

# *The* **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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Vol. 64 No. 7

JULY, 1996

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## **FIRST AT ANTIOCH**

Every so often the term "Christian" is thrown into the arena of controversy. Tony Blair's recent statement, in a speech, a couple of weeks ago, that "Christian values" would probably prevent Christians from voting for the Conservative Party at the next General Election, has brought howls of protest from all directions. While most of Mr. Blair's colleagues in the Labour Party, and indeed most of his enemies, concede that Mr. Blair is a fine "Christian gentleman" there is obviously great resentment from those in the Tory Party who consider themselves equally as good Christians as Mr. Blair. "Who does he think he is?": and "How dare he suggest that Christians could not vote Tory:" and "What a nerve:" "Who gave the Labour Party a monopoly on Christian values" have been some of the press reactions to the Labour Leader's speech. With the General Election coming up soon, each political party is quite naturally trying to capture the minds and votes of all the various strata of society, and Mr. Blair (like many of those who have aspired to the presidency, in the USA) seems to be seeking the "Christian" vote, and is playing the "born-again Christian" card. It certainly seems novel (but nice) that the Labour Party should be pushing the "Christian ethic", since, in the past, socialism has tended to foster atheism, as did communism in the late USSR. However, we shall welcome any change.

It certainly would be wonderful to think that our next Government, if led by Mr. Blair, would be motivated entirely by Christian principles, but we should not hold our breath. Politics is, and always was, "a dirty business" and seems, of necessity, to be subject to layer upon layer of vested interest, "wheeling and dealing"; lies, deceit and back-stabbing (ask Mrs. Thatcher). It quite often involves (to protect jobs and domestic issues) the sale of tanks, shells, bombs, bombers and dreadful land-mines, even to impoverished Third-world countries, and the orchestration of wars. One wonders how long a Christian could remain in the world of politics, or how long one could expect any government to be able to follow "Christian principles."

### **GRADES OF CHRISTIAN ?**

As we can imagine, Mr. Blair's comments have provoked considerable discussion, not only upon Mr. Blair's own level of Christianity, but on Christianity in general, and on whether there are "good" Christians and "not so good" Christians, or whether if one is not a "good" Christian one can be a "bad" Christian but still be a Christian.

It is certainly true that we hear this kind of expression quite often, i.e. that so-and-so is "a very good Christian", or that such-and-such an action was "not very Christian", or that so-and-so was far from showing "a Christian attitude" etc.

Before we begin to think in terms of "Good Christians" and "Bad Christians" we have surely got to understand what we mean by the word, and what constitutes a Christian. "Christian" is a designation that obviously means all things to all men; excellently illustrated by the fact that Britain is quite often referred to as "a Christian country." Even in the religious world the word is much over worked and has no certain meaning. Quite often the term is a blanket description for nice and compassionate people, especially if they are engaged in charitable endeavours. Even some of the men and women of the entertainment industry (Pop Stars) who perhaps make no claim whatsoever to being even slightly religious, are described as fine Christian people, because they have collected vast sums for charitable projects in the Third World. By and large, people do not become Christians because they do good works; rather the reverse. Indeed some of the greatest philanthropists who ever lived were completely atheistic.

#### SPARSE MENTION IN N.T.

And so, even in the religious world, this word "Christian" gets banded about: Christian Church, Christian Brethren, Christian Ideal, Christian Ethic, Christian Principles, etc., etc. In view of all this, it seems incredible that the Early Church managed quite well **without the term "Christian"** for some fourteen years, and when the appellation was coined it certainly does not seem to have been produced by the apostles or the church members themselves. Originally it was applied to church members by people **outwith the Church**, and was probably intended to be rather derogatory. Previous to the word being invented the church members used to describe themselves as **disciples, saints and brethren**, and, of course, they **continued to do so** even after the word 'Christian' appeared. We read (in Acts 11:26) that Barnabas was making so many converts at Antioch that he asked Paul to come and help him, and together for a whole year, they taught much people and greatly multiplied the Church. It was **at this point in time**, (about 44 AD) that we read that **"the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."** Prof. William Barclay, says, on this verse, (Quote) "The word Christian began by being a nick-name. The people of Antioch were famous for their facility in finding jesting nick-names. The termination (-iani) means belonging to the party of. For instance, Caesariani means belonging to Caesar's party. Christians means 'These Christ-folk.' It was a half-mocking, half-jesting, wholly contemptuous nick-name. But the Christians took the nick-name and made it a name which all the world was to come to know" (Unquote). J. W. McGarvey (Notes on Acts) disagrees that it was ever a nick-name because he thought there was nothing very belittling about it, but adds (Quote) "True, in the only later occurrences of it in the N.T., it appears as a name by which the disciples **were called by others**, rather than that by which they called themselves but it is only natural that in the epistles which are all addressed to Christians, other and more intimate titles should usually be employed." (Unquote). As Brother McGarvey truly says in that short quote, the epistles were all addressed to "Christians" but is it not incredible that **the term is never used?** Paul in all his many epistles to a great host of brethren **never ever** employed the word 'Christian.' Indeed the term appears **only three times in the entire N.T.** once as mentioned above: once where King Agrippa said to Paul **"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian"** (Acts 26:28), and once where the apostle Peter said that if anyone was to suffer **"as a Christian"** he need not be ashamed (1 Peter 4:6). If the designation "Christian" was originated by the apostles, or by the Church, for general application to church members it surely must be amazing that the word never appears in the entire N.T. (apart from those three special instances just mentioned). In the Bible Commentary (by Jamieson, Fausset & Brown) we read (Quote) "This name originated not within, but without, the church, not with their **Jewish enemies** by whom they were styled "Nazarenes" and "Galileans" (Ch. 24:5) but with

the heathen in Antioch, and (as the form of the word shows), with the **Romans**, not the Greeks there (Olshausen). It was not, at first, used in a good sense (as Chap. 26:28 & Peter 4:16 show), though hardly framed out of contempt (as De Witte, Baumgarten etc.) but as it was a noble testimony to the light in which the Church regarded Christ; honouring Him as their Lord and Saviour, dwelling continually upon His name, and glorying in it - so it was felt to be too apposite and beautiful to be allowed to die" (Unquote).

