

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## A GREATER THAN JONAS

If this article should seem even less coherent than usual, and shorter than usual, it is because of the extreme cold. It is difficult to concentrate when sitting at the typewriter with coat and hat on and with a layer of ice on the inside of the windows. Apparently it was 29 degrees below freezing not far from here last night and Scotland right now is much colder than Moscow. However unlike many thousands in the country our pipes have not yet frozen up so we should be thankful. Last month I tried to comment on "A Greater than Solomon is here" and this month I would care to comment on Christ's words "A greater than Jonas is here" which were uttered by our Lord on the same occasion. Both statements were prompted by the reaction of the Jews to His miracle upon the demoniac who was both blind and dumb. Rather than being pleased and astounded by the cure the Pharisees explained it by saying that Jesus did it by Beelzebub and was in league with the devil, and, ignoring this wonderful miracle, they asked Him to show them a sign *from heaven*. They were suspicious of earthly miracles and, as He claimed to come from heaven, they wanted a heavenly sign, but Jesus replied, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgement with this generation and shall condemn it; because *they repented at the preaching of Jonas*; and behold, a greater than Jonas is here." (Matt 12:39). Luke quotes it thus, "For as Jonas was a sign to the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation" (11:30).

Just as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites so Jesus would be a sign to those of His Generation (and to the generations to follow). What kind of a sign was Jonah? There are many marvels in the Book of Jonah and many baffling perplexities. Quite apart from the marvel of Jonah's mode of transport (three days and nights in the belly of the fish which bespoke the lengths to which God would go to save the Ninevites) there was the marvel of the preaching of Jonah and its amazing effect upon that vast city — followed by the perplexity of Jonah's anger and despair at God's forgiveness of the Ninevites. His anger was prompted, it seems, by the same reason as that which prompted his reluctance to go to Nineveh in the first place — he feared that the Ninevites might repent, and he knew that if they repented God would almost certainly forgive them. To quote Jonah's own words: "Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my own country? Therefore I fled to Tarshish; for I knew that

thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness." (Jonah 4:2). The whole episode regarding the Ninevites, was, in Jonah's eyes, an everlasting slap in the face to Israel, the chosen people of God. This it certainly was, of course, because here we have Jesus, many centuries later quoting the matter as a scathing rebuke to the Pharisees.

The first mention of Jonah is in II Kings (14:25) where as an important prophet of Israel he made predictions regarding the fact that under Jeroboam II the nation would restore its ancient boundaries and crush Syria. In this era Israel prospered materially but their hearts were not very near to God. Thus we can perhaps understand, although not approve, Jonah's reluctance to go to Nineveh when called upon by God to do so. Why should a prophet of Israel transfer his labours to a wicked and heathen city (not just to denounce it, but to offer it redemption) when he had plenty to do in trying to get God's own people to repent? Israel herself was not unlike many of the heathenish cities in terms of idolatry and wickedness. Like many other reluctant evangelists he said, "Why go there when there is a lot to be done here?" He was doubtless worried that, in view of his lack of success with his own countrymen, God should extend an interest in the heathen. If the lamp of God was only flickering in his own nation of Israel (and likely to go out) how could he think to go and light it in another clime?

Jonah's bolt for Tarshish merely produced a terrible energy in God's determination in dealing with Nineveh's sins. As if all of Nineveh's guilt was now upon Jonah he was cast forth as a propitiatory victim into the deep — yet (with another marvellous turn in the counsels of God) not to perish but to resume his suspended mission to Nineveh. There he must appear as a sign of God's displeasure with its sins, but yet as a testimony to God's good intentions. Jonah was thus a walking witness to the Ninevites of the severity and goodness of God. Likewise the sojourn of Jesus amongst men was to express God's displeasure at sin but also to declare God's goodness in saving man from his sins. Fortunately for the Ninevites they quickly recognised these things and their hearts were melted by the evidence of God's kindly concern for them. They readily accepted God's ultimatum and repented, from the king to the errand boy. Jonah's message had been brief, if oft repeated, and yet at his first attempt with the ninevites what a triumph for his preaching. Most evangelists are delighted with but one convert for their efforts and yet Jonah was anything but elated with well over 120,000 of them. We can but hope that Jonah's sulking anger was motivated more by despair for the shame brought to Israel, than the mercy brought to Nineveh. In the event, Nineveh's contrition did not last forever and the city was destroyed some 200 years later by the Babylonians (as described in the Book of Nahum). Perhaps Jonah even hoped that the utter destruction of sinful Nineveh might have been a means of bringing Israel to order and giving them a salutary lesson. Now with such a hope gone and disappointed in this expectation he perhaps felt he had shot his last arrow in the conflict and was consigned to watch Israel perish in her wickedness and other nations, even the heathen, rise to the position she had held with God. Jonah's death-wish and fit of depression was probably akin to that of Elijah's when the latter hid in the wilderness from Jezebel thinking that all was lost and wishing to die (I Kings:19).

