I have reprinted a question he answered in the April issue, 1987, and well worth a second read.

Please remember Alf and Edna in your prayers.

(Ed.)




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Conducted by  
Alf Marsden

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**"I hear so much talk these days about 'progressive revelation' and how that the doctrine of the Church should change in order to accommodate modern thinking. What would be your answer to this?"**

I am not quite sure what 'progressive revelation' means because the apologists of this doctrine never really say. However, we do know that 'progressive' is defined as 'moving forward; proceeding step by step', and that 'revelation' means, the disclosing of knowledge to man by divine agency' so I suppose what is meant in the Christian sense is that God is uncovering various aspects of His Divine Will step by step down through the ages and that He will continue to do so until the end of time. The flaw in this teaching ought to be obvious to everyone because it means that no man **in any age** has ever known the **complete** Will of God, and no man until the end of time will **ever know** the complete Will of God unless that cataclysmic event coincides with the final bit of revelation from God.

It is also interesting to speculate how this additional revelation should come. Will God reveal it to individuals, to the Pope, the Archbishop of Canterbury, to any latter day Mahdi, or will it be through any of the many groups of activists throughout the world. We have all seen the effects of the theory of so-called doctrinal development — the theory which promotes the idea that doctrine and theology can change and



develop — and we are currently seeing this theory being put into practice in attempts to unify the differing strands of doctrine in the major religious groups. Documents like 'Faith in the City' indicate the more liberal, political and pastoral aspects of the Anglican church particularly, and in order to accommodate this shift in emphasis, doctrine and theology will have to change. We can see this in the inevitability of the ordination of women as priests; in the explaining away of God as a Person and the emergence of Him as some kind of 'force'; and in the denial of the Virgin Birth of Christ, and in His resurrection being explained as some kind of cosmetic trick. We can expect other changes of doctrine and theology in the future. Church leaders no longer lead; they bow to the so-called 'reforming' attitudes of peoples who have long since ceased to believe in the immutability of the counsel of God.

### Is Revelation Progressive

I think we all understand that progression is possible only until final fulfilment occurs. For example, certain diseases will progress in the body until they become terminal; when the disease has fulfilled itself, progression will cease and the person will die. Likewise we see the progression of the revelation of God through the O.T. and into the New, culminating in the coming of Christ. As the writer of the Hebrew letter says, "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son" (Heb. 1:1,2. NIV).

So in Christ we saw the embodiment of God Himself, "full of grace and truth". But that wasn't quite the end of the revelation; shortly before Jesus left His sorrowing Disciples He promised them that another "Comforter" should come (read John 14:15-26. In that discourse, note the words of Judas, 'Lord, why do you intend to show (reveal) yourself to us and not to the world' v. 22). Later in the same Gospel record, Jesus answers the question posed by Judas (read John 16:1-15). You will notice that Jesus told the Disciples (later to be the Apostles) that the **Holy Spirit** would guide **them** into **all the truth**, and would bring to their remembrance all that He (Jesus) had spoken to them. So with the Apostolic Era we have the complete scenario of revelation from the Godhead (God, Christ, the Holy Spirit). It must be said, of course, that the Apostleship of Paul, who wrote most of the recorded N.T. letters, is well attested to in Scripture and cannot be mistaken.

So at the end of the Apostolic Era the revelation, which had progressed until then, was completed and ended. **All** the truth had been revealed. What man had to do was interpret the revealed Will of God (the unchanging Will, we might add) in the light of every age in which He has lived since then. And therein has lain the problem and the tragedy of interpretation.

### What Did God Reveal

Before we answer this further question let us think why God **needed** to give any revelation at all. Man was lost in sin — for which the penalty was death and eternal separation from God — and could do nothing to save himself, therefore, unless He wanted to lose His whole creation, He had to act. A vicarious sacrifice was needed to remove the guilt and consequences of sin, and so God 'stepped down' from Heaven in the person of His Son and died on the Cross, the Guiltless for the guilty. It was also necessary for man to know that he still had the power of choice, to live or die. Further, God needed to re-state the type of life that man should live if, in fact, he chose life in Christ. It was essential from God's point of view that man should know and understand these things, hence revelation was necessary. The question we now have to address ourselves to is "what did God reveal"?

