

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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STEWARDS OF MYSTERIES

"Behold I show you a mystery," says the apostle Paul, and obviously assumes that all his readers will immediately be interested in the very mention of a **mystery**. Surely he was right in this assumption for men in all generations, and in all parts of the globe, have been, and still are, intrigued by that which is truly mysterious. A speaker gets undivided attention if he proposes to discuss a mystery: particularly if he also claims to be able to provide the solution. Agatha Christie, and many similar writers, have for years, galvanised the attention of millions of readers, and made a fortune in the process — all based on an insatiable appetite on the part of the human animal for things curious, bizarre and mysterious. Men and monarchs have, in all ages, travelled the world: spending **much** time and vast fortunes in the pursuit of explanations to bewildering circumstances. Men have risked their very lives to decipher strange inscriptions; find 'lost' worlds (like Atlantis): raise sunken vessels: trace the source of rivers (like the Nile): find 'lost' tribes (like the 10 'lost' Tribes of the O.T.): solve riddles and prophecies (like those of Nostradamus): investigate puzzling phenomena like the Bermuda Triangle, the Mary Celeste, the demise of the dinosaurs: or seek elusive creatures like Yeti (Abominable Snowman), 'Bigfoot' or Loch Ness Monster, etc., etc.

As children we were all enthralled by the conjurer at the party, and, as adults, we are still amazed by the Paul Daniels of this world, and by illusionists who can even make an aircraft 'disappear.' Some puzzles are as enigmatic as ever and we can all have our opinions of the Turin Shroud, Stonehenge or U.F.O.'s and the 'corn-field circles.' In spite of all scientific explanation it is still difficult to understand how massive steel warships can float, or how huge 'Jumbo Jets' with 350 passengers can remain suspended in the air and not come crashing down. And who can possibly explain the mystery of spontaneous combustion in humans? How can human bodies suddenly catch fire and slowly be consumed with a searing and incinerating heat, which very often does not singe their clothing, or scorch adjacent furniture? This phenomenon so intrigued even Charles Dickens that he introduced such a death into one of his novels ('*Bleak House*'). It used to be suggested that many who died in this way were alcoholics but this has been easily disproved and, only yesterday, a newspaper related the death of a child in China who died from spontaneous combustion, at 4 years of age. Yes, there are all manner of baffling circumstances in this amazing world and we have only had space to hint at some of them. I suppose we all have our own personal list of mysteries which confound us most, and doubtless we add to it all the time. Agur had just such a list and this he shares with us (in Proverbs Chap. 30: well worth a read) and says "There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea' four which I know not. The way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock,

the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid." One wonders how mystified Agur would have been had he lived in these days of submarines, X-rays, television, electricity, the combustion engine, and men walking about on the moon, etc.

Once Concealed: Now Revealed

Few would deny, I suppose, that the Bible is the one Book which deals in true mysteries. Although this might come as no surprise (for the Bible is after all, God's revealed mind to man) yet the Bible enlightens rather than mystifies, and provides the solution to much that would otherwise be entirely mysterious. God is, after all, the revealer of secrets, and indeed if it were not for the Bible we would know very little of how, where, when and why life began, or of the history of early man, the Jews and other nations. There are, obviously, many mysteries still in the Bible but these are, in the main now of historical and academic value only, as far as the O.T. is concerned. 'Mysteries' in the N.T. however are worth a glance. In passing, it is, perhaps worth mentioning that 'Religious Mysticism' as pursued by the Greeks and Romans, is still around today and many modern cults shroud their beliefs and practices in religious Mumbo-Jumbo, in striking contrast to the Gospel of Christ so openly proclaimed by the apostles with certainty, clarity and simplicity.

WILLIAM BARCLAY, says "Mystery" in the N.T. "has a special meaning. In Matt. 13:11 (and Mark 4:11) the disciples are congratulated by Jesus that to them has been given to know the 'mysteries' or 'mystery' of the Kingdom of Heaven. Both the R.S.V. and N.E.B. substitute 'secret.' In religious Greek a *musterion* (a mystery) is not something which, as in the English word, is complicated and mysterious, it is something which is obscure and unintelligible to the outsider, but crystal clear to the initiate to whom the inner meaning of it has been revealed. An example of this is the action of the Lord's Supper. To the outsider the sight of people taking a sip of wine and a piece of bread is obscure and, it may be, even be slightly ridiculous. To the member of the church who understands the inner meaning of it, it is the most precious action of Church worship. It will, therefore, often happen that to translate *musterion* by 'mystery' or even by 'secret' will be misleading in English and the translation has to be 'filled out.' Thus we may translate Jesus' words, 'You have received the privilege of knowing the meaning of the Kingdom of God, a secret which only a disciple can understand'."

And so, according to W. Barclay, "mystery" in Hellenistic Greek meant 'a secret' or 'something puzzling' but in N.T. Greek it meant something previously concealed which is now revealed: and revealed to those who present themselves, as pupils, initiates, or disciples to receive the information. Clearly, men must be of a receptive disposition to benefit from God's revelations. The word 'mystery' or 'mysteries' occurs some 30 times in the N.T. and, subject to obvious exceptions, usually refers to matters now revealed whereas previously concealed. For instance, when Jesus was asked why He taught in parables, "He answered and said unto them. Because it is given to you to know THE MYSTERIES of the kingdom of God, but to them it is not given." (Matt. 13:11). These 'mysteries of the Kingdom' were not mysteries in the sense that they were incomprehensible (in fact they were simple and easily understood) but were mysteries in that they had not previously been made known. They were also being withheld initially from those who would not appreciate them, and restricted to those willing to receive them, for Jesus went on to say, "Therefore speak I to them (the Jews) in parables, because they seeing see not: and hearing they hear not: neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand, and, seeing ye shall see and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed: lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with

their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear. For verily I say unto you that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." (Matt. 13:13-17).