Perhaps Jonah in his wisdom recalled that in Moses' song (Deut. 32:21) God, because of the people's idolatry, decreed "They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities; and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation." It's a far cry in time from Deut. to Matthew's gospel, when Jesus commanded His disciples to go into *all the world* and preach the gospel

to every creature, but many events between those dates expressed the fact that God had other sheep which were not of this (Jewish) fold. Jesus went to His own but His own received Him not. In His own home town they scoffed at His lowly pedigree — son of a carpenter — and caused Him to remark that a prophet is not without honour save in His own country. He did few miracles there because of their unbelief. Many of Jesus's parables — the barren fig tree; the two sons; the great supper; the parable of the wedding feast; all testified to the taking of the kingdom of God from the "People of God" and giving it to a people more worthy to receive it. Jesus angered the Jews by pointing out (Luke 4:25) that there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elias, when famine abounded for three years, but unto none of them was Elias sent except one and she was a Sidonian (not a Jewess). There were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha and none of them was cleansed except Naaman, and he certainly was not an Israelite. The Jews slew Stephen when he accused them of being stiffnecked and "uncircumcised in heart and ears" and "always resisting the Holy Spirit as did their fathers." They gnashed on him with their teeth when he asked "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers . . ." (Acts 7).

Jonah's conquest of Nineveh, like the meeting of Abraham with Melchizedek, or the sacrifice of Isaac, or the lifting up of the brazen serpent in the wilderness were all transactions for which we can never see the ultimate purpose until we contemplate them as initial steps of a course, or provisional movements of a plan, which was to reach its culmination in the work and kingdom of Christ. The Israelite's of Jonah's day failed to see any significance in the event, just as did the Jew's of Christ's day.

However, the one thing which emerged from Jonah's mission, which shone like a beacon and could not be misunderstood, was the complete and unequivocal repentance of the Ninevites. The Jews, by contrast, scoffed and spurned the preaching of the only Son of God. On Judgement Day Jonah will not be called as a Witness against the Jews but the Queen of Sheba and the people of Nineveh will. They will be witnesses against us too, if we fail to recognise that a greater than Jonas is here.

EDITOR.

## THE RESURRECTION

(1 Cor. 15:12-21, 50-58)

### Introduction

The question of a resurrection from the dead is strictly a Bible subject, insofar as its origin is concerned; for no one apart from God ever caused a dead person to live again. The term "resurrection" literally means a coming forth from the dead, a return from death to life; and that would be impossible if a death did not occur.

The Apostle Paul begins this section by declaring his intention to restate the gospel which he had preached in Corinth. The resurrection was the last problem to be discussed in the epistle.

1. Paul points out the relation of the Corinthians to this gospel (1-2).
2. He pointed out the basic issues of the gospel he preached (3-4).
  - (1) That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.
  - (2) That He was buried.
  - (3) That He has been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.
3. Paul, then lists the appearances of Christ in proof of His resurrection (5-8).

4. Paul gives an explanation of his apostleship which was based on Christ's appearance to him (8-11).

### Christ's Resurrection

In verses 12-34, the Apostle explains the bearing of Christ's resurrection on the subject of the resurrection of the dead.

1. Paul bases his first argument on the assumption of the Corinthians that there is no such thing as a resurrection of the dead. (12-19)
  - a) Question: If Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead — as Paul had just shown — how could some of them say that there was no resurrection of the dead?
  - b) Consequence of denying the resurrection: If there is no resurrection of the dead, Christ has not been raised.
  - c) Result of denying that Christ has been raised (14-19)
    - (1) The preaching of the apostles is vain.
    - (2) The faith of the brethren is vain.
    - (3) The apostles are found to be false witnesses of God.
    - (4) The faith of the brethren is vain and they are still in their sins.
    - (5) Those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.
    - (6) The apostles, who have only hoped in Christ in this life, are of all men most pitiable, if they go through life hoping for something that will never be.
  