Without wishing to labour the point, it does seem most odd that, if 'Christian' was a name given by the Church to themselves, or one generally approved of by the apostles, it is conspicuous by its absence from the pages of the N.T. Paul never wrote "to the **Christians** at Corinth, Ephesus or Galatia, etc." but always "to the saints in Christ and faithful brethren," or, sometimes "to them sanctified in Christ, called to be saints." He had unlimited opportunities to speak to the '**Christians**' around him, but never used the word, even once; and, after all, he was at Antioch when the term was coined, and his epistles ranged in origin from 7-25 years thereafter. Jude wrote (some 25 years thereafter) "to them that are sanctified" and likewise never mentioned the word. John wrote (some 50 years thereafter) "to my little children" or "my beloved" and never mentions '**Christians**.' James didn't write "to all the **Christians** scattered abroad" but "to his brethren" in the twelve tribes scattered abroad; and he too never used the word 'Christian.' Peter, who used the word once (in the context already mentioned) didn't write "to all the '**Christians**' scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, etc., but to "the elect" and "to those who have obtained like faith." Thus we see Peter's limit to his use of the term, (and his second epistle was some 23 years thereafter). Although nothing conclusive is claimed for this apparent oddity, it does seem to indicate that the term 'Christian' was not very common currency in the vocabulary of the apostles and Early Church.

### THE FIRST CHRISTIANS

Subject to the above proviso, I now use the term in describing the definition of a 'Christian.' The religious world would, of course, give us a hundred conflicting answers to the question "What is a Christian?" but the best place (indeed the only place) for a sure definition is the N.T. In the Acts of the Apostles we have a great wealth of information as to how men and women, from all walks of life, Jews, Gentiles and Samaritans, converted to Christ and became members of His Church. Initially, on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41) around 3,000 were immersed and became the nucleus of the Church in Jerusalem. The apostle Peter had preached to great throngs in the city, (showing who Christ really was and how He had fulfilled all Messianic prophecy in the O.T.). Peter spoke so forcefully that many were convicted and called out "What shall we do?" Peter's reply, given then and still applicable today, was "**Repent and be baptised (immersed) every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**" (Acts 2:37). 3,000 obeyed. All subsequent conversions (and many are recorded in the Acts) followed precisely the same form, i.e. men having heard the true gospel; and having become convicted of their sins; decided to amend their careless ways by their repentance. They also publicly expressed their belief in Christ and started their new life in Christ with 'a clean slate' i.e. **by washing away their sins in the waters of baptism.** Even in the conversion of the apostle Paul himself, there was no deviation from this procedure, and in consequence of his repentance he was counselled by Ananias to "**arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.**" (Acts 22:16). Those, and only those, who opted to be "born again" in this way were added to the Church and entered the brotherhood of Christ: becoming '**Christians**.' However, many refused the opportunity, as many still do today. Indeed, as we have seen, King Agrippa's reaction to the

preaching of Paul was, "**ALMOST** thou persuadest me to be a Christian," thus exercising his option not to be a Christian. Millions since are in the same position, almost persuaded, but lost.

### ADD TO YOUR FAITH

The question with which we started off was, of course, whether there were "good" Christians and "bad" Christians. The N.T. certainly talks about good seed, good tidings, good measure, good gifts, etc., but never good Christians, or good churches, for that matter. Presumably no person, or no church, is wholly good or bad, but somewhere-in-between. We all have our strengths and weaknesses: we are all partly wise and partly foolish; partly generous and partly mean; partly enthusiastic and partly indifferent; partly militant and partly disinterested; partly dependable and partly erratic, etc. Even Paul refers to the continual warfare within himself, that when he intended to do good he found himself doing the opposite. (Rom. 8:18). In the letters to the seven churches (Rev. 2 & 3) we see that the churches were, like people, and like the curate's egg (good only in parts). They were partly hot and partly cold; partly this and partly that; for some things, highly commended, for others, roundly condemned. None were described as good or bad, but all were advised and exhorted to become BETTER. In any case, Jesus Himself refused to be called 'good' and when the young rich ruler addressed Him as "**Good Master**" Jesus rejected the description and said, "**There is none good but One, and that is God**" (Matt. 19:17).

What becomes of Christians after conversion depends upon a whole mixture of circumstances. Firstly, it is not unknown for people to convert to please parents, to impress their boss, to seek to marry a church member or even to get a food parcel, etc. and so they may be 'still born', and not re-born. Some babes in Christ die early from malnutrition, or lack of help and encouragement - never receiving sincere milk much less strong meat. Some converted on a wave of emotion during a highly charged 'Campaign' and have cooled somewhat, for some churches make regular and rapid conversions but lose members just as fast and remain the same size (like a bath with running taps but the plug hole open). Some have come from a 'Christian' background and are buttressed around with advice and support, while others have come from a really rough environment and have brought with them habits and prejudices. Some have tangled marital ties; some rescued from alcoholism, prostitution, drug-abuse and homosexuality. Surely much depends upon the point from which we start. Even the twelve, specially chosen by Jesus and who actually lived with Him for some years, observed all His miracles and heard all His words; were not wholly good: for one betrayed Him, one denied Him; all were upbraided for their unbelief and eventually all forsook Him and fled.