Nothing much has changed and even today the 'mysteries' of the Kingdom are lost on a world which is largely indifferent to God, with eyes and ears closed, with heart hardened to the gospel and grimly determined not to be converted to Christ. We also learn from this passage that these things were entirely mystifying to the prophets and good men of the O.T. who would dearly have loved to have seen and heard the things which are now revealed to us in Christ Jesus. Surely this emphasises the great honour and privilege **bestowed upon us** in these 'last days': something not to be regarded lightly.

Stewards of The Mysteries

Some things will ever remain mysteries, of course, because God has not revealed them, and we can never discover them. Paul suggested this when he proclaimed, "**O' the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God: how unsearchable are His judgements, and His ways past finding out. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counsellor?**" Rom. 11:33-35). Even if God was to reveal many of His secrets we would probably be unable to comprehend them. How can the finite human mind cope with the infinite? And so as the Jews discovered a very long time ago, "**The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong to us, and to our children for ever.**" (Deut. 29:29).

Paul described himself (and the other apostles) as "**ministers of Christ, and STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES of God.**" (1 Cor. 4:1) and added, "**But we speak the wisdom of God IN A MYSTERY, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of the world knew: for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory**" (1 Cor. 2:6-8). The incarnation of Jesus and His gospel were ordained even before the world began but concealed until these last days: God's wisdom hidden in mystery. One of the most prominent N.T. mysteries must surely be God's '**ingathering of the Gentiles**' and His inversely proportional disenchantment with Israel: reversing the previous fortunes of both. Indeed Paul was '**a light to the Gentiles**' and could say, "**For this cause I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles. If ye have heard of the dispensation of the Grace of God, which is given to me to you-ward. How that by revelation He made known unto me THE MYSTERY (as I wrote afore in few words), whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in THE MYSTERY of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. THAT the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.**" (Eph. 3:1-6). The last sentence of that quotation aptly describes 'the Mystery of Christ.' What Israel lost, of course, they can more than gain through the gospel: a better covenant based on better promises. Paul went a little farther and extended the mystery to include Israel's blindness: explaining it thus "**For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of THIS MYSTERY lest ye should be wise in your own conceits: THAT blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.**" (Rom. 11:25). And Paul expands the mystery still farther by including not only Gentiles and Jews, but also the angelic world when he says, "**Having made known unto us THE MYSTERY of His will, according to His good pleasure, which He hath purposed in Himself. THAT in the fulness of times He might gather IN ONE, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him.**" (Eph. 1:9). And so

in summing up, Paul could say, **"the MYSTERY which had been hid from ages and from generations, but is now made manifest to the saints. To whom God would make what is the riches of THIS MYSTERY among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, The Hope of Glory."** (Col. 1:26). Thus the Essence of the mystery: "Christ in you: The Hope of Glory."

The Great Mysteries

The N.T. also talks, however, of other mysteries. For instance, Paul warns of the Mystery of Iniquity and says **"For the MYSTERY OF INIQUITY doth already work: only he who letteth will let until he be taken out of the way"** (2 Thess. 2:7). And what was this mystery of iniquity which was already at work when Paul penned these words? Paul adds, **"Except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition: Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped: so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God showing himself that he is God."** (v.3). History describes how the 'falling away' did occur and how 'that man of sin' did emerge and did claim to be God on earth; and still does. Only one man fits that description. As well as the Mystery of Iniquity, Paul also talks of the Mystery of Godliness: as a Great Mystery, and says, **"And without controversy great is THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS, God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."** (1 Tim. 3:16). Paul says "Without controversy" (there is no argument: it is a mystery): yet men try to explain it. This is certainly a mystery which will ever remain fairly incomprehensible: i.e. God manifest in the flesh. And so THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY amounted to man trying to become God: whereas THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS refers to God when He became a man.

Space is fast dwindling but perhaps one other GREAT MYSTERY could be mentioned: a mystery which seemed to have originated with the union of Adam and Eve, and the two becoming one flesh (see Eph.5:31). Paul refers to this and says, **"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is A GREAT MYSTERY: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."** Thus the First Adam (and Eve) prefigured the binding relationship between the Second Adam and the church.

New Mysteries

Unfortunately, in a short article, it has been possible to mention only a few of the thirty, or so, references to N.T. Mysteries, and obviously there are many new mysteries which exercise men's minds with regard to the life to come. What will heaven really be like; will we recognise loved-ones; how will our 'time' be spent: and some even wonder if their beloved pet 'Rover' will be there. The N.T. gives only tantalising glimpses of heaven and Paul's visit to the Third Heaven and to Paradise, gave only a description unlawful for him to utter. Occasionally we hear the oft misquoted words of Isaiah (64:4) that **"Since the beginning of the world, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him"** as if this referred to the next life, but Paul quotes these words correctly and adds, **"But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit."** (1 Cor. 2:9). Isaiah's words were fulfilled 2,000 years ago. Nevertheless we know that the cynic is greatly mistaken in thinking that those who reach heaven will spend eternity twanging on harps, and we also know that heaven will be blissfully pleasant and celestially happy, for **"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."** (Rev. 21:4).

"Behold I show you a mystery . . . we shall all be changed" (1 Cor. 15).

