

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## SEEDBEARERS

From the third floor window of the office at which I am employed I can look across the street at the famous St. Giles Cathedral in the High Street, Edinburgh. St. Giles was founded by King Alexander I, in the year 1120, and to say that it was steeped in history would be the understatement of the age. However my present purpose in mentioning it is but to say that I have, since Spring, been watching the growth of a fairly large plant, with a yellow flower, on one of the buttresses of the cathedral. The matter is remarkable because the buttresses are made of polished sandstone and one can only be astonished at the fact that a seed could land there let alone that a plant could grow there. Its roots must penetrate the sandstone and from where, one wonders, does it derive the moisture needed to sustain it. Nevertheless there it remains for all to see, and it has flowered all summer and is now about two feet in length.

This is surprising but, of course, it is not in any sense unique for birds, rivers and the wind carry seeds into all manner of unlikely places. Each time that I see this plant and its stubborn fight for survival I am reminded of the fact that there are many disciples to be found in unlikely places, and many struggling to survive and to blossom. Some are to be found in unlikely *countries*, like the U.S.S.R., where many meetings must be held in secret, and detection means imprisonment and sometimes death itself. Other disciples are to be found in unlikely towns (like the Corinthians in N.T. times) and some are to be found in unlikely *homes* (in face of family opposition and victimisation).

For instance one often wonders how someone like Cornelius managed to be found in the most unlikely place — the Roman army. The followers of Christ in the Soviet Union and other such places, many in complete isolation, who struggle on in the face of great odds, to survive and blossom, are surely often in our thoughts and always in our prayers. May God look down on all such and bless and strengthen them. We think that we have problems but we know little of the difficulty of trying to follow Christ in such countries.

At the dawn of time God set in motion His designs for the continuance of the species, which by and large was, and is based on the sowing of seeds. This is a point that needs no clarification and we have all been around long enough to appreciate the principle. Many natural laws obtain in the spiritual world and Jesus, in the parable of the sower, placed upon record for all time that this is one natural law

which works in the spiritual world. In His explanation of the famous parable Jesus said, "Now the parable is this; The seed is the word of God . . ." (Luke 8:11). Peter, writing to those who had already obeyed the gospel could describe them as, "Being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." Thus the word of God is not only seed, but it is incorruptible seed, and liveth and abideth for ever.

The seed is not only incorruptible in that it will not corrupt the minds of the hearers, but is incorruptible in the sense that it has immortality — it shall live for ever. When Jesus gave the parable of the sower to the world he referring to the 'broadcast' method of seed sowing i.e. the sower had a basket slung over his chest leaving both his arms free and enabling him to throw seed to the left hand and to the right. The parable admits that this would seem a wasteful method of sowing and concedes that some seeds will fall into stony ground, shallow ground and among thorns. Since the time of the Agrarian Revolution in this country, farmers have developed very sophisticated machinery for sowing seed, in drills with the drills certain distances apart, so that no seed will possibly be wasted. It may be that some preachers would seek to sow the seed only in the places thought most likely to be receptive, but Jesus, I suggest, insists upon the *broadcast* method of sowing the seed of the gospel. Who is to decide which ground will be receptive, or more receptive? The most unlikely people respond to the gospel. Who would have thought a flower would have blossomed on the smooth face of a stone wall? The gospel is to be preached to all and sundry, without fear or favour, and Jesus knows that the seed will fall into all kinds of ground — much will be sown to no avail but each must have his or her chance to refuse Jesus as Lord — each must hear and make his own response — whether it be barren or receptive. "Preach the gospel to every creature" is the call, and make no prejudgements on the hearers — it would be even worse to by-pass some with the message, would it not?

At the beginning of para. two I said that at the dawn of time God set in motion His means of the procreation of the species by seed sowing. Likewise at the dawning of the Kingdom of Heaven (Acts 2) God set in motion His design for the procreation of the spiritual species (His new creatures) by the sowing of the spiritual seed and having inaugurated His Kingdom it would appear that God did not intend that many generations should die of old-age before having an opportunity of hearing the gospel. God, it seems, lost no time in having the gospel, the incorruptible seed, scattered to every corner of the known world. The Kingdom of God, or church of our Lord Jesus Christ, was, of course, cradled in Jerusalem, but did not confine itself to that city for very long. Three thousand were baptised into the church on the very first day of its inception, to be followed by thousands daily thereafter. Jerusalem had been figuratively 'set on fire' by a vast series of events, wonders, miracles and signs and was a virtual hotbed of spiritual excitement. This was not of course to the liking of High Priest, elders and scribes and they indulged themselves in a great persecution of the church, assisted by zealots like Saul (later known as the apostle Paul). Elated by the apparent ease of murdering Stephen, the enemies of Christ embarked upon a thorough purge of the church and we read, "And Saul was consenting unto his (Stephen's) death. And at that time there arose a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him." And so the scribes and elders learned that it's a big mistake to try and throw water on to a petrol fire. Stephen was dead but he had not died in vain and indirectly his death had caused the scattering of Christians throughout the world. The explosive climate and atmosphere which had been building up in Jerusalem had now had the match applied to it and the resulting explosion caused reverberations which were to be felt soon in every part of the world and can perhaps be felt even today.