And so it would seem not so much a matter of good, or bad Christians, but of BETTER Christians. Christ is the model: He set the very high standard to be attained, and that does not leave much room for any complacency. Paul never described himself as a good Christian, but "as chief of sinners" and was concerned that having preached to others he, himself, might be castaway. There is always room for improvement and growth. "**GROW in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.**" (2nd Peter 3:18). "**And besides this, ADD to your faith**" says Peter; "add such things as, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love." "**For if these things be in you and abound**" ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:5). We will never be 'good' but we can all try to be better.

If Mr. Blair can bring Christian principles into the world of politics, so much the better, but we shall have to wait and see. Obviously it won't be easy.

**GLEANINGS**

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

**TWO MUSTS**

**"He must increase, but I must decrease"** John 3:30

**WE BEHELD HIS GLORY**

**"And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him."** Luke 2:40

**"And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers."** Luke 2:47

**"The people were astonished at His doctrine: For He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."** Matt 7:28

**"But the men marvelled, saying, what manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"** Matt 8:27

**"But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins."** Matt 9: 6

**"Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"** John 4:29

**"And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth."** John 1:14

**THE BIBLE SPEAKS**

**"He was transfigured before them. And His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; as no fuller on earth can white them . . . . And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves."**

Mark 9:2,3,8

**HE MUST GROW GREATER**

**"He must grow greater, I grow less and less;  
I like the mist which o'er the mountain flies;  
And in the rising glory vanishes;  
He like the sun in yon fair morning skies;  
Amen, amen! I would not have it otherwise."**

Horatio Bonar

**GLEANINGS**

**"Let your purpose be to unfold the beauties of Christ and to bring the saints into the conscious presence of the Lord."**

**PAUL SAID**

**"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."**

Galatians 2:20

**I MUST DECREASE**

**"Wouldst thou be great? Then lowly serve!  
Wouldst thou go up? Go down.  
But go as low as e'er thou canst,  
The Highest has gone lower still."**

## SOMEONE HAS SAID

I once heard Dr. Bonar remark that he could tell whether a Christian were growing. In proportion to his growth in grace he would elevate his Master, talk less of what he was doing, and become smaller and smaller in his own esteem, until, like the morning star, he faded away before the rising sun, Jonathan was willing to decrease, that David might increase; and John the Baptist showed the same spirit of humility.

D.L.M.

## LESS AND LESS

"Make this poor self grow less and less,  
Be Thou my life and aim;  
O make me daily through Thy grace  
More meet to bear Thy Name!"

## ALL POWER IS GIVEN UNTO HIM

## A TEXT

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me  
in heaven and in earth."

Matt. 28:18

## WE QUOTE - FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL

"The Father is the source of all power. For 'Thine O Jehovah, is the greatness and the power.' The Holy Spirit is the communicator of power, so that those who bring their emptiness to be filled with the Spirit may say: 'Truly, I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord.' But our Lord Jesus is the Depository of the power. As in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, so in Him is 'the hiding of His power' who has delivered all things unto the Son of His love."

Selected by Leonard Morgan

## ARE WE RIGHTEOUS ENOUGH

Are you righteous enough to go to heaven? If you died today, would you have the right to enter that glorious eternal home? Surely you don't like the tone of those questions any more than I do. Yet we often hear the prayer, "And if we have been found faithful, give us a home in heaven." How faithful? Better it were that we pray, "Oh, Lord, help us to be faithful!" Knowing ourselves as we do, we will surely also be praying, "Mercy, Lord! Mercy!"

## CREDITED RIGHTEOUSNESS

**Righteousness from Christ.** Our "righteousness" is not something that we "live in such a way," that we may expect a heavenly home. Living a righteous life is imperative, but that concept in itself is "justification by law." The salvation we know in Christ is not simply a blessing extended us because we believed enough to obey His commands to salvation, it is His righteousness credited to us in our obedience of faith. This we must understand, appreciate and embrace. Using Abraham as a clear example of imputed or reckoned, or credited righteousness, the apostle Paul taught, "**Wherefore also it was reckoned unto Him for righteousness**" (Rom. 4:22). Abraham was almost a hundred years of age (verse 19), but he believed God was able to provide him with a son even as He had promised (verses 20,21). "**Therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness**" (Rom. 4:22 K.J.V.); "**This is why 'it was credited to Him as righteousness'**" (N.I.V.). From that fact, the apostle Paul insisted, "**Now it was not written for His sake alone, that it was reckoned unto Him, but for our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe**

on Him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up for our trespass, and was raised for our justification" (verses 23-25). Thus our righteousness is from Christ, is in Christ (Eph. 1:3-14). That's how we were cleansed from our past sins when we were baptised as penitent believers; that's how we are "righteous" before God day by day as Christians, receiving forgiveness from a just and merciful Heavenly Father. See Philipians 3:9.

**Blessed Assurance.** "Wherefore also he is able to save the uttermost them that draw near unto God through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25); "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38,39); "I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd layeth down His life for the sheep . . . I am the good Shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know Me . . . My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand" (John 10:11,14,27,28).

#### WALKING IN THE LIGHT

**Faithful Children.** Reading the Holy Word reminds us of the constant call to faithfulness. True, ours is an imputed or credited righteousness, and true, our sense of security in Christ is very real - but we must ever remember, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:5-7).