EDITOR.

GLEANINGS

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

"NOT TO BE MINISTERED UNTO"

"For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45).

SELF MUST DIE

"Be well assured that at the bottom of the trouble, and in all its ramifications, is SELF. And this old enemy SELF must be mortified – put to death. We must give self no quarter. "I send you best wishes for your birthday: I hope you are dead," wrote one. And she was right "I seemed spoiled for everything but to see people die," wrote another. And she was right. SELF MUST DIE. With this fact in view, in what a different light must we regard **NOT BEING MINISTERED UNTO**. Welcome disappointment! Welcome hardship! Welcome slight! Welcome thorns and pricks! **These may all be turned to excellent account.** To fail in getting what we want may be a piece of good fortune! To be thwarted may be so good for us! To have our wishes crossed may be a positive blessing! To be trampled upon may be a splendid thing! For every time we are not ministered unto a fresh opportunity is given for self to die! And the person who snubs us may well be regarded as a friend for administering to our arch-enemy – SELF – a stout knock on the head! **Self must be mortified.** For it is only as Self dies that we can live the happy and victorious life.

Christ Must Live

But it is not enough that Self dies. Something else must happen. Christ must live. Self dying – Christ living. And it is in proportion as Self dies in us that Christ can live in us. Let us not then be afraid of death – death to the Self-life. It is only as Self dies and Christ lives in us that we shall be able to come fresh into the world each day "**Not to be Ministered unto but to minister,**" and in our tiny measure to give our lives, to sacrifice ourselves, for the glory of our God and the good of our fellows."

J. H. Horsburgh

HE DIED FOR OUR SINS

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

"He died for our sins according to the Scriptures." These words are engraved on the tablet of the world's memory. They cannot be effaced. Men may call Jesus by any name – humanitarian, hero, martyr, etc., but they have missed the mark. Until men hear what the angel said long ago; '**Thou shalt call His Name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins**', they miss the one clue to the understanding of the life and mission of Christ. All His life has directed to this one thing, that the obstruction that kept men from communion with God might be taken away. At His baptism He identified Himself with sinful men, and became the sin-sharer. In Gethsemane, His sensitive soul felt the weight of the world's sorrows and woes, and He became the sin-bearer. On the Cross He gave His life a ransom for many, and became the sin-offering. His life and death were not in vain, for God vindicated His faith by raising Him from the dead – the conqueror over sin, death and the grave."

Gardner Miller

SOMEONE HAS SAID

Some years ago, as I walked along one of the streets of Philadelphia, I saw a crudely printed sign hanging in the window of a tailoring shop that also dyed clothes. This is what I read, "I DYE TO LIVE; I LIVE TO DYE. THE MORE I DYE, THE MORE I LIVE." This is the truth of the Scriptures. I die to live; I live to die. The more I die, the more I live."

C.G.

Selected by Leonard Morgan.

RIGHTLY HANDLING THE SCRIPTURES

(Timothy 2:15)

We have entitled this lesson as above, because the Greek word “*orthomeo*” which is translated in the King’s version **rightly dividing**,” which means “cutting straight, rightly treating, rightly handling, or applying.”

The Amplified New Testament puts it this way: **“Study and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed correctly analyzing and accurately dividing-rightly skillfully teaching the word of God.”** Or as the ASV puts it **“handling aright.”**

There was no written Bible for more than 2500 years of the world’s history.

After it began to be written, it was 1600 years on being completed. The Bible, – the divine revelation from God, was written by about 40 inspired men who lived in different times, and various parts of the world.

The New Testament part of the Bible is especially for us, who are living in these last days; but the **“things written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”**

There are three Dispensations of religion taught in the Bible:

1. The Patriarchal – a family religion, lasted 2500 years.
2. The Jewish – a national religion, lasted 1500 years.
3. The Christian religion, a world-wide, universal religion, has lasted nearly 2000 years; The scriptures are made up of three kinds of sentences: 1. Facts to believe, 2. Commands to obey, 3. Promises to hope for.

The Bible contains three kinds of literature: History, Law and Prophecy. The Jewish law of the Old Testament served its purpose and has been abolished. The Prophecies have been fulfilled in Christ in the New Testament. We should read the Old Testament primarily for its Historical value. The primary function of the Old Testament is to produce faith in God, to prophesy of Christ and the future developments, and give the history of the beginning of all things John 14:1; Heb. 9:27; and John 5:39.

The Bible reveals three Kingdoms: 1. Of Nature, we enter by a fleshly birth, 2. Of grace (the church) by new birth John 3:5, and 3. Of Glory, We enter by a resurrection birth from the grave.

Under each dispensation of religion God required *faith and obedience*.

The fleshly law of Moses was a temporary law, given 430 years after God made the promise to Abraham, which served the Jewish nation as a schoolmaster, till Christ (the promised seed) and great teacher should come.

Christ, having fulfilled the law, abolished it and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.

Christ’s Commission To The Apostles

Christ, after having selected the twelve apostles, put in three and a half years training them, gave the great commission, and had them to tarry at Jerusalem until they were empowered from above, by the overwhelming baptism of the Holy Spirit. Then they began carrying out the great commission.

According to Matthew’s account of the gospel, **the great commission contained three commands:** (a) To teach or make disciples of all nations, (b) Baptizing them into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and (c) teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” Matt. 28:19,20.

We can not please God, nor come to him without faith Heb. 11.6. We must not only believe in God; but in his Son Jesus Christ as well. John 14:1.