2. In contrast with the gloomy thoughts of what would be true if there were no resurrection, Paul turns to the positive phase of his argument with the declaration, "but now hath Christ been raised from the dead" (vs. 20).
  - a) With this note of triumph, Paul begins to show the blessed consequences of that great event. All of the terrible consequences advanced in verses 14-19 are false because the original proposition is false. Christ has been raised and the consequences are the very opposite; the picture is one of hope and not of gloom.
  - b) The resurrection of Christ is regarded as "the first fruits of them that are asleep." In Old Testament times the first portion of the harvest was given to the Lord as an indication that all the harvest was in reality His. (Lev. 23:9-11).  
 Christ's resurrection is a pledge of the resurrection of all the saints. Physical death came upon man through the sin of Adam; it is "in Christ" that all shall be made alive (vss. 21-22). The order of the dead being made alive is: "Christ the first fruits; then they that are Christ's at his coming" (vs. 23). The "coming" clearly refers to the second coming of Christ. Since Paul does not mention the resurrection of the wicked in this discussion, it does not mean that the wicked will be raised some other time; however, in Acts 24:15 Paul tells us that "there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust."  
 Jesus Himself tells us that both the just and the wicked will be resurrected, that there will be a general resurrection. He says, "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming when *all* who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment." (John 5:28,29). This clearly shows that there will be one general resurrection composed of both wicked and righteous.  
 Paul does not mention the resurrection of the wicked in his discussion because it has no place in the discussion. He is discussing only the resurrection of

Christ and they that are His, Christ's. Those raised by Christ during His personal ministry are not under consideration at this point since they died again and their resurrection was not unto eternal life.

The coming of Christ and the resurrection bring the end (vs. 24). At that time Christ delivers the kingdom to God the Father, having abolished all enemies. Christ now reigns over His Kingdom and will reign until all enemies are subjugated; the last enemy to be destroyed is death, and it will be destroyed by the resurrection (vss. 25,26).

3. Paul bases his third argument on the relation of baptism to the resurrection (29-34).
  - a) Why be baptized if there is no resurrection (29-30)?
  - b) Why should Paul risk his life daily if there is no resurrection (31-32)?

### Some Problems Answered

*Verses 35-58.* Here, in these verses, the Apostle answers some problems involved in the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead.

1. We find here a twofold question: How are the dead raised, and what kind of body will they have (35-50).

One can imagine the question being raised as to how a disintegrated body could possibly experience a resurrection. Paul addresses such an objector as "You foolish man!" and proceeds to point to the sowing of seed and the quickening of life from that seed as an analogy (things similar in certain respects) (xebh). The seed is sown, regardless of the kind of seed, is not the new plant which shall come up. The main point in analogy, resemblance is that there is first decomposition, then a new life (vs. 37). The seed dies that a new plant might grow from it. Each kind of seed produces an appropriate plant as God pleased. In view of this wonder, why should anyone raise the question as to how the dead are raised?

But Paul continues with the thought in verse 38: God gives a body to every seed, the body which He originally designed and concerning which He decreed that every thing should bring forth after its own kind. In the analogy, Paul described sowing of the seed, the burial of the body, and the coming forth of a new life in each case.

But Paul wishes to show that the resurrection body will be a different kind of body from that which we now possess, and he calls some other illustrations into use (vss. 39-41). There is a difference of flesh among men, beasts, birds and fishes. The point here is that God is able to provide a body suited for and adjusted to each part of His creation — even though all of it is different. God will do the same with our resurrection bodies. There will be a difference between the body that is sown and that which is raised. When all the variety in God's creation is contemplated, it can be seen that the nature of the resurrection body is a problem that can safely be left in God's hands.

2. In verses 42-44, Paul sets forth a number of differences between the body when sown and when raised: corruption vs. incorruption, that is, the present body is corruptible; the future body is incorruptible. The present body is subject to dishonour; the future one is glorified (a process already begun, 2 Cor. 3.18). The present body is limited by human weaknesses; the future body is spiritual (spiritual does not mean "made of spiritual material," but "the product of a miracle." (Cf. 1 Cor. 10.3,4).