Surely none of us holds the shallow "in grace now, out of grace now" concept - i.e., in grace when fully doing the Master's will, and out of grace when failing, stumbling, sinning. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life" (Rev. 2:10) sees faithfulness, not perfection. The forgiveness of God is needed by us time and again - and is granted through Christ. In no sense is this a license to sin. Faithfulness involves our continuing study of the Word of the Lord so that we may know His will, faithfulness involves dedicated service in the name of our Lord, faithfulness involves love and fervour, not passiveness and lukewarmness. And faithfulness involves being often on our knees in penitence, confessing sins and imploring forgiveness.

Oh, yes, we can understand the difference between neglect and service, disobedience and obedience, sincerity and hypocrisy. So, too, we can understand the difference between trying and failing and not trying at all. We can also understand the difference between sinning and repenting and continuing impenitently in sin. **Question:** Are you a perfect husband? Perfect wife? Who would answer in the affirmative?! Another question: Are you a faithful husband? Faithful wife? Yes, yes. We do not walk in the light perfectly, but we do endeavour day by day, year by year, to walk in the light. We are less faithful at times than at other times, but keeping the faith is near and dear to us. Even the apostle Paul's "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7) cannot be viewed as his claim of perfection.

C. ROGERS.

## THE ART OF LISTENING

The eminent novelist and philosopher André Gide once opened a lecture by noting: 'All this has been said before, but since nobody listened, it must be said again.' Nobody listened - how often is this the case, and how often must messages be repeated because they were not

headed in the first place. In business, family and other personal relationships, the failure to listen properly is responsible, at the very least, for an enormous waste of time.

The failure to listen, as every Bible student knows, can have tragic and eternal consequences. Jesus began the vital parable of the sower with the challenge: "Listen!" (Mark 4:3-8, N.I.V.). The parable itself shows the necessity of careful listening. It is not the fault of the sower or of the seed, but of the soil, if no harvest is forthcoming.

There are certain essentials to good listening that we want to consider in this article, **First, we need to be quick, "quick to listen"** (James 1:19). We often reverse what James says in this verse and are "slow to listen and quick to speak." Someone has said that God gave us two ears and only one mouth, so we should listen twice as much as we speak. Like the Bereans we need to be eager to listen to God's Word (Acts 17:11).

**Second, we should develop our ability to concentrate.** An American speech communications expert, Dr. Harrel T. Allen, said, "Listening is hard work and requires increased energy - your heart speeds up, your blood circulates faster, your temperature goes up," Jesus often said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." We all have ears, but do we use them? Timothy was told to devote himself to the Scriptures, to be diligent in these matters and to give himself wholly to them (1 Timothy 4:13-16). "You can't take pains with something or be absorbed in it and remain passively aloof. You must get involved. You have to open up and let God talk with the real, inner you. You have to concentrate. You have to work at stripping away all the prejudice and pre-suppositions that keep you from being an active, receptive listener." (The Trauma of Transparency, by J. Grant Howard, page 92).

**Third, there has to be an honest love of the truth.** Do we really want the truth? Or do we prefer our own pre-conceptions or church traditions? The wise man encourages us to buy the truth and not sell it at any price (Proverbs 23:23). Jesus spoke of the importance of knowing the truth (John 8:32). Paul said that to fail to love the truth would result in the loss of salvation (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12).

**Fourth, we must realise the importance of the message itself.** The messenger is secondary; it is the message that is important. Like Paul, the true preacher of the gospel will hide behind the cross and keep himself in the background. The people of Nineveh would never have repented had they permitted the attitude of the messenger to affect their listening. They knew that it was a matter of life or death. The preacher may not have the most pleasant voice or have some other drawback, but if he is preaching the truth then we must receive it as the word of God. On the Mount of Transfiguration, God said, "This is my Son, whom I love, with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him" (Matthew 17:5). The message is important because it comes from God's Son who is King of kings and the Lord of lords.

**Fifth, we must recognise the need for repetition.** The Jerusalem Christians "devoted themselves" to the apostles' teaching and met together daily (Acts 2:42,46). The "Blessed man" of Psalm 1 had his delight in the law of the Lord and meditated on it day and night. In his second letter, Peter emphasised the importance of repeating basic lessons (2 Peter 1:12, 13; 3:1,2). Some say "I can't understand, so why listen?" But students who take difficult subjects recognise the need for sustained concentration and repetition. They see this as necessary for graduation and getting a job. Is it not worth far more to gain an eternal reward?

**Sixth, there must be discernment.** The message must be carefully considered (Mark 4:24). Eve heard, believed and obeyed a lie and she had to pay the penalty. We must not be like funnels and swallow everything we hear. The Scriptures frequently warn us against false prophets (Matthew 7:15,16; 1 John 4:11). Let us heed Paul's inspired advice to "Test everything. Hold on to the good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

**Seventh, there needs to be an attitude of reverence.** We need to continually keep in mind that it is the Word of God that we are hearing. If we reject it, we are rejecting God and

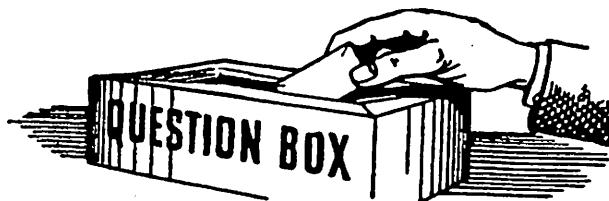


not the preacher.

*Eighth*, we must be ready to obey what we hear. The message was of no value to God's ancient people because they did not believe and obey it (Hebrews 4:2). James says, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says" (James 1:22).

*Ninth*, and lastly, there must be a willingness to take criticism. Sometimes we have to feel bad in order to become good. The Word is "useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). "The Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow, it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight! Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account" (Hebrews 4:12,13).