The Old Testament properly studied will lead one to believe in God. The first four books of the New Testament leads us to believe in Christ. The four books teach us one gospel. John 20:30, 31. Read John 3:16. Faith comes by (reading) hearing or

listening to the word of God. (Rom. 10:17). But faith alone, as some believe, will not save us, for faith without works is dead. James 2:17.

If faith alone would save; then the great commission at Matthew 28:19 would read, **“teach or disciple all nations,”** and instead of having 27 books in the New Testament, we would just have four: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Acts, the 5th book of the New Testament, shows how the apostles, after being empowered by the Holy Spirit, carried out the great commission.

The commission required more than faith alone. **It required four things:** faith, repentance, confession and baptism. The first five books of the New Testament, if learned and given heed to, will save the world from past sins, and carries out the first two parts of the great commission.

If when a person is saved from past sins, God makes them sin-proof by some so-called sanctification, as some teach, we would have only the first five books of the New Testament.

But since there is a third part to the great commission: **“teaching them to observe all things which I have commanded you.”** We have other books or epistles in the New Testament: Romans to Jude.

In order to make the Bible complete, we have in the New Testament **one book of prophecy**, called Revelation, foretelling the history of the Church or kingdom of Christ.

It tells of its battles, conflicts and final victory.

We should not go back to the Old Testament to learn a Christian’s duties, nor to learn what a sinner should do to be saved.

We should read the Old Testament principally for its historical value, as its law has served its purpose and been abolished, and its prophecies have been fulfilled in Christ, as we learn from the New Testament.

Things To Bear In Mind

As a sinner we should not go to the epistles or Revelation to learn the first principles of religion, neither should a Christian go to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John or Acts to learn their duties.

When reading the Bible **we should ask ourselves the following questions;** Who is talking? To whom are they talking? And what is the condition of the person or persons spoken to? Is it addressed to a Patriarch, a Jew, or a Christian? Is it addressed to a saint or a sinner? Is it addressed to an inspired apostle, or to an uninspired person?

Was it under the first commission to the Jews, or in the time of the great commission of the apostles under the gospel dispensation?

The Bible contains all of God’s message to man, for all the ages to come. It is the code of laws by which we will be judged. John 12:48.

We should fear God, and tremble at his living word.

There is danger of **PERVERTING** the gospel, **WRESTING** the **SCRIPTURES**, or **PREACHING A DIFFERENT GOSPEL**, which has caused all of the religious confusion in the world.

At Matt. 22:29 Christ said, **“Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.”**

Paul says anyone **PERVERTING THE GOSPEL**, **WRESTING** the scriptures, or preaching **ANOTHER GOSPEL** is anathema, or accursed, whether he be man or angel. (Gal. 1:9).

Now let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: **“Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man”** Eccles. 12:13.

THE INDISPENSABLE INGREDIENT

“Without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to God, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is a rewarder of them that dilligently seek him” (Heb. 11:6). Conviction and confidence that God is and that he rewards those who seek him is a prime requisite for satisfactory living.

We speak of the necessary items for the preparation of a palatable dish as the ingredients. It is the same with living. There are some items that are positively essential to life if it is to be lived at its best.

One of these ingredients is FAITH and we are not confining this necessity to the religious realm alone. It is axiomatic that a child must believe his mother or his guardian, or die. The mother tells her little ones fire burns, poisons kill, water drowns, highways are dangerous, falls cripple and exposure makes ill. Whether the little ones like it or not, they can believe her or die.

The student of necessity believes his instructor or remains ignorant. A beginner comes to his teacher without knowledge of the tools of learning. He knows no letter of the alphabet. If he is ever to distil the treasures from the world of books, he has to believe his tutor when she points out that this character is “A” and this is “Z” or all the volumes of the world will remain locked and a mystery.

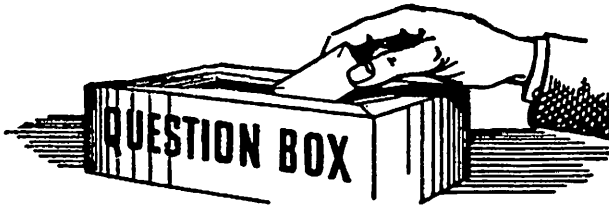
The business man must have faith in his fellowman or he can do no business. Letters of credit, cheques, credit cards are all largely a matter of faith. Sure there are some losses but think, if there were no faith there would be no business and whatever profit is gained would be impossible.

Then why is it thought strange that in the religious realm a man has to believe or perish? How expensive is man’s scepticism! Our years are so brief, our experiences so narrow, how easy to be guilty of faulty observations, hasty generalizations or illogical or ill-formed conclusions. By faith we can begin where we must end if we refuse to believe.

If man could only bring himself to the point of faith, how many tragedies he could avoid, how much disappointment and failure he could prevent. Why do so many live such difficult lives? Because **“The way of the transgressor is hard”** (Prov. 13:15). Why do so many die prematurely? Because longevity, in many instances, is connected with doing the commandments of God. **“Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honour thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth”** (Eph. 6:1,2). Why are our prayers unanswered?

Because we ask amiss or to spend what we ask selfishly. **“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures”** (James 4:3). Why do many have such difficulties in living.? Because they refuse to put the Kingdom of God first. **“But seek ye first His kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”** (Matt. 6:33).

This is not to say the godly never have any problems. But how differently are they affected by their trials! The attitude **“all things work together for good to them that love the Lord”** makes it impossible to overwhelm the man or the woman who takes this view of life. It makes for calm in the storm, gives strength for the long haul and peace in trials.