If we posed this question to a group of Christians we might get the answer, "well He revealed enough to ensure our salvation." If pressed further, they might direct us

to Acts 2:38 which reads, “repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Obedience to a textual directive, it is said, would produce salvation. But do textual directives comprise the whole of revelation? Surely God intended something in addition to this, important though the text is.

The plain and simple answer is that God revealed **Himself**; we have been shown His essential nature. Sometimes we shy away from Scripture because we say that there are some things we are meant not to understand. Consequently, we stop looking. But when we examine the Bible from Genesis to Revelation we see our Divine Creator laid bare before our wondering eyes. We see His creative power, integrity, long suffering, steadfastness, love, compassion, wrath, endurance, majesty, righteousness; need we go on.? And yet, there are those who say that He is so far above us that we can never really know Him; all we have to do is exactly what He tells us to do according to the text of the Bible. Well, all I can say is this; if Christianity means just appropriating ourselves to the text without appropriating the One who is revealed by the text, then small wonder that it is meeting with no great success. If a prospective employer had as many facts on an application form about a prospective employee as the Bible has about God, then he wouldn't consider it necessary to hold an interview in order to find any further information. The very heart and nature of the Godhead is uncovered to our understanding. Oh, why do we not read it, and revel in it? Furthermore, there is a wealth of information revealed to us so that we can live our lives in the benign and spiritually affluent ways of God. Leaping out to us from the written page we see our God and His Christ, and we are amazed at the scope of His Revelation. Why do we linger in the shadows?

#### **The Doctrine of Change**

People living in the 20th century cannot countenance that the 17th century could be classed as ‘modern’ when contrasted with, say, the 12th century. Does ‘modern’ man of any historical period think that the Christian doctrine should be changed and brought up-to-date in order to accommodate his modernity. Has God made a mistake in failing to appreciate that the 20th century would be different from its predecessors? This is what the apologist for a modern theology would seem to affirm. God failed to see that promiscuity would be rampant in the 20th century so His teaching about chastity and marital fidelity must have been wrong for us; what a puerile argument this is.

I read recently of one Anglican apologist who was commenting on the fact that the Anglican church in its training of the clergy had switched the emphasis from theology to pastoral expertise. He went on to say, “It is ironical, then, that our chief pastoral difficulties should be caused by a specific theological deficiency.” Referring this statement to sexual promiscuity I take it to mean that the doctrine of Christian morality should be eased so that the pastoral care of those who live immoral lives would become easier to deal with. If this is the result of modern thinking then we can truly say that the Will of God has been really subordinated to the will of man. God has finally been relegated to non-league status and by people who purported to lead others in His name. In all the welter of advice and information about means of containing the A.I.D.S. virus I have listened in vain for someone to champion the God-given doctrine of chastity and morality, but no, all we hear are means of making immorality safer. What was it Jesus said about the blind leading the blind.?

Brethren, let us stand firm. The latter part of the 20th century has been characterised by falling standards in many areas. Let it never be said of us that we stood idly by while people trampled underfoot that glorious revelation that God gave and which cost Him so much.

(All questions, please, to

Alf Marsden, 20 Contessy Way, Winstanley, Wigan, Lancs. WN3 6ES.)

## WHAT IS “UNWORTHILY”?

Any Christian who approaches the Lord’s Supper with even minimal reverence is acutely aware of his sinful nature, yet he is usually confused about himself when this passage is read: **“Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of Lord”** (1 Cor. 11:27). Too many have been made to believe that “unworthy” means the same thing as “worthless,” consequently they feel unsafe in ever partaking of anything so serious.