K. T. THOMSON




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Conducted by  
Alf Marsden

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"In N.T. times an "Evangelist" was an office (or work) in the Church. Today if a preacher chooses to preach full-time, instead of part-time, does that alone confer upon him N.T. powers. i.e., put him on a par with Timothy and Titus, and authorised to appoint elders, reprove and rebuke congregations even with elders? All because he preaches full-time instead of part-time?"

The crux of this question seems to be (a) has a full-time preacher any special N.T. powers, (b) is he authorised to appoint Elders, and (c) can he reprove and rebuke a congregation over the heads of any Elders or Deacons. If I have made a right interpretation of this question, then we shall need to go into more detail.

#### THE EVANGELIST

The word in the Greek language is *EUANGELISTES* which means, literally, 'a messenger of good' (EU, well, *ANGELOS*, a messenger) and it denotes a preacher of the Gospel. In Acts 21:8 we read, ". . . and we entered into the house of Philip, the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him." (The 'seven,' of course, were the ones appointed to look after the Hellenists. See Acts 6.) Philip was the one who preached in Samaria, and also to the Ethiopian Eunuch. In Eph. 4:11 we see there listed various people for the establishment and extension of the early Church. I think J.B. Phillips gives us a clear picture, "His 'gifts unto men' were varied. Some he made his messengers, some prophets, some preachers of the gospel . . . etc." These were necessary to equip the saints so that they could come to the maturity of the faith. This was a 'work' which had to be done so far as the preacher of the gospel was concerned, but I do not see it as an 'office' in the Church 'in perpetuity'. Today, following the pattern of what the Church calls 'mutual ministry', we have many brothers who are 'preachers of the gospel' in their own assemblies; rather depressingly, they are, in many cases, preaching the gospel to the converted. This we loosely call 'evangelisation.'

A *missionary* is a preacher of the gospel. We in the Church talk about 'the missionary journeys of Paul'; he was an Apostle, of course, but he was also a preacher of the gospel. Before his Damascus Road experience, Saul of Tarsus made havoc among the Church, persecuting from house to house. (See Acts 8:1-4). Many of the Christians were scattered abroad, and in v4 we read, "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere

preaching the word." When this happened, there must have been some error and misinterpretation of the scriptures. The case of Apollos, the Alexandrian proves this. Here was a man mighty in the scriptures, eloquent, instructed in the way of the Lord, and fervent in spirit, but he knew only the baptism of John. Aquila and Priscilla had to take him aside and **"teach him the way of God more perfectly."** We can understand, then, there must have been a great need for preachers and teachers in the early Church, not only to preach and teach the word, but to correct whenever it was necessary. What 'special powers these men had at that time is a matter of some conjecture, but the scriptures state that Philip could work miracles; but he did not, and could not assume any Apostolic powers. (Read Acts 8:5-17).

### INTO THE WORLD

As regards the setting up of churches in different localities, I think we must acknowledge the contrast between the 1st century and the 20th century. The early days were volatile days regarding the preaching of the word; we read of 'thousands' and 'multitudes' of people responding to the gospel. These converts would need leading and guiding and so some sort of church organisation locally would have needed to be established. This was evidently in place, because Acts 20:17ff records that Paul, from Miletus, sent for the Elders at Ephesus to come to him. v28 records that the Holy Spirit had made them overseers with the express purpose of feeding the Church of God. I can only conclude that if the Holy Spirit had made them overseers it was because, among other qualities, they had lived Spirit-filled lives, and **that had led their fellow-Christians at Ephesus to seek them out from among themselves** for leadership. It is probable that the Apostle's hands had been laid on them, not to confer on them any special powers, you understand, but to 'set them forth' before the others as overseers. They, and they alone, were responsible for ruling and disciplining their charges. There were many converts, and it is plain that local groups had to be organised this way. You will understand also, that when the scripture says that the Holy Spirit had made people overseers, we are not thinking of 'cloven tongues of fire' descending on them, but rather a recognisable Spirit-filled life. It is also interesting to note that when Paul wrote to Corinth concerning the case of the incestuous brother, he had to **recommend** to the Church what should be done, and he waited in some trepidation until Titus informed him that it had been done. (Read 1 Cor. 5, and 2nd Cor. 7). Therefore, I see no valid reason why anyone, evangelist or otherwise, could or should usurp the authority of elected overseers.

Consider the situation in the late 20th century, but before we do let me make one point. I have never seen the role of an evangelist as being attached to a church which has Elders and Deacons; I believe he should be out preaching the word in areas **where there is no church**, so that, perhaps, one could be started. I am open, of course, to defend that statement. It seems to me, however, that today most people couldn't care less about God and His Christ, and it is very difficult to win souls. If, therefore, an evangelist works a new area with the gospel, it may take some considerable time before a church of suitable numerical strength can be set up, and out of which the members can select their own leaders. **Until that time, the evangelist will have to lead and guide.** When he considers that the church is numerically and spiritually strong enough to stand on its own, he should have taught them that they must look for their leaders from among themselves; he should not make any attempt to appoint them **himself**. When the exercise is complete, he should move on to another area. Do you say this is an arduous task? So it is, but then, work for Christ has never been an easy option. Therefore, in view of what I have said, we can conclude that Elders and Deacons are not necessary for the **being** of a church, but they are certainly necessary for its **well-being**.

### TIMOTHY AND TITUS

*Timothy* had been left by Paul at Ephesus. His task was to teach the truth, and also to expose errors of doctrine. I think the key verse in the two letters is to be found in 1 Tim.