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

“I am a young Christian and I would like to know how the social life of the Church has changed over the years. Youth week-ends all seem to follow the same pattern. What did you do when you were younger, and what lessons did you learn from your experiences?”

This young sister has already learned one important lesson, i.e., that lessons are learned primarily from our experiences. The more people we meet, the more we learn about relationships; the more we learn about relationships the more likely we are to foster the good ones and shun the bad ones. It is vitally important that we have good relationships with our brethren and with our friends; the one will make it easier for us to do God’s Will, and the other will perhaps enable us to lead someone to Christ; we must never lose sight of that important objective. It is in the area of mutual relationships where we experience most of our joys and sorrows; it is also where the learning process should become more finely tuned. The most damning indictment after some personal debacle is surely the comment, “You never learn, do you”.

Words Without Music

I shall never forget the Saturday morning in early 1946 when, after six and a half years in the army during the war, with hastening feet I hurried to the home of my fiancé, Edna Unsworth (now my wife of 43 years). Free at last to go where I wanted. My first words to Edna went something like this, “Where are we going tonight”? Her reply was totally incomprehensible to me, “I don’t know where you are going, but I’m going to chapel”. It transpired that someone called Albert Winstanley was conducting a Mission at Albert Street Church of Christ. “Well”, I thought to myself, “not quite what I expected, but if Edna’s allegiance to this preacher is greater than it is to me then he may be worth listening to”. So off I went with her, bronzed from Burmese suns, fit enough to push a wall over, and prepared to be somewhat bored. Even though I had been impressed with the doctrine of the Church, the attitude of some toward their fellow-Christians left me shocked and dismayed, and I can reveal with certainty that if it had not been for Edna I would have walked away without ever becoming a member of the Lord’s Body.

What did these events teach me? First of all I learned that I must not blame my Saviour for the defects of some of those who purport to follow Him. They need to be prayed for and helped in their understanding, because it is quite evident that they have not appropriated the true nature of the One whom they say they follow. Secondly, I learned that an argument may be right according to the Scripture, but surely it cannot be right to pursue that argument by unchristian means; if textual protagonists do not learn that lesson then in my opinion their defence of the truth is nullified by errors of attitude.

After I became a Christian and began to study in depth I became convinced that the arguments advanced for the non-use of musical instruments in worship were among the weakest scripturally to sustain; now, some forty two years on, my opinion is still the same. Some brethren may be shocked to read this, but God knows my mind anyway and it is He who will judge me; personally I do not believe that this revelation will in any way threaten my salvation. Of one thing I am sure; no brother, or sister will ever hear verbal abuse from me because they think differently than I do on some

'Issues'. I believe I have learned **that much**.

What a Fellowship

The song, from Great Songs, goes, "What a fellowship, what a joy divine, Leaning on the everlasting arms". Even amid jealousy, acrimonious debate, infidelity, many can testify to the great fellowship of the Church. Those 'everlasting arms' are extended to and by the brethren in loving, caring, and supportive actions which go on day by day and are often unseen and unsung. Aspects of this fellowship have also been experienced over the years in our leisure activities, and it is to some of these that I now turn.

If asked about holidays which linger most in the mind, some might mention such places as the Canary Islands, the Costa Del Sol, the Bernese Oberland, and many other. My list would include such names as Bangor Normal College, Scratby, Paddock Wood, Kelston, etc., because to those places went groups of hardy, intrepid Christians, bent on experiencing the questionable delights of these exotic-sounding venues, but primarily to spend periods of leisure time **just being together** and doing the things that Christians would want to do.

Bangor Normal College was the start of this great adventure in community leisure. It was the brain-child of Bro. Albert Winstanley and other courageous and far-seeing brothers, who scoured the country-side looking for venues with reasonable accommodation and facilities at almost negligible cost; they found such a venue at Bangor in North Wales.

How does one describe the happy hours and days spent there. The gathering together in the morning to give thanks to the God who had so richly blessed us; the opportunity in the afternoon to explore Anglesey just across the Menai Straits. Edna and I had a young family, no car, but a great deal of faith in our brethren; there was hardly a car which started on some trip that did not have a Marsden in it. And then there were the evenings, when a well-fed, tired but happy group met together again prior to going to bed in order to thank God in song and prayer for the day we had experienced. It was during these interludes that I learned many of the spiritual songs which have sustained the spirit in difficult days, and the recall of the warmth and fellowship has been a balm to the soul. The most wonderful sight of all, though, was to see young people being immersed into Christ in the waters of the Menai Strait. This was the time when I believed quite fervently that the 'oyster of salvation' could be opened so that the 'pearl of great price' could be revealed in all His glory to the people of the world. But the intervening years have taught me a sad and bitter lesson, i.e. that the illimitable power of God in the Gospel can be limited by self-satisfied Christians who have very little vision. There is a time, when one is young and vibrant, to take courage in both hands and to launch out in faith. There are millions of unsaved people throughout the world, I know that, but there are millions of people in **our own country** who need to hear the Gospel. Mission does not have to involve thousands of miles of travel to distant lands.

Through the 'Garden' with Others

Down in the 'Garden of England' there is a place called Paddock Wood. In this 'idyllic' spot, in a field pock-marked with 'cow pats', stood a number of huts; evidently they were used by hop-pickers during their annual stint of hop-picking. It was to these unpromising 'country residences' that a company of hardy Christians resorted for a 'holiday'. The first night we were there the rain beat down on the corrugated roofs of the huts; percussion caps of some description went off every thirty seconds or so in a nearby orchard to prevent the birds from settling on the trees; and the palliasses on which we were supposed to sleep were so full of straw that I rolled on to the floor several times during the night. I was furious, and must admit that a lot of unchristian thoughts and words were directed against the organisers.