All will agree that there is a natural (Greek, *psuchikon*) body, a body adapted to the present life; so, it is natural to expect that there shall be a spiritual (Greek, *pneumatikon*) body, one adapted to the spirit (vs. 44b). The fact that the first man Adam became a living soul (Greek for "soul", *psuche*) explains the reference to the "natural" body. Christ is a "life-giving spirit" (Greek for "spirit", *pneuma*); He will be the giver of the spiritual (*pneumatikon*) body.

But, says Paul, there is a certain order that is followed — first the natural, then the spiritual. As to their earthly appearance, Adam was before the incarnate Christ. The natural body of man is first, then there will be the resurrection body later (vs. 46). Adam was made from the dust by the creative power of God; Christ, of His own volition, left Heaven and became a man (vs. 47). All men are like Adam in the fact that they are dust; those who are Christ's will be given bodies like His at the resurrection (vs. 48). In this life man bears the image of Adam; in heaven he shall bear the image of Christ (vs. 49).

One might ask, what about the physical characteristics of this present body — will they be evident in the resurrected body? One might reply, what stage in the human life is the "real" body? Only the full grown man? What about the infant? In all stages of human life man has a body, although that same body may not even be recognisable as the same person in its differing stages. The main thrust of the resurrection body is that Christians do not seek to be without a body, but to have a new body (2 Cor. 5:1-6). All of this is God's doing. Christians need not fear, for Jesus' resurrection is God's guarantee He will destroy death for them, as He has already forgiven their sins. And with whatever body God gives, we shall be like Him.

### The Great Victory

*Verses 50-58.* Fleahly bodies cannot enter into the kingdom of glory (vs. 50). Hence, a change is necessary, and Paul proceeds to tell about this change which he terms a "mystery," something that can be known only by divine revelation. Not all shall die before the coming of Christ; some will be alive at the time of that great event. But all, whether living or dead, shall be changed at Christ's coming, and this change must occur before anyone enters heaven (vss. 51, 52).

The divine signal which announces these momentous events is described as the sounding of the trumpet (cf. 1 Thess. 4:16) (Lev. 1:7). The Apostle Paul speaks of this as "the last trump." (vs. 52). Here the Greek for the word last is 'eschatos,' which means, utmost, the fullest extent, extreme, last terms. This explains to us that there will be no other signal a thousand years later or at any other time. As other passages show, all the dead, both wicked and righteous, will be raised at this time; however, Paul does not discuss the resurrection of the wicked in this passage. In order for the body to enter heaven, it must undergo a change: this corruptible body, one that is subject to decay, must be clothed with incorruption; this mortal must put on immortality (vs. 53). When this occurs, the passage, "Death is swallowed up in victory" (Isa. 25:8), will have been fulfilled. Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. To this triumphant note of hope, Paul adds his affectionate appeal for the brethren to remain unmovable in the work of the Lord for now they know that their labours are not in vain.

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Malta.



# GLEANINGS

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

## But not the rock

"Because it deals with sin and sorrow and human need, the Bible will last as long as man. Modern criticism has only touched the moss upon the rock, but not the rock."  
F. B. Meyer.

## God Willeth Not the Death of a Sinner

"God does not predestinate man to fail. That is strikingly told in the history of Judas: "From a ministry and apostleship Judas fell, that he might go to his own place," The ministry and apostleship were that to which God had destined him. To work out that was the destiny appointed to him, as truly as to any of the other apostles. He was called, elected to that. But when he refused to execute that mission, the very circumstances which, by God's decree, were leading him to blessedness, hurried him to ruin. Circumstances prepared by eternal love became the destiny which conducted him to everlasting doom. He was a predestined man — crushed by his fate. But he went to his own place. He had shaped his own destiny. So the ship is wrecked by the winds and waves — hurried to its fate. But the wind and waves were in truth its best friends. Rightly guided, it would have made use of them to reach the port; wrongly steered, they became the destiny which drove it on the rocks. Failure — the wreck of life — is not to be impiously traced to the will of God. God will have all men to be saved, and come to a knowledge of the truth. God willeth not the death of a sinner."