Verse 4 of the same chapter of Acts 8 says, "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word" (or sowing the seed). The strategy of Christ's enemies had, as it so often is, been very counter productive and the means used to destroy the church had been the very thing to bring about its increase. The very next verse tells of Philip taking the glad tidings to the Samaritans and (even while having great success in preaching to the Samaritans) taken yet farther, into a desert place, to preach to one individual Ethiopian eunuch. Yet who can possibly measure the effect that the winning of the eunuch to Christ had on the world — and the sowing of the seed that the eunuch was able to do when he returned to his own country? We all, as children, have sat amongst the grass and blown away the seeds on the 'Will O' The Wisp' and wondered where these seeds would finally land. Philip and the early disciples must have wondered much the same thing in the early days of the church. To some extent, we in retrospect can see from subsequent history just how quickly the gospel spread amongst the nations. The process continues of course, and the duty to 'preach the gospel to every creature' is as solemn a duty as ever it was and rests upon the shoulders of every follower of King Jesus.

There are as many today, who have not heard the gospel, as there were in New Testament times and we must bear to them the incorruptible seed of the gospel. No profit is likely to come to the farmer who keeps his seed safely tied up in a bag and locked in a shed. The apostle Paul said that a necessity was laid upon him to preach the gospel — in fact he said, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel of Christ." (1 Cor. 9:16). May we each and all seek to emulate the apostle in this, the only grand and glorious purpose in life, to take the glad tidings to a jaundiced and dying world.

EDITOR

## GLEANINGS

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

"WHAT IS SPIRITUAL LIFE, AND HOW TO DEEPEN IT?"

It will be noticed that I have not introduced anything into my paper relating to how God deals with His children, providentially, to deepen their spiritual life, such as afflictions, persecution, etc.: but only such things as are in our own power to do, or to attain.

So full are the teachings, so numerous the finger-posts pointing the way to the heights and depths of spiritual progress and abundant life, that I am compelled to desist, and try to bring my paper to something like an orderly conclusion. Having seen that this life is not born with us; that Jesus came from God and brought it in Himself; that every means is provided to secure its enjoyment in rich and abundant measure; let us enquire, in conclusion, how men may come into possession of it.

Each form of life in the natural world has its own seed, out of which it is evolved; its own process of generation and manifestation. All sentient beings reach manifestation through a birth. "Spiritual life" moves in a similar groove. All the conditions, however, are of a spiritual character. The seed is The Word! Faith receives it into good and honest hearts. There it develops under gracious conditions into new life, eventuating in the new birth, as explained by the Lord Jesus to Nicodemus. The Word is the Spirit's power to destroy the love of sin and beget the new life in the soul. It is the sword of the Spirit! It is the seed of the kingdom. Faith is the human faculty which accepts and appropriates The Word.

You must have noticed how frequently the Great Teacher insists on a belief on Himself and His words, and on Him who sent Him. Unbelief is, then, the first barrier to be cast down. "Every man," says Jesus, "that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me." "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing through the word (or teaching) of God." Faith destroys unbelief, and thus the first barrier is removed. The next barrier is the bad past, which looms the darker as it is viewed by

a believing mind against the background of Golgotha and the cross of our Lord and Saviour. God calls all men to repentance. Repentance means sorrow for sin, which leads to a determination to turn. Repentance says: "I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto Him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in Thy sight, and am not worthy to be called a son. Oh Father, take me in, and I will be a slave, if so Thou wilt.'" It is turning from idols to the Living God. Thus repentance throws down the barrier of the bad past, and brings us face to face with our Father. He waits to be gracious. Christ has provided a place where the old bad past is buried and covered up, and left a place which the poor seeking sinner can never forget. That place is, without doubt, the institution of believers' baptism, in which the poor penitent, who has been begotten by the Gospel of Christ to new life, new purpose, new resolves, ends the bad state, and out of which he emerges into the new state. Romans 5. gives us the genesis of sin unto death. Romans 6. gives us the genesis of grace unto life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. In that chapter we have believers introduced to us who had died to sin, who had made up their minds that they could not live any longer therein; that life was not worth living any longer in sin; and that an end must be put to it. Hence the Apostle says, "Don't you know that as many of us as are baptized (immersed) into Jesus Christ, were immersed into death? Therefore we are buried by immersion into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; knowing this that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin, for he that has died is free from sin." Again, Col. 2., "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." So our state is changed by a burial, which cuts off both the story and the facts of the bad old life in a grave of water, the likeness of our Saviour's grave. In it the old man is buried, and out of it the new man emerges to walk in a new life, to live under new and better conditions; to enjoy citizenship in a new kingdom under a new king; to mingle with new fellow-citizens, share in a new and holier fellowship; in a better hope and truer joys. To this agrees the words of Jesus to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Also the manner or mode of effecting this new birth, this change of state, agrees with the terms and conditions of the world-wide commission, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel unto every creature, he that believeth and is immersed shall be saved."

### Preach The Gospel!

Yes, my brethren, that is the power of God unto life and salvation. The Gospel is the charming story that leads a poor sinner who believes it into repentance unto life. Oh, it is a matchless story, the story of the love of God in Jesus Christ His Son; the Prince of Life and the Lord of Glory. It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ which begets the new life in men. He that believeth that Jesus is God's anointed, is begotten of God. When we apprehend what this Gospel is, the new life ceases to be a mystery. Who can lend a believing ear, and a responsive heart to the Gospel and not be melted into responsive affection? Who can believe it, and not be lost in wonder, love, and praise? Who can believe it and not lay down the weapons of rebellion? Who can believe it and continue to live the sin, to atone for which, the lovely Son of God went to the Cross of Calvary? He who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Thus, by hearing, believing, and receiving the Gospel, we are led to Jesus our life, and in obedience to the conditions attached to the message, we put Him on. Being (as Peter says) born (begotten) again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible; by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the

flower thereof falleth away, but the Word of the Lord endureth for ever, and this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you.