2:14-16. He was also to warn them about false teachers. He was also to teach about the establishment of Church government. (See 1 Tim. 3). It is the qualifications of these men which Timothy had to teach, but these men 'first had to be proven.' This follows the pattern of Timothy himself, who was "well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium." (Acts 16:1,2). *Titus* is not mentioned in the Acts, but we can get a clear picture of him by consulting such scriptures as 2 Cor. 2:13;7:6 -15; 8:6-24; 12:16-18; Gal. 2:1-3; 2 Tim. 4:10. Paul used them as 'good ministers' of the gospel of God. They were exceptional teachers in the establishment of the Church.

The task of Titus was to 'set straight the things that remained' (that still needed to be done) in the towns and cities of Crete. He was told to 'appoint' (*KATHISTEMI*) Elders in every city. There is no ecclesiastical ordination in view here, but rather an 'appointment for recognition of the churches' of those who had shown Spirit-filled lives. The word does not preclude the choice by the churches.

### CONCLUSION

So what have I said in answer to the question? The so-called 'powers' of Timothy and Titus resided in their determination to preach and teach under Paul's Apostolic instructions. We have the word today with the same Apostolic authority, and our duty is to obey by exhibiting Spirit-filled lives.

As far as I can see, there is no scriptural authority for evangelists to 'appoint' Elders and Deacons.

Furthermore, I believe that an evangelist does not have the authority to reprove and rebuke a congregation over the heads of Elders and Deacons unless, of course, the reproof and rebuke are inherent in the word he may be teaching.

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

## THIS WORLD

I do not presume to infer that no one else has ever felt the impact of the full understanding that the scriptures reveal concerning "*this world*", but just recently as I studied the subject again, the full force of the words of Jesus were driven home. "Now is the judgement of **this world**; now shall the prince of **this world** be cast out" (John 12:31).

Yet Jesus, continuing in the same breath also said: "and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Me." (Dealing with the last statement first; we see that this has been fulfilled - not that all men; in the sense of every single person, but that men from *every nation* under heaven have been drawn to Him, many to ultimately obey the gospel and be saved, and many to be drawn to the principles that Jesus taught; but yet never having sufficient faith to obtain the salvation that is revealed.

The "**prince of this world**" should be understood from the same standpoint and perception as those to whom Jesus originally addressed the remark - (John 12:29) - *Pharisees* (v19) *Greeks* (v20) *Disciples* (v22) who, with the exception of the Greeks, all knew their Old Testament well. As men who called Abraham "*father*" (John 8:39) the significance of the title "*prince*" would not go unnoticed. In Gen. 23:6 it is recorded that men recognise Abraham as being "*a mighty prince*" and this in contrast to the very first place that the word or concept is recorded (Gen. 12:15) - here the "*princes*" were recognised as having their power and authority from Pharaoh, whereas the children of Heth (Gen. 23:5) also translated as Hittites (N.I.V.) knew that Abraham had a special relationship with the God of heaven by the accounts of his past exploits, and God's intervention in the events of his life to that date, and it was this therefore that led them to attribute to him the concept of "*prince*", not by any man's authority but from God Himself.

The word "*prince*" in the Old Testament is translated from the Hebrew word "*sar*" (from which we derive our "*czar*" - Russian - "*Tsar*" - Latin "*Caesar*") which means - any head-person, captain, chief, general or governor.

### 'THIS WORLD' IS NOT OUR WORLD

Satan then obtains his authority and power only as God sees fit, but nevertheless by God's permission - just as Jesus told Pilate "**Thou couldest have no power at all against Me except it were given thee from above**" (John 19:11).

The conclusion is as stated in 1 John 5:19 "**the whole world lieth in wickedness**" (K.J.V.) or "**the whole world is under the control of the evil one**" (N.I.V.) Ephs. 2:2 says: "**the prince of the power of the air.**"

Jesus adds to our understanding when we read: "**he that believeth not is condemned already**" (John 3:18).

All the nations are under the rule of Satan, despite all the counterfeit "good" that governments do and despite all the poor, blind, misled people of this world would have us believe; there now can be no lasting, meaningful peace that can be or will be worked out by men in any situation, confrontation or conflict. Laws of men, piled up on top of laws of men, will never stop the anarchy, violence, lawlessness and hatred that permeates men's hearts.

All men must be "**born again**" (notice that Jesus did not say that men should go around SAYING they are "born again" but rather He said ye must "**BE**" born again) John 3:3-7).

For those of us who have obeyed the gospel this world is not our home for we have come "**to the heavenly Jerusalem**" (Heb. 12:22) and are looking forward to the **New Heaven and New Earth** (Rev. 21:1-7). Having been sanctified by the truth we are "*in*" it but not "*of*" it (John 3:3-7).

We **MUST** be on guard against those who would have men place their hope for peace in the wrong place and with the wrong people. "**Finally**" - read Ephs. 6:10-18.

G. SILLMAN,  
P.O. BOX 327, Chilliwack, B.C.  
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## SCRIPTURE READINGS

August 4 Psalm 32	Phil. 3:17-4:7
August 11 Psalm 1	Phil. 4:8-23
August 18 Proverbs 4:1-19	Col 1:1-20
August 25 Isaiah 11:1-10	Col. 1:21-2:5

### REJOICING IN THE LORD

There is much doom and gloom in Britain today. In fact, a survey has just been published in the U.K. which reveals there is more pessimism around than optimism. People are worried about job insecurity, crime, public and personal health, terrorism, corruption, cost of living, etc. There is a distinct lack of the "feel-good factor" throughout the country. People say there is nothing to rejoice about. But Paul wrote all these years ago:

**"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, rejoice"** (4:4).

Brother Bill Cook and brother Graeme Pearson have recently returned from a trip to Ghana. They have told us about the joy among the saints there despite a distinct lack of resources (to put it mildly!). We love our African brothers and sisters and thank God for their "joy-full" lives. We in the West have much to learn from them. Perhaps they know the chorus I used to sing in the Sunday School:

Joy, joy, my heart is full of joy;  
Joy, joy, my heart is full of joy;  
My Saviour dear is ever near:  
That's the reason why my heart  
is full of joy.