Not one is, or can be, *Worthy* of the price Christ paid for our salvation, but if the cost of redemption is the gauge, Christians are certainly not *worthless*. Christians are so nearly priceless that it took absolute perfection to buy us out of the pawn of sin. Nevertheless, the sincere realisation of man’s sinful nature, coupled with vague wording in translation and misunderstanding of a vital passage, has caused many to fear the supper instead of rejoicing in its significance. When the apostle wrote this sentence he was less concerned with the sinful nature in man than he was with the sinful situation in the church.

None of the first Corinthians can be really understood outside the context of the divisions rending the church’s unity. They were a pack of divisive, jealous, petty souls who cared for personal opinions, grievances, and social standing than of the sacrifice from God. What had been created very good by Christ was being used very badly by Christians. In open rebellion to the unifying aspect of the supper, it had become a wedge to divide the body of Christ, the church. During their worship and association various groups would go aside from the rest, eat their food, leaving some with little or none and with no fellowship at all.

This separatist practice was beginning to affect the very observance in which Christians should most certainly be united, the celebration of the sacrifice made once for all and for all time. By their actions, however, one who observed might suppose that they were not even anticipating the return of the same Saviour, but of several Christs. Their divided lives were not telling of a Son but of sons, not of the only Begotten but of many.

Because they were at odds with their brethren, they were at odds with God. Their selfishness became most vivid at the moment of remembering the unselfishness of Christ. By contrast to His perfection, their division was devilish. This is the **“unworthy manner”** against which Paul warns them and us. By their blemished, second-rate sacrifices, the Jews of Malachi’s era caused God to cry: **“O that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire upon my altar in vain.”** No worship is better than hypocritical worship for the former at least leaves no false impression of the kind of God he is.

The Lord’s Supper then, is not the time or place to repent of sins, to make things right with brethren, to heal the gashes of division among us. One must have already done that! In relation to Mosaic sacrifice, Jesus related a divine principle governing all worship to God: **“So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there and go; first be reconciled to your brother . . .”** One does not become reconciled to his brother *during* the supper. He must be reconciled, to have made the attempt, *before* he participates. Otherwise he is guilty of the Corinthian sin that Paul called **“an unworthy manner”** because he is dividing the church which is the body of Christ.

J. W. Neal.

The road to succes is filled with women pushing their husbands along.

It is not so much what a man stands for as what he falls for.

When a batchelor flatters himself he knows women, he flatters himself.

When a man says his word is as good as his bond — get his bond.

A man who hides behind a woman's skirts today is not a coward. He is a magician.

A philosopher is a man who can look at an empty glass with a smile.

Prosperity is produced by pluck, push, principle, patience, prudence, and perseverance.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

Jan. 7	Ex. 32:1-20	1 Cor. 10:14-33
Jan. 14	Gen. 2:7-25	1 Cor. 11:1-16
Jan. 21	Ex. 12:1-20	1 Cor. 11:17-34
Jan. 28	Num. 11:16-30	1 Cor. 12

### LIBERTY IN CHRIST

I remember once meeting an Indian student in London. Both of us were holidaying alone in the metropolis and we, therefore, decided to have a meal together. He explained to me, prior to entering the restaurant, that he did not eat meat or fish. In consequence, I avoided the steak and ordered the salad instead. My thoughts were that eating a steak in his presence might have offended him and soured the warm relationship that was then established and which was leading to discussion about Jesus.

Paul wrote: **"All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's good (10:23-24). Also: Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor the church of God: even as I pleased all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved" (32-33).** Looking back all these

### AN OFFENCE

The offender never pardons.

George Herbert.

Love the offender yet detest the offence.

Pope

We never can willingly offend where we sincerely love.

Rowland Hill.

We are so desirous of vengeance that people often offend us by not giving offence.