The Gospel, therefore, is the life-bringing message. It reveals to us the living Christ. He who lived, and was dead, and is alive for evermore. It brings the gift of life — spiritual life — to every believer. The life it brings is a life which we do not possess by nature. It is a life which is a gift of grace from God, and which is resident in His Son, far from the reach of the Destroyer's power.

I have feebly endeavoured to trace the source and the genesis of that life, the pathway to its enjoyment, and the process of deepening it into a flowing stream. It is the "Spiritual Life" of which we are in search. In order that the point may receive notice in the discussion, I will venture to say, that in my humble and glad judgment, it is Eternal Life.

It is a life which, springing up within us, will under favouring conditions, largely under our own control, expand, deepen and intensify, as it runs its course to the infinite and "inviolable sea" of Eternal Life — life in an indestructible and glorified body like the glorious body of our risen and exalted Lord — in God's delightful and happy heaven.

If you, my brethren, have apprehended the Christ as your life, and have put Him on in His own appointed way, realising that your life is his with Him in the Eternal God, then you will know as I know, and as well as I know, what "Spiritual Life" is. You will abide in Him, and keep His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His words, then and thereby will you experience the joy and the process of deepening "Spiritual Life;" growing devotion and heightening bliss in His holy service. You will live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, and be abodes of the Spirit. Then as the days roll round to the crowning day of all; which brings into the horizon of faith and hope, the rays of the glory of the second advent, you will feel and understand the thrill of those words. "Happy are they who have washed their robes, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the City."

This concludes the Conference paper by G. Collin in Bristol in the year 1894.

Selected by Leonard Morgan.

## BUT WE PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED

Today much emphasis is laid upon the ability of preachers to impress themselves upon their audience. How often do we find ourselves enjoying a message, and yet are unable to remember the message? In such preaching the Word of God takes second place to the cleverness of speech of man, and the cross of Christ is in danger of being made void. (1 Cor 1.17) Well did Emerson remark, "Go into one of our cool churches, and begin to count the words that might be spared and in most places the entire sermon will go." It was with such dangers in mind that Paul emphasised that he came not with superiority of speech and wisdom, but that he "determined to know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

In following articles we shall look at the subject matter of preaching and try and gain an understanding of the Gospel; but first let us look at the task of preaching itself.

### 1. The Need to Preach

We live in a tolerant country where most men are able to 'do their own thing,' as long as they don't interfere with others. "Be a Christian if you must, but don't preach to me," will sound familiar to most of us. Why then should we trouble to preach Christ to men, some of whom will scorn our attempts?

Jesus told the Apostles to go into the world teaching all men to "observe all that I commanded." The importance of evangelism did not escape Paul, who in his turn sought to draw Timothy's attention to the responsibility; "The things which you

have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." (2 Tim 2.1) To bring men to a knowledge of Christ is our responsibility, for "faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom 10.17); through faith men will gain knowledge of Him who called us, and thus may be granted "everything pertaining to life and Godliness." (2 Pet 1.3).

The need to preach must arise then from a desire to see all men brought to a knowledge of Jesus. Without preaching mankind would stand condemned on the judgement day; the importance of our mission can not therefore be underrated. We must preach, teach and evangelise in obedience to Christ, for He said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; pray therefore that the Lord of the harvest may send labourers into His harvest." (Matt 9.37).

## II Our Subject Matter — The Gospel

Preaching or teaching is to be aimed that it may bring about a response in those who hear. We are therefore striving to see that all men have an opportunity to heed God. Paul and Barnabas in Antioch were seen to be teaching the word of the Lord, in accordance with such desires. (Acts 15.35). Jesus Himself said, "I do nothing on my own initiative but speak these things as the Father taught me." (Jno 8.28). As our Lord received the word, so He revealed it to the Apostles, for Paul tells us of the gospel, "I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal 1.12). So must we therefore follow the Word of God in our teaching, and not the word of man; following not old traditions merely because they are old; not calling the changes for changes' sake; but referring ourselves to scripture to direct our paths.

For there is in preaching a great temptation to withdraw from controversial issues, which are often seen as diversive. But the natural result of this is that we generalise and simplify the Gospel. With this, how short do we fall of the true unity of being of one mind, simply because we fail to teach the complete Word of God? For Paul's immediate response on being received into the Lord's body was to proclaim Jesus as the son of God, (Acts 9.20) while to the Corinthians he declared of most importance that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. (1 Cor 15.3) And having died He was raised, so that Paul may be seen preaching Jesus and the resurrection, (Acts 17.18) for "if Christ has not been raised then our preaching is in vain, your faith also is vain." (1 Cor 15.14) For it is through the cross of Christ that we may be saved and receive the power of God, (1 Cor 1.18) to preach the Kingdom of God with openness and unhindered. (Acts 28.30) In preaching we must progress from simple truths to what Paul calls 'solid food,' that not only ourselves but those who hear us may become mature, being able to discern good and evil (Heb. 5.14) that we may attain a complete and real unity of the saints.