As so often happens, however, this inauspicious start was to be followed by some

precious moments of fellowship which have lived in the memory. The following morning dawned bright and clear, and as I staggered out of our hut I met Bro. Bill Hurcombe inhaling the morning air with obvious relish. "Isn't this wonderful," he said to me. I replied sharply, "Glad you think so," and made to move on. Bill, however, has always been persistent in loving and sharing, and after I had explained my displeasure he promptly offered his van for one or two of our family to sleep in, an offer, I might add, which was gladly accepted. All the same I seemed to be hit by a thunderbolt of remorse. Could my churlish, condemning attitude be associated with the same Lord who had evoked such love and concern in Bill? I decided it couldn't, and from that moment I resolved, with the Lord's help, to do better in the future.

As if to compound my spiritual unease, there came floating on the morning air the stentorian voice of our late Bro. Carlton Melling; he was giving vent to an Al Jolson song. Knowing Carlton's physical limitations only made me contrast his obvious happiness with my own carping self-pity. I was learning what it takes to be a Christian. It takes much more than doctrinal exactness and platform skill; it means the appropriation of the Christ in such a way that His Spirit shines through us. As we rode home in Bill Stanton's car – and even today I can't think how eight or nine of us got into it – I ruminated on how badly the week had started for me, and how well, through contact with the saints, it had ended.

Dear young sister, time and events have killed off the sorts of activities that my generation engaged in. But I can tell you this with some certainty; try to find your enjoyment some of the time with other Christians. At times you may find it rather tedious; if so, I advise that you look for faults in your own input to the situation. At other times you will find the fellowship sweet and rewarding. Textbook theology may help you unravel a knotty doctrinal problem; practical and participative Christianity will teach you about the problems associated with people; the longer you live the more you will realise that these are the most difficult to resolve. I could say, "Good luck in your Christian life," but luck has nothing to do with it. Keep Christ and your brethren by your side; watch, pray, and learn.

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

FULFILLED

The religious world in general seems to feel that men live under the Ten Commandments today. Even some preachers of the gospel are heard to say and write, that nine of the often are brought over into the New Covenant. Jesus stated: **"Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished"** (Matt. 5:17,18,ASV).

A crucial word in this Scripture is "till" (or "until"). Jesus was saying that he had come to fulfill the law and the prophets, which he did, but until the fulfillment should be accomplished not one thing could be changed. When the law had been fulfilled, then the time limit marked by the word "till" would have been reached and that which was fulfilled could no longer be in effect. This is exactly what Paul said when he stated, **"Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross"** (Col. 3:14). Blotted out – nailed to the cross – taken away – the entire law given to the Israelites through Moses. Nothing is said anywhere in the Scriptures about part of the law being brought over into the new – it was all taken away.

Paul, explaining to the Galatians that they should no longer observe the Mosaical covenant, stated the promise (of salvation) is through faith in Christ Jesus. **"But before**

faith came, we (the Israelites) were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed. So that the law is our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor" (Gal. 3: 23-25).

In further clarification of this theme, note the words of Jesus, "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill: and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment ..." (Matt. 5:21,22). Thus Jesus referred directly to the Decalogue (Ten Commandments) by quoting one of them, and then said "But I say unto you ..." In verses 27, 28 he quoted another of the Ten Commandments and again stated, "But I say unto you ..." Thus one may clearly understand that we are not under the Ten Commandments, or any part of the Law of Moses, but are to live by what Jesus said.

Principles of conduct most assuredly are there – our relationship with God and with men are both involved in the teaching of Christ, but the Decalogue had to do with outward, overt acts, and Jesus gave a "law", or described the true Christian life in terms which reach into the innermost parts of one's being, and is thus greater and deeper than was the law given through Moses.

There certainly is no objection to the memorization of the Ten Commandments, or any other part of the Bible, but the teaching that Christians are under these Ten Commandments, or any other part of this, or any other part of the law of Moses, is erroneous.

To have salvation one must do what Jesus said in becoming a Christian and then follow the principles of conduct which *he* laid down in order to have eternal life.

L. E. Ellis.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Sep. 2	Psa. 119:17-32	2Tim. 2
Sep. 9	Psa. 119:33-48	2Tim. 3
Sep. 16	1 Kings 2:1-12	2Tim. 4
Sep. 23	Ezek. 33:1-20	Titus 1
Sep. 30	Ezek. 33:21-33	Titus 2

THE WORD OF GOD

Paul wrote: "Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2:15). "Study" is the Greek verb *spoudazo* and W.E. Vine said that "it signifies to hasten to do a thing, to exert oneself, endeavour, give diligence." The N.E.B. translates it as "Try Hard" and the R.S.V. as "Do your best."

"Rightly dividing" is *orthotomeo* in the Greek and literally means to cut straight (*orthos* straight, *temno*, to cut). The R.V. translates it "handling aright."

Vine again stated: "What is intended here is not dividing scripture from scripture, but teaching scripture accurately."

Chapter 3 concludes with these words: "Every scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for convincing, for correction of error, and for instruction in right doing; so that the man of God may himself be complete and may be perfectly equipped for every good work" (16-17, Weymouth) "Inspired by God" is the Greek word *theopneustos* and literally means 'God-breathed'. When God breathes into something that something comes alive. For example, we read in Genesis 2:7: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: and man became a living soul." The word of God is alive and energetic because its author is alive. Every book that has come from the scribe, or printing press, other than the Bible, has been a dying book because its author has been

a dying author. There is, therefore, no comparison between the Bible and the books of men – even those written by Shakespeare!