F. W. Robertson.

## We Quote — H. W. Beecher

"Happiness is not the end of life: character is. This world is not a platform where you will hear Thalberg piano-playing. It is a piano manufactory, where are dust and shavings, and boards and saws, and files and rasps, and sand-papers. The perfect instrument and music will be hereafter."

## Food for the Journey

"Ye have now, Madam, a sickness before you; and also after that a death. Gather then now food for the journey. God gave you eyes to see through sickness and death, and to see something beyond death. I doubt not but that, if hell were betwixt you and Christ, as a river which ye behoved to cross ere you could come to Him, but ye would willingly put in your foot, and make through to be at Him, upon hope that He would come in Himself, in the deepest of the river, and lend you His Hand."

Samuel Rutherford.

## "Delight Thyself Also in the Lord."

"How beautiful the phrase! The literal significance is this, "Seek for delicacies in the Lord." Yes, and if we only set about with ardent purpose to discover the delicacies of the Lord's table, we should have no time and no inclination to fret. But this is just what the majority of us do not do. We take the crumbs from the Master's table, and we have no taste of the excellent delicacies. Now the delicacies of anything are not found in the elementary stages; we have to move forward to the advanced. The delicacies of music are not found in the first half-dozen lessons; it is only in the later stages that we come to the exquisite. And so it is in art, and so it is in literature, and so it is with the "things of the Lord." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." Let us be ambitious for the excellent! God has not

yet given to us of His best. He always keeps the best wine until the last. We shall never reach God's superlative! The "unsearchable riches of Christ" will reveal themselves more and more to us throughout the glorious seasons of the eternal day. When we sit at the table of the Lord, tasting of His delicacies, fretfulness will be unable to breathe."

J. H. Jowett

### An Old Birthday Wish

"I have no dearer birthday wish for thee

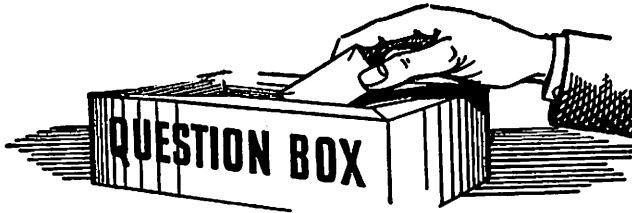
Than that the presence of the King may be,  
 Today and evermore,  
 The sweetest brightest joy of all thy life—  
 May give to thee, through all the days of strife,  
 A peace unknown before—"

I'll Let William James answer that.

"Why does religious faith bring us such peace and calm and fortitude? I'll let William James answer that. He says: "The turbulent billows of the fretful surface leave the deep parts of the ocean undisturbed; and to him who has a hold on vaster and more permanent realities, the hourly vicissitudes of his personal destiny seem relatively insignificant things. The really religious person is accordingly unshakable and full of equanimity, and calmly ready for any duty that the day may bring forth."

Dale Carnegie

Selected by Leonard Morgan




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Conducted by  
 Alf Marsden

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**"I frequently hear preachers saying that they are preaching from the 'Word of God.' What is meant by the 'Word of God'?"**

I suppose a short answer would be to say that they are preaching from the Bible, but I am sure that such an answer, although true, falls short of what is really meant. We need to impress on our minds, and on the minds of others, that we are considering the Revelation of God, and as such it must be consistent with Himself. The Bible is under attack from those who purport to teach from it, and from those who say that it has no place in late twentieth century thinking. On the one hand, those who should be defending it say that large areas of it can be disregarded; on the other hand, the purveyors of materialism present it as a ludicrous irrelevance, contradictory in itself, and meaningless in its application. But I return to the major point; God's Word must be an expression of Himself, and whatever is essentially His must also be present in His word, and on that premise we shall proceed.

### It is Immortal

In his first letter to Timothy, Paul speaks about the appearing of Christ, and goes on, "which in his time he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which



no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 Tim. 6:14-16). This God revealed His Word and consequently it must be as immortal as He is. The message is as ancient as the Ancient of Days. When time is no more, God's Word will stand. It is the great explainer of the everlasting past, and the signpost to the everlasting future. It is the unchanging, unchangeable Revelation of God. As Peter says, "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." (1 Peter 1:23-25).