The joy that Jesus brings is unique. It is not of this world, but it is a fruit of His Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

**THE DUTY OF RIGHT THINKING**

Paul wrote: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things" (4:8). W. J. Dawson was moved to pen this on this verse "The control of our thought is our great prerogative. We are what we think, and unless we think of noble things we shall not be noble, and unless we have the high thought we cannot live the high life." He concluded his essay with these words: "All change in life begins with change of thought, of aim, of intention; and hence the duty of right thinking as the primary condition of all right living. Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, fix the mind on these things."

Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). He fully realised that there was a war on for the hearts and minds of men and women. This war, of course, is still taking place and all of us are involved in it, whether we like it or not. I like what Paul said to the Romans: "And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2).

**THE COLOSSIAN LETTER**

**AUTHOR:** The apostle Paul.

**DATE:** c.60 A.D.

**PLACE:** Rome, while Paul was a prisoner.

**PURPOSE:** "Two matters . . . First, he was writing to Philemon in Colossae sending back his runaway, but now converted slave, Onesimus (Phm. 7:21). He could also take the opportunity of writing to the whole of the Colossian Church. Secondly, Epaphras had brought to Paul a report of that Church, which included many encouraging things (1:4-8), but apparently

also disquieting news of the false teaching that threatened to lead its members away from the truth of Christ. This news pressed the apostle to write as he did" (F. Foulkes). *COLOSSAE*: was a city of Phrygia in the Roman province of Asia. Like Hierapolis and Laodicea, it was situated in the valley of the River Lycus about one hundred miles East of Ephesus. Herodotus, in the fifth century B.C., spoke of it as "a great city of Phrygia." Xenophon, at the beginning of the following century, described it as "a populous city, wealthy and large." Later it diminished in importance with the growth of Hierapolis and Laodicea. Strabo, at the beginning of the Christian era, called it a small town. The site is now deserted.

**CHURCH ESTABLISHED:** "Christianity was introduced to the Lycus valley during the years of Paul's Ephesian ministry (c.A.D. 52-55) . . . While this work was directed by Paul, he was assisted by a number of colleagues, and through their activity churches were planted in some areas of the province which Paul was unable to visit personally. Among these were the churches of Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis, which appear to have been planted by Paul's colleague Epaphras; this may be inferred from Paul's reference to him in Col. 1:7f; 4:12f" (F.F. Bruce).

**THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST**

Someone once said: "Jesus is not valued at all until He is valued above all." And, of course, He is above all. Paul in this portion of Scripture (1:15-20) clearly reveals the supremacy of Jesus the Christ. It is worth reading again and again.

One of the most important writers of the twentieth century, I think, is Henry M. Morris, the Creation scientist. His defence of Biblical Creationism over the last thirty to forty years has been of great encouragement to me. I shall never forget, when I first read his book, (co-authored with John C. Whitcomb Jr.) - *The Genesis Flood* - the impact it made upon me. It helped restore my confidence in the Biblical record. I say all this because Morris, in one of his most recent works, -

*The Biblical Basis for Modern Science* - highlights the creation by Christ and the Christ of creation. He quotes verses 16 and 17 of chapter 1: "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in the earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by Him and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." He points out that the latter words are similar to those of Hebrews 1:3: "... who (Jesus) being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of God." Two points I wish to make here. First, "thrones, dominions, principalities and powers" have to do with angels. The terms are equivalent to "seraphim, cherubim, archangels and angels." Second, God created all things by the power of His word and sustains all things by the word of His power. To explain the order in the universe man now speaks of laws of nature. John R. W. Stott once wrote: "So-called natural laws simply describe a uniformity which scientists have observed. And Christians attribute this uniformity to the constancy of God."

Jesus is not only Creator, but "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature" (1:15). Jesus Himself once declared: "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). "The firstborn of every creature" should be read in conjunction with the words in verse 18, which explains this phrase: "... who (Jesus) is the beginning (the source or origin), the firstborn from the dead." Further, Jesus is "the Head of the body, the Church..." (1:18). Think about it: to destroy a body you have to destroy the head. I thank God that I am a member of a body that cannot be destroyed.

#### PAUL'S LABOUR FOR THE CHURCH

To read verses 12:24 to 2:5 is to read of a man totally dedicated to the cause of

Christ - a cause, he believed, was not only worth living for, but also dying for. To him it was a privilege to suffer for the Master (1:24). Paul was going through a great struggle for Christians he had never seen, but whom he deeply loved (2:1). Remember that, when he wrote this letter, he was a prisoner in Rome awaiting judgment and possible execution. It was typical of this great apostle that he was thinking of others ahead of himself. Again, we used to sing in Sunday School: "Jesus first, yourself last, and others in between" Paul was worthy of conducting our junior choir.

IAN S. DAVIDSON,  
Motherwell.

#### TEST YOUR BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE

1. On which day was a Jewish boy circumcised?
2. Who was the wife of Lappidoth?
3. With how many chariots did Pharaoh pursue the Israelites after they left Egypt?
4. Who was the third son of Adam and Eve?
5. Who were Job's three friends?
6. At what age did Joshua die?
7. Where was Paul's home town?
8. Where did Damaris become a believer?
9. Who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah?
10. How many people were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them?