## III 'Go Into The World'

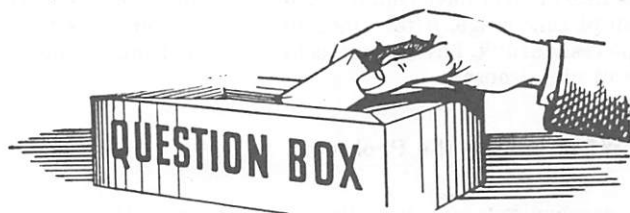
We have a reason to preach, and we have a subject. But what should be our attitude of mind? For instance, if we knew the world were to end tomorrow would we preach to more men than otherwise? It is necessary that we preach with urgency, for "behold, now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor 6.2) Let us, as Paul solemnly charged Timothy, "be ready in season and out of season." (2 Tim 4.2). Let us possess such conviction as Peter who everyday was not ceasing in teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ. (Acts 5.42). We must preach Christ to everyone with all wisdom. that we may present everyman complete in Christ, (Col 1.28) and our preaching should be as of oracles of God, through the strength which He will supply, that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. (1 Pet 4.11).

To preach then is a great responsibility for those of us called to be Christians. We must therefore be mindful to teach all that the Lord commanded; of salvation; of the Kingdom; namely the Gospel, and, Lord willing, in future articles we shall direct our thoughts to these matters

We must preach the Word of God then, to please neither ourselves nor our listeners, but in obedience to the Lord. Let us not concentrate on eloquence of speech as foremost, but merely use such abilities to the glory of God. As Emerson again observed, "The sermon which I write inquisitive of truth is good a year after, but that which is written because a sermon must be writ is musty the next day."

"May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of your Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom 15.5).

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Conducted by  
Alf Marsden

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**"I am a young Christian and on occasions when I have attended some function or other I have been handed a glass of sherry or something similar to drink. I know some people frown if you accept, but isn't it impolite to refuse, and would an occasional drink like that do any harm anyway? I would be interested in your comments."**

I think this sort of situation has troubled many Christians on many occasions and I feel a great deal of sympathy with our questioner. How many times have we been placed in similar situations? How many times have we responded to the invitation to take an alcoholic drink? More importantly, how many others may we have influenced to do the same; others who may be weaker than we ourselves are, and who consequently may have embarked on a journey which they have not the strength to control? These are important questions we have to ask ourselves before we pass judgement on others, because the answers to these questions will determine to a great extent our Christian witness in the world.

I see a great danger in stressing one part of a scripture without an adequate explanation as to why it is being stressed. There are two scriptures I can think of which may have left a wrong impression in some Christians' minds. In all the gospels we find Jesus saying to his disciples, "Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats" (Mark 7:18, 19). The other scripture is in the form of advice given by Paul to Timothy, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" (1 Tim. 5:23). If one talks with a man of the world about alcoholic drink almost invariably he will say, "Well, doesn't it say somewhere in the Bible that you are allowed to drink wine"? Unfortunately, some Christians react like this also. So, then, we need to learn some facts about the consumption of alcohol and maybe this will help us to see the situation a little more clearly.

### **The Size of the Problem**

In the latest annual report published recently by the National Council on Alcoholism, the Director, Mr. Derek Rutherford said, "There is clear evidence that if consumption of alcohol continues to rise we will be soon in the grip of an endemic disorder of frightening magnitude". This statement is supported by some alarming

statistics. Over the last twenty years the number of alcoholics in England and Wales has trebled from 200,000 to 600,000. Over the same period the number of offences involving drunkenness has risen by 80%, and the annual per capita consumption of alcohol has increased by the same amount. Mr. Reg Prentice, Minister of State for Employment, in a recent statement said that absenteeism caused by excessive drinking could account for between 8.8 million and 14.8 million days off work sick each year in England and Wales. The cost to industry is estimated between £100 million and £350 million a year.

The Church of Christ in Albert St., Wigan, is situated in a built-up area. We used to get cans which had contained soft drinks thrown over our walls by children of school age; today, the cans thrown over have contained beer and lager, but they are still consumed by children of school age. After lunch breaks, children have been found in some schools hopelessly drunk, having been sold alcoholic drinks by none-too-discerning proprietors of off-licenses.

### What makes the Problem?

We live in an age in which escapism seems to be the order of the day. Voices have been raised which cry, "Let the individual have personal freedom to express himself in the way he wants to"; to put the same into modern phraseology 'let him do his own thing'. But freedom is a very elusive concept. Does freedom mean have no rules, no restrictions, no concern for anyone else, just do what you want to do? It seems to me that such individual freedom will result in collective chaos.

Another alarming feature of our modern society is the way in which many parents have abrogated responsibility for their children. About this time every year, we in our organisation at work have occasion to interview many school-leavers for jobs. We ask them if they have talked over with their parents what they ought to do career-wise, and in far too many cases we get the answer, "Oh, my parents just leave me to decide what I want to do". Now if this is true in the important area of choosing a career, how true it must be in other areas of conduct also.

The Lord teaches us that the greatest freedom comes from the greatest self-control. How can a person who cannot control his own indulgences claim that he is free? He becomes a slave to that in which he indulges himself. Isn't this the case with the drinker, the smoker, the gross over-eater? It's high time that some of this so-called 'personal freedom' was given up so that there might be a greater contribution to the common good, or has this grand biblical teaching been lost not only to the world, but also to the Church.

### Do You Know?

Considering the fact that the drinking of alcoholic beverages is engaged in by the vast majority of people, there is a good deal of ignorance about it. It is a fact that the strength of a drink depends upon the amount of pure alcohol in it. What comes as a surprise is that there is roughly the same amount of alcohol in one half pint of beer as there is in one single whisky or brandy, one glass of sherry or one glass of table wine; what varies in each case is the size of the glass in which the different drinks are served.