Faithful to the End

Paul wrote: “For I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Timothy 4:7-9). Paul is nearer his end and knows it. The word he used for “departure” (Greek *analusis*) is an interesting one. It is the word used for unyoking an animal from a cart or plough; the word for loosening bonds or fetters; the word for releasing the ropes of a tent; and the word for loosening the mooring ropes of a ship. “So,” as William Barclay has written, “for the Christian, death is laying down the burden in order to rest; it is laying aside the shackles in order to be free; it is striking camp in order to take up residence in the heavenly places; it is casting off the ropes which bind us to this world in order to set sail on the voyage which ends in the presence of God. Who then shall fear it?”

Sir Harry Lauder of Scotland, used to sing a song, “Keep right on to the end of the Road.” That is exactly what the apostle Paul did. His road was the narrow one which leads to glory.

Names

Paul in these chapters of 2 Timothy referred to Hymenaeus, Philetus, Janes, Jambres, Demas, Crescens, Luke, Mark, Tychicus, Carpus, Alexander, Priscilla, Aquila, Onesiphorus, Erastus, Trophimus, Eubulus, Pudens, Linus and Claudia.

HYMENAEUS and ALEXANDER are mentioned here in the second epistle (2:17; 4:14) and in 1 Timothy 1:20, where we read . . . “whom I have delivered unto Satan that they may learn

not to blaspheme.” PHILETUS, with HYMENAEUS, was one who worked to undermine the Christian doctrine of the resurrection (2:17-18). JANNES and JAMBRES (3:8) were probably the Egyptian magicians (Exodus 7-8), whose names do not occur in the Old Testament. DEMAS (4:10) is also mentioned Col. 4:14 and Philem 24. At one time he was one of PAUL’S co-workers. In the end he left the faithful apostle in the lurch. CRESCENS is a Latin name and this companion of Paul is mentioned only in this epistle (4:10). LUKE, of course, was the beloved physician who features in his book of Acts. He is also the author of the gospel record that bears his name. His name further appears in Col. 4:14 and Philemon 24. He was an outstanding co-worker with Paul. JOHN MARK (Acts 12:12,25; 13:13; 15:37; Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11; 1 Peter 5:13) was a cousin of Barnabas and author of the Second Gospel. F. F. Bruce has commented: “Mark the evangelist has left an imperishable legacy to all succeeding generations, and as a member of three intersecting circles in the early church, he provides an important link between Barnabas, Peter and Paul.”

TYCHICUS (4:12) is also named in Acts 20:4, Ephes. 6:21, Col 4:7 and Titus 3:12. He was a native of the province of Asia and was a fellow traveller on Paul’s last journey to Jerusalem. He was apparently the bearer of the Colossian and Ephesian letters. CARPUS, mentioned only here (4:13) was evidently a friend of the apostle.

PRISCILLA and AQUILA were a married couple who are always mentioned together (Acts 18:2, 18,26; Romans 16:3; 1 Cor. 16:19; 2 Tim. 4:19). They played a notable part in Paul’s missionary enterprise. ONESIPHORUS (4:19), whose help meant much to Paul when he needed it most, is also named in 1:16-18.

ERASTUS (4:20) is also found in Acts 19:22 and Romans 16:23. Erastus was the city treasurer of Corinth. TROPHIMUS (4:20) will always be seen

as the innocent cause of the riot in Jerusalem that led to Paul's arrest and imprisonment, when the rumour spread through the city that Paul had violated the sanctity of the temple by taking this Gentile within the forbidden bounds (Acts 21:27-36. Also Acts 20:4). EUBULUS, PUDENS, LINUS and CLAUDIA (a woman) are mentioned only in this second epistle to Timothy. Nothing else is known about them.

THE EPISTLE TO TITUS

WRITER: apostle Paul.

RECIPIENT: Titus. "He was a Gentile (Gal. 2:3); a beloved friend and helper of Paul (2 Cor. 2:13; 7:6,13,14; 8:23); a messenger of the church at Corinth (2 Cor. 8:16-18); a companion of Paul and Barnabas on a journey to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1). He was left in Crete by Paul to superintend the churches (Titus 1:5). He was in Rome with Paul during the latter's imprisonment (2 Tim. 4:10)."

DATE: about 66 A.D.

PLACE: probably Rome.

PURPOSE: instructions and exhortations relating to various duties and doctrines. The leading thought of the epistle is the importance of good works in all those professing Christianity.

CRETE: the fifth largest island in the Mediterranean Sea. In Paul's day it was subject to Rome. No people ever had a worse reputation than the ancient Cretans. They were characterised for insincerity, falsehood and gross living. "To cretize" meant to lie and to cheat.

ELDERS

Let us briefly consider the qualifications of an Elder, "**Blameless**" (*anekletos*) marks one against whom no evil charge can be maintained. "**Husband of one wife**" means an Elder has to be a one-woman man. Someone divorced or a polygamist cannot be an elder. "**Faithful children**" refers to faithfulness to the earthly father. "**Not self-willed**" (*authades*). The self-willed man has a character which is compounded in equal parts of conceit, arrogance and

contemptuousness. "**Not soon angry**" (*orgilos*) Orge is inveterate anger which a man nurses to keep warm. "**Not given to wine**" in the Greek means literally not near to wine. It refers to those accustomed to drinking parties. "**No striker**" (Greek *plektes*) refers to one who settles things with his fists. "**Not given to filthy lucre**" describes the man who does not care how he makes money, so long as he makes it.