### It is Authoritative

Perhaps the most important thing which authority can do is to set a standard. In Amos we read of the Lord God standing by a wall which had been built true to plumb, and with a plumbline in His hand. Amos goes on, "And the Lord asked me, 'What do you see, Amos?' 'A plumbline,' I replied. Then the Lord said, "Look, I am setting a plumbline among my people Israel; I will spare them no longer" (Amos 7:7,8). I believe that the plumbline which God has put into the world is His Word; it is not only the Divine Standard, but it is the *inspired* standard, and what we are speaking about here is direct and verbal inspiration. What was written at first stands written today, and will stand forever. In the very last book of the Bible God makes Himself very plain. "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the word of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life" (Rev. 22:18,19). The Bible is not just a book which *contains* the Word of God. It is the Word of God.

The authority of the Bible is absolute because it is God who has spoken. What He has *said* to us of inestimable value and importance if we will but receive it as from Him. Jesus did, and so should we. When Jesus prayed for His disciples He said, "For I have given unto them the *words* which *thou gavest me*; and they have received them (the words), and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me" (John 17:8). The Eternal God has revealed the Eternal Truth in the Eternal Word, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

The Bible is authoritative because the consistency of God's Word is seen in the outworking of His plans. Men have looked *beyond* that which has been revealed, whereas if they have been content to be guided by Him they would have known better. Jesus illustrated this point quite well to the two on the road to Emmaus when He chastised them, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (24:25, 27).

Pentecost should have taken no one by surprise. Peter reminded his bearers of things they should have known, "And he (God) shall send Jesus Christ, which was before preached unto you: Whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:20,21). Peter then goes on, "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days" (v 24).

Now the point of all this is crystal clear; God has spoken *words* through the *mouths* of His messengers. It seems important to me that we should understand that we are

not dealing with the words of *inspired men*. Peter makes this clear when he says, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21). As if to reinforce this, Paul writes to Timothy, "All scripture is given by *inspiration of God*" (2 Tim. 3:16). Which brings us to our next point.

### The Self-testimony of Scripture

We can, I believe, read the Bible too superficially. I have heard some people say that the Bible needs to be *believed*, not explained. But when Jesus referred to the prophet Daniel He said, "whoso readeth, let him understand" (Matt. 24:15). It is vital to believe, but it is also extremely important to understand *what we believe*; the two go hand in hand.

However, the Bible does assert its own divinity. God in old times spoke by the prophets; in these last days He has spoken by His Son. If the Book is a product of the Divine Spirit and is a precise record of the revelation of Himself to us, then what it says of itself must be Divine also. When God speaks there is no argument; or there shouldn't be. Moses was the scribe, but *God* was the speaker.

There are two words used in the 2 Tim. 3:16 passage; "Graphe" — writing that, which is written; and "Theoneustos" — God-breathed. "Pasa Graphe Theoneustos" — every sacred writing is God-breathed. It is that which is left on the pages of the Bible which is God-breathed — the words. When Jesus was tempted by a certain lawyer, His question was, "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" If we use a simple illustration I believe we shall see what is meant. In the recent bitterly cold weather I got into my car and breathed on the windscreen; almost immediately the frozen breath was etched in a pattern on the inside of the windscreen and was there to be seen. In like manner, I believe, the God-breathed words have been etched onto the parchments on which they were written and are there as a record for all to see. The reporters and writers are relatively unimportant; the words themselves are all-important and are inspired.

### Search the Scriptures

There is not another book that I know which calls for the closest scrutiny that anyone can give it, except the Word of God. Any book written by man is at the Mercy of men to tear it apart, destroy it; nullify its effect. The Bible is not such a book; it calls for the minutest examination and investigation; through the ages it has been subjected to this, but it has emerged unscathed from the vicious invective that some have thrown against it, its splendour and majesty undimmed, its claims and message untarnished. But, you see, it is God-breathed.

The word 'search' is an interesting one. It has two applications. The word EREUNAO to search, to examine diligently. The word ANAKRINO is used in the forensic sense and means to analyse, to sift, and has the added meaning of examination by torture. It predicates the very closest investigation. There are those who say that we delve too deeply into the Bible; they say that there are some things that God does not want us to investigate too closely. But you know as well as I do that you cannot bring to it any investigation which is too penetrating. The more we delve the more we are convinced that it is the Word of God. The more precious gems we dig out, the more are uncovered. God wants us to dig. His God-breathed words invite us to investigate, because He knows that the more we uncover the more we shall learn of Him, whom to know is life eternal.