It is also a fact that a raised blood alcohol level impairs the performance of an individual. Everyone now knows that a person must not be in charge of a moving motor vehicle if on test he is found to have a blood alcohol level in excess of 80 mgms. What many people fail to understand is that according to medical opinion the liver is only able to 'burn up' alcohol slowly at the rate of 15 mgms per hour, which is about equivalent to one drink per hour. Therefore, a person who consumes



ten drinks at night will still have a raised blood alcohol level when he wakes up next morning; it follows, then, that his performance would still be impaired. This raises the extremely important question of how many people there are who suffer from paired performance when they drive cars, buses, attend dangerous machinery, etc., on the morning 'after the night before'.

### That first drink

There are some who think, without any evidence I might add, that some people are born to be alcoholics, or that some are "allergic" to alcohol. Whatever the validity of these arguments may be there is one thing which is crystal clear; addiction to alcohol stems from progressive stages along the route, and can be traced in most cases to the first drink. It is true to say that there are many who never pass the first stage; these are the ones who take the occasional drink probably on social occasions. They consider themselves not to be at risk, but this is a false assumption. The person who only takes the occasional drink finds that the alcohol goes to his head very quickly because he just isn't used to it; in that state he is potentially dangerous.

The more serious aspect, of course, is the insidious way in which alcohol addiction can develop. The person who takes that first drink always thinks that he is going to 'get off the bus' before the terminal stage; unhappily, this is not true in most cases, and many drinkers find themselves addicted before they realised the danger. The only safe way is to refrain from taking the first drink. Oh, people may scoff and call you a social misfit, but that is infinitely better than being a social outcast.

### What Does God Say?

To the Christian the teaching of the Bible is quite specific, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:19,20). When Jesus spoke about defilement of a man he was referring to the physical body of man as distinct from the spiritual man. In the Corinthian passage Paul is referring to the new spiritual man which is housed in the physical frame. In this new state the Holy Spirit is the Divine Guest, if we can use the phrase, and He is working to subdue the sinful flesh so that the complete man can be used to the glory of God.

We also recall in this context how summarily Jesus dealt with the Jews who were defiling the Temple in Jerusalem. The christian has no reason to think that he would be dealt with any more lightly if he defiled the habitation of the Holy Spirit. I see the operation of the Holy Spirit in the individual's Christian life as a catalyst, influencing that life to such a degree that the propensity to sin is diminished day by day, and the very idea of defilement becomes abhorrent. As the hymn-writer puts it,

Make this poor self grow less and less,

Be Thou my life and aim,

Oh, make me daily by Thy grace,

More meet to bear Thy name.

### Conclusion

I have tried to set out as objectively as I can what my considerations would be relative to the question. The Christian, I believe, should abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages. I think we should move away from the thought "what would God allow", and move over to the positive application of His Will. In so doing, I believe we shall open for ourselves new horizons, and experience a fuller and more complete life. Incidentally, I believe the wine that Timothy would drink would be unfermented and purely medicinal. (All questions please to Alf Marsden, 377 Billinge Road, Highfield, Wigan, Lancs.)

# THE PEACE OFFERING (Part 1)

Read Lev. 3 vs. 1-17 & 7 vs. 11-38

This is the third of the sweet savour offerings and the law thereof which gives further details and additional information relative to this offering. Verse 37 of chapter 7 is of special interest as it takes the peace offering from its third place and puts it last among the five. And the reason is that this is the order of human experience and therein lies a beautiful thought. The burnt and meal offering aspect of the life and death of the Lord Jesus delights and satisfies the heart of God, meeting all His requirements and the sin and trespass offerings meet us in all our guilt and need and so brings us into peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Sin atoned for brings peace with God and the restitution of the trespass brings peace with men. This is the end purpose of what Christ has done. The peace offering is reconciliation to God and being brought back into fellowship with Him. Not so much atonement for sin but making amends for the results of sin for sin had brought us into a state of separation from God and we were at enmity with God. Is not this the language of the New Testament? In Ephesians we are told that Christ is our peace having made peace through the blood of His Cross. He has slain the enmity and reconciled us to God. We are now made nigh to God by the blood of Christ and are fellow-citizens, fellow heirs and are in fellowship with God and with His people.

Now all the great basic truths of the gospel are found in the Roman epistle and chapter five would remind us that being justified by faith we have Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And being reconciled to God by the death of His Son, we are being saved by His life, that is, His resurrection Life. This has brought us into a peaceful relationship and co-existence with God because by virtue of Christ's reconciling work, if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

That is why leaven and this is the only case where leaven could be brought with the offering and offered to the priest, not instead of, but with the meal offering, as we are told in chapter seven. For the leaven here would remind us of that carnal nature, the flesh which is within us, that is always at enmity with God, that can never change. That is why we need a new nature, we need to be born again. And in the new birth God has made us partakers of the Divine nature, a new nature in Christ, represented by the unleavened mingled with the oil, speaking of Christ and the Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts. So the unleavened and the leaven would remind us of the dual nature of the believer, the Spirit and the flesh and our constant need of the advocacy and reconciling work of the peace offering, for the flesh warreth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. The leaven, which was forbidden to be burned upon the altar as an offering made by fire, was here permitted to be brought to the priest, reminding us of that evil nature which is still within which is covered by the peace offering of our Lord Jesus Christ and only by this are we acceptable to Him. The confession made by the offerer in Duet. chapter 26, was, "A Syrian ready to perish was my father and was in bondage but Thou didst deliver with a mighty Hand". The flesh will not allow us to forget what we once were, the pit from whence we were digged, and this, I suggest, is symbolised by the leaven brought with the peace offering.