## OBITUARY

**Beaulah Road Kirkby in Ashfield:** The church here regret to announce the death of our oldest member, Bro. Reginald Bursnell on the 29th April, after a short illness. Reg, as he was known, was a well loved and respected member having reached the age of 85 years.

Reg had been a staunch Christian for 70 years, reliable and dependable in attendance, and in addition acted as church auditor for many years. He had been a very

good cricketer in his younger years, a fast bowler in the style of Larwood and Voce who lived in the same area of Nuncargate. Reg will be much missed by us all and we extend to his dear wife Betty our sincere and deep condolences, may the Lord bless and strengthen her at this time of deep sadness. A fitting tribute was given in a service at the Beulah Road chapel conducted by Bro. David Wilson who also officiated at the Mansfield Crematorium.

T. WOODHOUSE (Sec)

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Kirkcaldy:** The change to the Directory is; Sec. Alan Moyes

Con. Tom Steedman

RUTH MOYES (Sec.)

**Slamannan District:** The Quarterly Mutual Benefit Meeting took place on Saturday, 8th June, 1996, at Haddington Meeting House, when the subject for discussion was "What is the meaning of the phrase "Baptised for the dead" in 1 Cor. 15:29?" The Chairman was Bro. J. R. Gardiner and the Speakers were Bro Niall Scobbie and Bro. Drew McGinn. Although this was the first occasion of speaking at Mutual Benefit Meetings for both our young speakers, they both made a very useful contribution to the understanding of the subject. The discussion amongst the audience thereafter brought out, as always, much information and food for thought and a very profitable and enjoyable time was had by all. Our next such meeting will, God willing, be held at Motherwell, on 7th September, 1996, when the subject will be "What is the Apocrypha? and why are these books not in the Bible?" The Chairman will be Bro. Ian Davidson and the Speakers will be John Colgan, Tranent and Bro. Graeme Pearson, Dunfermline. Thanks are due to the sisters at Haddington for the enjoyable refreshments.

HARRY MCGINN (Sec.)

## COMING EVENTS

(For your diary)

### ANNUAL SOCIAL

At Newtongrange, will, God willing, take place on  
SATURDAY, 12th OCTOBER, 1996  
at 4.00 p.m.  
(Details later)

### EDITOR'S CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please note that the editor's address is:  
70 Avon Street, Motherwell,  
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### CHANGE OF 'PHONE NUMBER

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Bill and Eleanor Pirie is  
(01542) 834734

### CHANGE OF SECRETARY

The new Secretary at Newtongrange is:  
David Ferguson,  
2d Keir Hardie Drive, Mayfield,  
Dalkeith, Midlothian.  
Tel. 0131 654 2012

### OLD PUBLICATIONS RE-TYPESET

*Printed copies, all in A4 size.*

*Price includes Post and Packing.*

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"For His Name's Sake" Witness Members against Militarism during 1914-1918 War. 1921. 56 pages, no pictures. (£3.50).

**Any of the books on IBM compatible disk, DD (720 KB).** Containing one or two books, according to length, as requested. Per disk. (£1.00).

(It is inadvisable to send disks overseas unfortunately, as some countries subject the mail to x-rays which erase the work).

More titles in course of preparation.

Miss R. M. Payne, 1 Kennilworth Avenue, Reading. RG30 3DL.

**GHANA APPEAL**

I would like to start by sincerely thanking our brethren who made the journey of Graeme and myself to Ghana possible. It was extremely profitable and I pray that this work to extend the Lord's Kingdom will continue for many years, that the Church there will continue to grow and our brethren helped and encouraged. They certainly deserve it and the number of congregations has increased from eleven at the end of my previous visit to forty one now. We have seen for ourselves the dedication to, and love for, the Lord among our Ghanaian brethren which promotes this.

While we were in Ghana we witnessed a number of baptisms, including six in one village, and I have since been told that there have been a further sixteen baptisms and two restorations. Before writing this appeal, I've been reading some of the letters I've received since returning home and it warms my heart to see the close love our brethren there have for us. To quote one sentence "May the brethren there through you come to love us more in Ghana." They certainly have a great love for us, was evident from just being with them and I, too, have a great love for them. Let us continue together in the bond of love that the extension of the Lord's Kingdom may continue.

Please make cheques payable to

"Graeme Pearson (Ghana Appeal)" and send to Graeme Pearson, 13 Fairways, Dunfermline. KY12 0DU.

Tel. 01383 728624.

BILL COOK.

**SURE REFUGE**

While a small steamboat was crossing a stormy bay, the engine suddenly stopped, and for a few minutes the situation was one of real peril. One elderly woman rushed to the captain anxiously asking if there was any danger. "Madam," was the uncompromising reply, "we must trust in God." O, sir, wailed the enquirer, has it come to that?"

A good many of us act as though we felt like that in times of peril. We are willing to trust in almost anything - except God.

1. Eighth (Leviticus 12:3).
2. Deborah (Judges 4:4).
3. 600 plus (Exodus 14:6).
4. Seth (Genesis 4:25).
5. Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar (Job 2:11).
6. 110 (Judges 2:8).
7. Tarsus (Acts 22:3).
8. Athens (Acts 17:22,34).
9. Jesus (Revelation 5:5).
10. 18 (Luke 13:4).

**ANSWERS**

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is published monthly.

PRICE PER YEAR — POST PAID BY SURFACE MAIL.

UNITED KINGDOM and COMMONWEALTH.....	£	7.50
CANADA & USA.....	\$	14.00

AIR MAIL, please add £2.00 or \$3.00 to above surface mail rates

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