"**A lover of hospitality**" literally a lover of strangers. It describes one who opens his doors to fellow Christians and others. "**A lover of good things**" (*philogathos*) – an unselfish man. "**Sober**" (*sophron*) – a person who has a well regulated mind and is free from excesses. "**Just**" (*dikaiois*) – a man who shows respect to his fellow man and reverence for God. "**Holy**" (*hosios*) describes the man who reverences the fundamental decencies of life. "**Temperate**" (*egkrates*) – to the Greeks, a man who has achieved self-mastery. "**Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught . . .**" – speaks of one who in public is able to contend for the truth.

Ian S. Davidson,
Motherwell.

COMING EVENTS

Motherwell: Saturday Evening Meetings at Motherwell Meeting House, August 18th and 25th, September 1st all at 6.30 p.m. Subject: "The Old Testament Scriptures and Their Background." Speaker: Ian S. Davidson. Plan to Attend

ANNUAL SOCIAL

Newtongrange: Saturday 6th October, 1990 at 4.00 p.m. Speakers: Bro. J. B. Wilson, (Livingstone), Bro. S. Farrow, (Manchester) Chairman: John Wilson
A rich time of fellowship awaits all.

ANNIVERSARY MEETING

Kentish Town, London: Saturday, 6th October, 1990. Meeting: 3.00 p.m. Tea

at 4.45 p.m. Evening Meeting 6.30 p.m.
Speaker: Philip Partington.

and was officiated by the writer.

Joe Malcolm.

OBITUARY

Motherwell: The church here has suffered another great loss on the death of our dearly beloved brother Leslie Purcell. Leslie was born in 1907, the second youngest of six brothers, and was born again in 1932, after which he remained a faithful servant of Christ until his passing, in the early hours of Sunday, 17/6/90.

He is survived by sister Nettie, to whom he was married for 56 years, and four children: Billy, Margery, John and Isabel. He also leaves two brothers, thirteen grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Leslie was a tireless worker for the Lord, preaching and teaching regularly at all the meetings of the church. His happy and contented disposition revealed his deep faith in the Master, and he will be greatly missed. Services at the Meetinghouse and Cemetery were conducted by Ian Davidson, Motherwell, and Prayers were offered by J. Nisbet, J. Sinclair (snr.) and D. Chalmers. The numbers in attendance reflected the great affection for Leslie and the respect with which he was held.

W. Purcell (Sec.).

Dennyloanhead: We regret to announce the passing of our dearly beloved sister Elizabeth McLuckie on June 25th at the age of 91 years. We mourn her passing but not as those without hope, for she served her Lord faithfully and has entered into that rest that remaineth to the people of God. We commend her family to our heavenly Father, who is the source of all comfort and consolation.

The funeral service on June 28th was held at the Funeral Parlour in Denny and later at the Old Cemetery, Denny,

Hindley: After a long period of painful suffering, sister Mary Catterall has entered into rest and peace, on Thursday June 21st. The funeral service conducted by Bro. Philip Partington taking place on Tuesday, June 26th, when a goodly number were present to pay their last tribute to one who had been a faithful member since coming to a fuller understanding of the word of God, and, until her invalidity, was always present.

We commend her husband James for his loving care and devotion to her every need. Our hearts go out to him and those she loved at this time of need, and pray that the Lord who maketh rich and addeth no sorrow may uphold them by His Grace, and strengthen them by His Presence in the inner man.

Tom Kemp.

GHANA APPEAL

Medical Aid

Today I received a letter from David Arku-Mensah informing me of a Brother in the Accra congregation who is suffering from cancer. Allow me to print a paragraph from David's letter concerning this situation.

"As you are aware, Brother Joseph Mills diagnosis of cancer is a fact to reckon with. It has cost the church in Accra eighty three thousand cedis (C83,000.00). We are yet to know how much more we will need in the near future. We will therefore be grateful for any amount of money that will be donated to the church for medical aid."

It may help to understand their plight when you know that there are 500 cedis to £1.00 and the average wage in Ghana is £1.00 per day.

Anyone wishing to help in a collection to assist the church in paying

for such treatment please contact me. Cheques should be made payable to:- Graeme Pearson (Ghana Appeal), and sent to:-

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

church in Nyarkrom
£100 for building materials for the church in Patriensa
£100 for building materials for the church in Odumasi
£200 for building funds for the church in Accra.

On behalf of the brethren in Ghana, may I once again express my thanks to all who have contributed in the past month which has made these gifts possible.

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

GHANA REPORT

In the past month I have been informed that the church at Patriensa have built a road up to the church building site. They have made their concrete blocks and have purchased their cement and are awaiting for the green light from building control to proceed.

15kg. of clothes have been sent in the past month to the congregation in Accra for distribution among the saints.

£850 was sent to Ghana to be used in the following way:-

- £150 Medical aid (to be used immediately for cancer relief)
- £100 for building materials for the church in Koforidua
- £100 for building materials for the church in Huhunya
- £100 for building materials for the

BUILDERS

Lines on the Christmas card of F. John Roe's Advertising Service Agency. Isn't it strange that princes and kings. And clowns that caper in sawdust rings. And ordinary folk like you and me Are builders of eternity?
To each is given a bag of tools.
An hour-glass and a book of rules,
And each must build ere his time has flown
A stumbling-block or a stepping-stone.

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