Mme. Deluzy.

years (over twenty), I think I did the right thing with my Indian friend. I recall I was motivated by Paul's words here. Of course, I now know that the subject of his words was food offered to idols. But I think he laid down some principles for all saints in every age. Albert Barnes has written: "Anything that would promote that object (to save souls) was proper: anything which could hinder it, though itself it might not be strictly unlawful, was in his view improper. This is a simple rule and might easily be applied by all."

### HEAD COVERING

To some, this is an emotive subject. For many, it is a custom, which has long had its day. In this portion of scripture (11:1-6), Paul has many revealing statements about man and woman and their relationship to one another. Because of lack of space, I should just like to make one comment on head covering. How would you react, dear reader, if a brother in the congregation worshipped God with his head covered? Would it offend you? It should (11:4-7). Why then should a sister uncovered or not likewise offend (11:5-7,10,13)? And please note that Paul referred to "ordinances" (11:2) prior to dealing with this subject.

### THE LORD'S SUPPER

The apostle Paul reminded the disciples of the institution of the Lord's

Supper. It was on that dark betrayal night that Jesus took a loaf and a cup containing the fruit of the vine and said: **"This is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me . . . This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do you as oft as you drink it in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show forth the Lord's death until He comes"** (11:24-26). How simple its institution, yet how profound its meaning and significance!

Every Christian on the first day of every week sees in the elements the body and blood of his Lord and therefore, the sacrifice for his sins. With the eye of faith he looks upon the cross of Calvary and the suffering of the Son of Man and staggers at the love of God in Christ Jesus. J. Montgomery put it this way:

Up to the cross we turn our eyes,  
We gaze on Calvary;  
We see thy soul a sacrifice,  
And will remember thee.

Attendance at the Lord's Supper requires tremendous concentration. How often the things of the world have encroached upon our thoughts and distracted us from vitally important service taking place! I often wonder what thoughts were going through Jesus' mind when he passes the loaf and the cup to his beloved disciples in that upper room. He foresaw, of course, His suffering and His death, which were soon to befall Him. Such vision did not make things any easier.

Paul raised with the Corinthians disorders in the observance of the feast. He did not mince his words, but told them plainly how to resolve these disorders quickly. Their divisions must have pained his heart (11:18). So he exhorted them to discern the Lord's body (11:29), that is to recognise that although they were many members yet they were one in Him. If anything manifests the unity of the saints then surely the Lord's Supper does. Failure to observe the feast, properly, brought (spiritual) weakness, sickness and sleep to the Corinthians

(11:30). I think there is a powerful warning here for us, which we ignore at our peril.

### SPIRITUAL GIFTS

One of the most important studies of the Bible, I believe, is "The Holy Spirit, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirits, of course, a personality of the Godhead or Godhood and Jesus once described Him to His disciples as "the Comforter," who was to be sent on Jesus' departure from earth.

The gift of the Holy Spirit is a birth-day gift from God. He comes to every sinner on his rebirth. Peter said to the Jews on that great day of Pentecost: **"Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"** (Acts 2:38). Paul later wrote that if you do not have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in you then you are not Christ's (Romans 8:9).

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are another matter. I believe they were unique to the early days of the Church. One writer put it this way: "Those Churches out of Judea had everything to learn and could not have a single spiritual thought but as they were taught either by inspired men or by the Holy Spirit. But the inspired apostles must travel everywhere and could not long continue in one place; and therefore it was necessary that these lampstands, newly lighted up, should be constantly supplied with fresh oil. Hence, all those spiritual gifts were bestowed on the first converts for perfecting them. They could neither speak in the church, pray, nor sing, without supernatural aid." Once, of course, the revelation of God was complete then there was no further need for the supernatural gifts and there was then the opportunity for the natural gifts or talents to develop in every saint.

This is a huge subject and can only be briefly dealt with here.

### THE WORD OF WISDOM (12:8)

— The teaching of the gospel communicated by inspiration. Note that it stands

first in the list. It was primarily gifted to the apostles.

**THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE (8)** — That particular inspiration which enabled its possessor to interpret and apply, till then, sealed portions of the Old Covenant scriptures.

**FAITH (9)** — Paul in the next chapter placed it with gifts evidently miraculous. One writer has said: "It impels and emboldens one to bid a demon depart and a leprosy withdraw, in the assurance of seeing his commandment obeyed."

**PROPHECY (10)** — inspired speaking. Not only foretelling but forth-telling, or telling forth the word of GOD.

**DISCERNING OF SPIRITS (10)** — The ability to detect the inmost thoughts of a stranger, who has put on the Christian name.

**MANY KINDS OF TONGUES (10)** — languages. One who could speak foreign languages with the precision and fluency of an orator.

**THE INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES (10)** — One who was able to translate accurately.

**APOSTLES (28)** — Those endowed by the word of wisdom. They were ambassadors for Christ. An important point is that they had no successors.

**PROPHETS (28)** — Those possessed with the word of knowledge and who were qualified to interpret the ancient revelations.

**TEACHERS (28)** — "Embracing all who boldly declare the doctrine of Christ, illustrate it and confirm it by miracles," as one commentator has written.

**MIRACLES (28)** — More clearly defined in verse 29 as "workers of miracles."

**HELPS (28)** — helpers, or those who assisted in work specially committed to others.

**GOVERNMENTS (28)** — administrators, who were fitted to direct the church.

**DIVERSITIES OF TONGUES (28)** — Those gifted in speaking diffe-

rent kinds of languages and who were able to preach to every nation in its own language.

Let it be emphasised that all these gifts were necessary in the establishing of God's Kingdom on earth prior to the completion of the perfect revelation. I have this comment in my notes on the Holy Spirit: "Writings of all sorts were scarce and many had not the ability to read, had they had the writings of the apostles all completed in their hands. in these congregations, then, everything was done by the suggestion of the Holy Spirit . . . The same wisdom which made apostles out of rude fishermen and hid the gospel treasure in these humble vessels, chose to fill rude barbarians and ignorant pagans with supernatural gifts, that the excellency of the power might appear Divine and not human".

Ian S. Davidson.  
Motherwell.

### APPEAL FOR EVANGELICAL HELP

We are four sickly pensioners meeting to remember our Lord Jesus Christ in my home and do not have any prospect of being able to support a full-time worker financially for more than a few weeks. Hereford is, we are told, the fastest growing town in Europe. It is an old midlands market-town almost 20 miles from the Welsh border, in beautiful country-side, and has a generally mild climate.

Of the people moving here some look for a church in which to worship, and especially for a Sunday School, but they do not take seriously a group with no preacher or special meeting place. Some new churches are forming and are growing quite rapidly. I'm told the Mormons are moving too.

If this seems to you to be an opportunity of evangelism I would gladly send copies of the local newspapers listing available properties and employment vacancies.

There are many houses on the market and prices have fallen since last year when they were high.

Staff are wanted in established firms as well as in new enterprises which are proliferating.

I have a spare room if anyone would care to come and look for themselves.

Grace Sprake,  
72 Whitehorse Street,  
Hereford.HR4 0ER.  
Tel. 0432 50082.

Dear Brother Editor,

It is for the reasons given recently by brother Roy Davison that I have so far hesitated to write for publications so please could he, or someone, tell us women what we should do when:-

- (1) We have no husbands at home to answer our questions.
- (2) We have no elders or men who feel able to make decisions.
- (3) If we believe that decisions made violate scripture.
- (4) An adult male shows interest in hearing the gospel — remember I have not the option of introducing him to brethren. In this case literature is of little help as he is still struggling to learn to read.

I am not trying to be difficult or controversial. We really do need some answers. If it were in order for you to print the enclosed appeal in the S.S. perhaps that would provide some answers for us.

We have been putting leaflets in letter boxes but we can't think how to follow this up. Even if we have visiting speakers we would still need at least one resident brother wouldn't we?