We notice again that the emphasis is placed upon the little word ALL, as in all the offerings. Here it is 'all the fat is the Lords' chapter 3 verse 16. In the burnt offering it was ALL the animal; in the meal offering, ALL the frankincense but now ALL the fat. The fat is that which readily responds to the fire and burns intensely, speaking of the burning zeal and intense devotion of the Lord Jesus in His response to the Fire of Divine Holiness and the will of God. "The zeal of Thine House hath eaten Me up" is the prophetic word of Psalm 69 as it envisages the Christ doing what was perhaps contrary to human thinking and offensive to some, but accomplishing the will of

God regardless. So that towards the end of His earthly life and ministry He could say in His prayer to His Father, "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do", John 17. The fat is the richest part of the animal and again the New Testament comes to our aid as we are reminded in Ephesians of the 'riches of His grace' the 'riches of His mercy' and 'the riches of His glory' all expressed in relation to the peace offering as Ephesians seems to suggest.

We have seen that the sweet savour offerings are in three major divisions. So in the peace offering the choice could be made from the herd, from the sheep or from the goats. I like the way in which the figure 3 keeps repeating itself in these first three offerings. It breathes Divine testimony for there are three Persons in the Godhead and have you noticed, incidentally, how the figure 3 plays such a prominent part in the life and ministry of Jesus. The Wise men and their three gifts. The three temptations in the wilderness. Three times a voice from heaven in response to the Saviour. Three people He raised from the dead. He chose three favoured disciples for special occasions, Peter, James and John. He wept three times; over a man, over a city and over the world. Three times He prayed in Gethsemane. Peter denied Him three times. Three times Pilate declared Him innocent. There were three crosses on Calvary; there were three Marys at the Cross and the third day He rose again. And there are likely to be many more. Astonishing isn't it? But what a wealth of meaning to the spiritually minded.

So in this offering we have the choice of three kinds of animals only this time it could be either male or female. Whereas the burnt offering was entirely male because it speaks of what Christ was to God; here there is a difference, because the peace offering is reconciling as we have seen and this includes of course, both the man and the woman, therefore it could be male or female. On the other hand, Christ possessed not only the manly virtues but also the feminine qualities. Sometimes the Divine attributes are referred to in the feminine gender. This is common to the Book of the Proverbs where the Wisdom of God is spoken of as 'she' and 'her'. For example, 'Wisdom hath builded HER house; SHE hath hewn out HER seven pillars'. Again, 'Say unto wisdom, thou art my sister' and so on. In fact Genesis 5 verse 2, God brings male and female together in one, viewing the woman as in the man, from whom she was taken. 'Male and female created He them and called THEIR name Adam. He brings them both under one name. It was Adam who gave Eve her name, not God, because God saw them as one. So the qualities of both are expressed in Christ. At the same time man and woman have the same need as sinners and this is met in the sacrificial worth of the peace offering and is available to either and to both. So the offering could be either male or female for it can speak both of Christ and ourselves.

(To be continued)

JOHN D. HARTBURN

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

### FOR NOVEMBER 1979

Nov 4-Joshua 1  
 11-Isaiah  
 18-Isaiah 41, 1-13  
 25-Numbers 10,1-13  
 Acts 18,24 to 19,7  
 Acts 19,8-20  
 Acts 19,21-41  
 Acts 20,1-16

### IN JOURNEYINGS OFTEN

We speak of the events we are now reading as "Paul's Third Missionary Journey". The second concluded at 18,22 with the words "went down to Antioch" (in Syria). How long he stayed here we do not know, probably only a short time although his account of his adventures in II Cor. 11,23 ... leaves room for much more journeying than is briefly recorded by Luke. His heart doubtless was with the Christians in all the districts he had covered. "Galatia and Phrygia" (v.23) is a wide range of country. To reach them much dangerous

and rocky terrain had to be traversed — all the “perils” except those in the sea were there. These places are the “highlands” of Asia Minor, wild and infested by robbers. The whole journey must have taken about 4 years concluding at Jerusalem (21,15-17). We calculate very roughly that it was 700 miles to Ephesus, on to Troas 200, thence to Corinth 400, probably the furthest point in that direction, back to Miletus about 700. What all this meant to a man with the “thorn in the flesh” we can only dimly imagine. It is probable that the time spent at Ephesus involved more journeying hither and thither for the whole province of Asia was influenced. The situation of the town would in any case guarantee widespread publicity. We do not think Col. 2,1-5 could mean that Paul had not visited most of the towns. During the three years at Ephesus the first letter was written to Corinth. We get a moving picture of his struggles in body, mind and spirit as we read II Cor. 2,4 and 7,5-7. The journey from Ephesus to Macedonia (possibly Philippi) via Troas was about 300 miles including a sea voyage which on another occasion (20,6) took five days — have we considered what that meant to a burdened soul? His comment, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” must indeed apply. His many visits in Macedonia and Greece (Achaia) included “peril from his own countrymen” (20,3). How thankful he must have been for the company of his fellow travellers, such an international group of good men with the addition of Luke, the beloved doctor, from Philippi on the return journey, where it appears he was resident. (20,4-6).

### APOLLOS

There is something specially attractive in the character and ability of this man. We need as preachers of New Testament christianity to be both “mighty in the scriptures” and “fervent in spirit”. Alexandria was an important Egyptian university city in Greek learning, and it was here where the Greek translation of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint was made. The

Jews were prominent in Egypt. Apollos is described as “eloquent” in the A.V. and “learned” in the R.V. The Greek word embodies both — he knew and he could express his knowledge. He brought the objections of unbelievers to the test and successfully answered them (18,28). The instruction of Priscilla and Aquila proved his humblemindedness, and his subsequent labours earned the appreciation and co-operation of Paul himself.

Read I Cor. 1,12: 3,5&6: 4,6: 16,12. I find it difficult to understand that he preached the “way of the Lord”, and yet had not a knowledge of the terms of salvation, Acts 2,38, and the promises of forgiveness and the Holy Spirit. Just how much did he know seems uncertain. However the twelve men Paul found when he came to Ephesus were the result of the word of Apollos and like him readily accepted the whole Gospel when it was explained to them. The miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit were, as undoubtedly in other cases, received through the “laying on of hands” (Acts 8,16-18: I Tim. 4,14: II Tim. 1,6). This surely fitted them to be among the bishops in the church (20,28). Apollos went to Corinth and certainly worked effectively in other regions also (I Cor. 16,12).

### EPHESUS

We have in the New Testament three messages recorded for the Ephesian church. Two were written messages and one spoken by Paul in person through the elders. We are reading the initial work now resulting in the formation of a church which continued for centuries. An ecumenical council was held there in A.D. 431 and another in 449. Evidently however apostate it may have become it maintained a cause until the 14th century when the whole area was overrun by the Turks.

Originally the town was famous for its martyrs when Rome attempted to destroy the faith at its birth. Later a form of apostasy took over. Massive ruins only now indicate the greatness of the past as a head-quarters of heathenism and christianity — a

wonder of the world when Paul preached there. It was natural he should go there. He had made a promise (18,21) but his ambition was stirred also. He had a further great city in view also (18,21) for the same reason. The original open-mindedness of the Jews did not last. He had three months of liberty of speech in the synagogue. Then neither Priscilla, Aquila, Apollos nor Paul could lead the majority into the truth. We presume the Jews would keep quiet in the great heathen citadel about their faith, and some even made their living by taking advantage of the superstitions of the heathen. Demetrius spoke truth when he spoke of the "whole world worshipping Diana". "Ephesian letters" were worn as charms to give strength or to ward off trouble. We have now a widespread attention to astrology but nothing to compare with the superstitions of the heathen world. It is a measure of the influence of the gospel in that city that enough people were convinced by the preaching and the power of Paul to depart from these practices to make a bonfire of books of magic, value about ten thousand pounds.

Preachers of today are sometimes accused of "feathering their own nests", but the priests and people of Ephesus lived on their worship. We can understand that the man who acted as agent for the craftsmen realised they were losing trade, and getting them together pointed out the cause. It was easy to raise a mob with some shouting and no doubt some violence was used against Gaius and Aristarchus. Had Paul not been held back by influential "councillors" (Asiarchs) he might have suffered badly. The Jewish attempt to disassociate themselves from the christians was naturally resented, and it seems that the uproar somewhat spent itself and a tactful town clerk quieted the people.

### THE COLLECTION

It appears that one of the objects of the journey was to collect the offerings of the Gentile churches for the poor in

Jerusalem. This is not mentioned by Luke but is the subject of ch. 9 of Paul's second letter to Corinth. The journeying and exhortation in Macedonia and Achaia not only gave opportunity for apostolic help in a spiritual sense but brought much joy to Paul's heart as evidence of the loving concern of christians for their less fortunate fellows.

The earlier chapter shows the care with which financial matters were dealt, and we mention again the group of workers who travelled with Paul. We are not told in what form the offerings were collected and sent but several brethren were personally responsible for it. We feel it must have been quite a hazardous operation to carry money in any quantity through so many places. The end of the journey is mentioned in Acts ch. 21, 15 & 16 where "carriages" or "baggage" is mentioned. Of what did it consist?.....

R. B. SCOTT

## "AN APPRECIATION"

On Sunday 2nd September, 1979, Jane Kendrick fell asleep to await the return of her dearest friend, Jesus. She will be missed:—

- (1) By the congregation of saints at Newtown (Wigan) who admired her beautiful life.
- (2) By the local neighbourhood who experienced her perfect Christian witness.
- (3) By the family who learned so much from her character and personality.
- (4) By me having shared her presence and eaten her scones. (She will also be missed by my sister who says rice puddings will never be the same again!)

Jinny, I can truly encourage all Christian women to follow you even as you followed Christ.

I. K. PARKER

*(In the current interest being shown amongst the brethren on the question of the benefits, or otherwise, of modern translations, readers may like to read this interesting editorial in 'Firm Foundation' dated 10-7-79.)*

*(Ed.)*

## THE UPDATED KING JAMES VERSION

We have no desire to enter the battle of the versions. Others are better qualified to do that. There are, however, a few things that should be said about the conglomeration of perverted versions that are being read before the assembly and studied in private to the detriment of real Bible faith. What the liberal critics were not able to do, the "translators" and paraphrasers seem to have accomplished. They have destroyed confidence in the infallibility and integrity of the Scriptures.

There are numerous versions and paraphrases on the market, all of which claim to be the word of God. Sometimes the label masks the poison.