Yours, waiting to be in the Masters service.

Grace Sprake.

#### GHANA (Low Cost Appeal) BIBLES AND TRACTS

Now that, through "Scripture Standard" reader's donations, Registration has been achieved in Ghana, and Medical aid is in the process of being set up, the primary function of the church in Ghana now needs some support.

This month I would be interested in hearing from anyone who wishes to supply small amounts of money on a long term (or short term) basis, for the supply and distribution of Bibles and tracts. Money collected will be sent to Ghana for the printing of tracts in their own native languages and the purchase of Bibles in Ghana.

Anyone, or church assembly, who have any surplus tracts or old Bibles, I will also collect and send to Ghana, as English is also understood by a number of our brethren. Old Bible dictionaries or commentaries will be well received. The only restriction I wish to make is: Please do send Versions or commentaries that you are not using because they are unreliable, Bible 'helps' must be of the highest standards, so that the truth prevails.

There is one specific request from Samuel Agyei in Koforidua, tracts on the understanding of human suffering. No matter how few surplus that anyone may have I will be happy to Air Mail these on to him.

Donations should be made out to:

Graeme Pearson,  
13 Fairways,  
Dunfermline,  
Fife. KY12 0DU.  
Tel. (0383) 728624.

#### CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN GHANA

I have recently received a very informative letter from brother Frank Worgan, Corby, regarding the great progress of Churches of Christ in Ghana. Our brother has made two trips to that country and says that there are 500 congregations there with about 80,000 members having obeyed the gospel since 1961. He is greatly impressed by the eagerness of the Ghanaians to hear the gospel and to respond; and also with their own efforts to build meeting-houses and further the Lord's work. He also confirms the austerity of life there and the poverty in worldly goods.

Ed.

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Kentish Town, London.:** On October 7th, the 118th Anniversary of the opening of our building was held. We met together to give thanks to God, to Praise Him, and to rejoice that we have been able to do this for another year. We were encouraged by brethren and friends who travelled quite long distances to be with us at this time. We thank them for their support, and also those whom we know would have been with us had it not been impossible through physical difficulties or other commitments. We know they were there with us in spirit, and thank them for their prayers.

We especially thank our brother Geof Daniell from Bristol who served us on both days and brought us four excellent messages of teaching and encouragement.

The whole weekend was a spiritual uplift to us all, and we pray that it was the same for all those who were able to join with us.

Dorothy Proud (Secy.).

**Beulah Road, Kirkby in Ashfield.:** It may not be known that tragedy of a different kind has befallen two of our members Bro. and Sis. Frank and Jessie Longden returned to their homes on a recent

Saturday evening to find it burgled and in flames from a fire caused by the burglar. The interior of the building was completely gutted and all their possessions destroyed or damaged beyond reclaim. Our hearts go out to our brother and sister in this traumatic experience and we ask for your earnest prayers for them as they try to recover from this enormous setback.

Their family, members of the church, and friends in the locality have responded with help, furniture and donations and for this sympathy and support our brother and sister extend their deep thanks and appreciation to all concerned. It will be some months before the building can be restored (it has to be seen to be believed) but a life-time's goods with all their hard work can never be replaced, treasured memories gone for ever. We ask your continued prayers for them in their predicament, and hereby pass on their heartfelt thanks to all who have helped in any way.

The local Council has kindly allocated them a temporary flat and their address for the time being will be —

12 The Acre,  
Kingsway Estate,  
Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Nottingham.  
NG17 7FX.  
Tel Mansfield 757582.  
Tom Woodhouse (Secy).

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is published monthly.

PRICE PER YEAR — POST PAID BY SURFACE MAIL

UNITED KINGDOM and COMMONWEALTH .....	£ 6.00
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.

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Scotland EH37 5PT. Telephone: Ford 320 527

"The Scripture Standard" is printed for the publishers by  
Lothian Printers, 109 High Street, Dunbar, East Lothian. Tel: (0368) 63785