Thomas Nelson Publishers has just hit the market with a "New King James Bible"; New Testament available now; Old Testament later. A superficial examination indicates that the King James text has been pretty well preserved with antiquated words and grammatical forms modernized. The aim seems to be to produce the only really majestic English version as the King James scholars would have done it if they had been working today. We like what we have seen. The English language is a living language, and hence in transition. The meaning of many words has completely changed since 1611. So many changes have occurred, there is need of an update.

A little background is important here: There are thousands of ancient manuscripts of the Scriptures — most of them fragmentary. There are no original autographs. Scholars rely chiefly upon three manuscripts: the Vatican, the Sinaitic and the Alexandrian. The Alexandrian is the chief basis of the KJV. After that version was produced, Westcott and Hort produced a different Greek text based upon the Sinaitic and Vatican manuscripts, and from this source came most of the later translations, including the American Standard. Most scholars agree that the Vatican and the Sinaitic contain many copyist errors, and that probably the Sinaitic is a poor copy of the Vatican Manuscript. There is increasing agreement that the Alexandrian is the best and most accurate of the ancient manuscripts. This is leading to increasing confidence in the KJV, as the most reliable translation of the original.

Thos. Nelson, Inc., produced and copyrighted the RSV and exclusively marketed it for the life of the copyright — 56 years. Extensive public relations and advertising made it a very popular version, despite its definite "modernism," just as extensive advertising has made some of the paraphrases so popular. Advertising does not guarantee authenticity; it merely sells books. We are concerned with authenticity, and not with book sales.

One thing really disturbs us: the news media and advertising people are preparing the publicity for another Thomas Nelson breakthrough: a new, updated King James New Testament, "with a decided fundamentalist slant." The work is advertised to "appeal to ultra conservatives." When book companies translate, publish and market books that "appeal to conservatives" or to "liberals" (as the RSV was advertised to do), you can't expect much concern for the truth on the part of the publishers, nor can you expect correct and faithful translation to take precedence over profitable book sales. It is a shoddy prostitution of something sacred and holy to reduce it to a slanted book sale for profit.

We are wondering now whether the Thomas Nelson editors have repudiated their defense of the Westcott-Hort text and their use of the Vatican and Sinaitic manuscripts as the basis of their American Standard and RSV translations. Are they now going back to the Alexandrian mms. from which the KJV was translated and acknowledging after all these copyright years that it is the best of the ancient manuscripts?

Arthur Farstad, former faculty member of the Dallas Theological Seminary, "headed a group of more than 100 conservative scholars" who worked on the KJ revision for over four years, according to the Associated Press. Farstad claims the new version "counters the RSV that was published by Thomas Nelson in 1964." Does this mean that Nelson has seen the light regarding the liberal taint of the RSV, or does it mean that Nelson will translate the original text any way it needs to be translated in order to fit the prevailing public mood and sell books?

During copyright the RSV sold 25,000,000 copies. The KJV has sold over 500,000,000 copies. We would like to think that Nelson has gone back to the KJV for scholarship's sake, rather than for sales and profit's sake.

The battle of the future will not be the battle of the versions. It will, rather, be a battle over whether we can trust *any* translation. In this, the KJV has one advantage: it was produced not for book sales in the publishing market, but for faithfulness to the best available ancient texts in an effort to put the word of God into the language of the people.

We would hope this new translation — or update — will improve the readability while maintaining loyalty to scholarship and the actual wording of ancient texts.

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

### **Slamannan District of Scotland** —

The churches held their quarterly 'Mutual Benefit' Meeting on Saturday 8th September, at Delmellington in Ayrshire. There was a goodly attendance and a rich time of fellowship. Two members from the Burnaby Church in Vancouver, Canada were welcomed. Brother Hugh Davidson was in the chair and the two speakers were brother John McLuckie, Haddington, and brother Edward Jess, Tranent. The subject was "Would the churches be better served by a modern translation than by the King James Version". Brother Ian Davidson had thoughtfully brought along some 22 'modern' translations for exhibition purposes. The speakers dealt admirably with the subject and some in-

teresting points were raised in the ensuing discussion period. Those attending greatly enjoyed the meeting, as far as can be gathered, and thanks are due to the brethren at Dalmellington for their kind hospitality.

**Zambia, Central Africa.** Two new congregations have been organised with over 40 baptisms. Three older congregations recently sent out evangelists on itinerant missionary journeys. Any young person interested in being a missionary apprentice in Central Africa should write to: Chester Woodhall, 1 Wyndley Drive, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands.

# OBITUARY

## COMING EVENTS

**Dalmellington, Scotland.** — With sincere regret we record the death of our sister McGinn who fell asleep in Jesus on August 24th in her eightieth year, widow of Brother T. McGinn who passed away on Sept. 14th 1978. Both had been faithful members since the church began 44 years ago. Brother McGinn took a leading part in all the activities of the church and did much, in difficult days, for the cause they both loved so dearly.

Sister McGinn was a true helpmeet, supporting and encouraging her husband in his work of faith and labour of love. We feel that, in the passing of our sister McGinn, a real link with the past has been broken, "until the day dawns and the shadows flee." We commend all the family in their sad bereavement to the God of all comfort and consolation.

Wm. Black

The church at Newtongrange (DV) hope to hold their annual social on Saturday 27th October 1979. Venue of meeting is to be St. Davids, Newtongrange at the time of 4 p.m.

Speakers arranged are Brother T. Nisbet, Tranent and Brother J. Morgan, Hindley. Brother Sharp is the proposed chairman.

Please make a note of this date as a good time of love and fellowship is assured.

A. P. Sharp.

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