It is a new year. Let us resolve that we shall ever have the Good Book before us as we proceed on our journey through life. Let us cherish it, search it, investigate it, analyse it, but above all, understand it.

"A glory gilds the sacred page,  
Majestic, like the sun;  
It gives a light to every age;  
It gives, but borrows none."

(All questions to Alf Marsen, 377 Billinge Road, Highfield, Wigan)

## CHURCH SUPPORTED HOSPITALS

by Mike Willis, 3579 Ruthridge Court, Dayton, Ohio 45432

I am delighted to see that so much interest has been shown in the question which I raised in the May issue of *The Scripture Standard*. Your readers will remember that I called for Bible authority for church support of hospitals and hospital personnel after reading Allan Ashurst's appeal for church funds to support Carole Ashurst as a nurse in India. The June issue of *The Scripture Standard* contained a letter from Kim J. Boland and David Brady expressing opposing views relative to my question. Then, the July issue contained a lengthy article entitled "Compassion" by brother Ashurst to provide scriptural authority for church support of hospitals and medical personnel. To this letter, I would like to give a brief response.

### Is There A Pattern?

The issue of the work of the church can be simplified and stated quite briefly: *either God has given a pattern for the work of the church, or he has not*. If God has not given a pattern for the work of the church, men can involve the church in any programme of work of their own choosing without becoming involved in sin (such as cleaning up ghettos, social reform, building colleges, hospitals, orphan homes, and old folks homes, manufacturing, etc.). Man would be limited only by the judgment of human wisdom to decide what works the church ought to be engaged in and in which works it should not engage. On the other hand, if God has given a pattern for the church with reference to its work, then the church has a moral obligation to God to limit itself to the pattern of work revealed in the Scriptures.

I feel rather confident that even brother Ashurst would repudiate the position that the church has not been given a pattern for its programme of work and, therefore, can do any work it so chooses. Consequently, brother Ashurst has the moral obligation to give book, chapter, and verse authority for church funds to be used in funding hospitals and medical personnel. To the best of my ability, I was unable to find one single verse which was cited to prove that the church had the right or obligation to be involved in these works. Did you see a *command* for the church to use its funds to support a hospital and its medical staff? Did you read an *approved apostolic example* where a church used its funds to support a hospital and its medical staff? Did you see our brother cite a *necessary inference* to authorize a church to use its funds to support a hospital and its medical staff? If no command, example, or necessary inference was given, you must conclude with me that brother Ashurst did not provide Bible authority for churches to support hospitals and their medical staff.

### The Miracles of Jesus

Our brother also asserted that the example of Jesus healing the sick was scriptural authority for the church to build and support hospitals and their medical staffs. If the miracles of Jesus constitute authority for this ministry, the logical conclusion would be that Jesus' miracle of turning water to wine would constitute authority for the church to enter wine making business, Jesus' miracle of feeding five thousand

with five loaves and two fish constitutes authority for the church to enter the cafeteria business, and Jesus' example of walking on water constitutes authority for the church to enter the ski making business. No one believes this! These are miracles done to demonstrate the deity of Christ. A brother is surely desperate to find authority for church support of hospitals to have to resort to this kind of proof to document his practice.

### Compassion Is Not The Issue

Brother Ashurst tried to imply that the issue was "compassion" or "no compassion." I beg to differ with him. The issue is not whether or not the individual Christian should be compassionate toward the suffering of his fellowmen; no one disbelieves that. Every Christian to my knowledge teaches that God requires His children to be compassionate. The question is one pertaining to Bible authority, not human compassion.

My brother argued that the church should support the Indian hospital and its personnel because of the extremities of their human situation. This is *doctrinal situationism* which is the same in principle as *situation ethics*. Basically, it states that human compassion authorizes the church to do many things for which there is no Bible authority. He continues to state, "We can see the wisdom of there being no hard and fast meticulous legislation in these things." He continued, "This is an emergency which can only be dealt with by emergency measures. Do we say: 'There is no scriptural pattern therefore our hands are tied,' or do we exercise compassion and have fellowship with them in their suffering?'. 'As we therefore have opportunity let us do good to all men, especially they that are of the household of faith'." (p.106). Hence, the situation authorizes involvement in a programme of work for which no other Bible authority could be found, according to the argument.

This is the same kind of argument which the moral situationists use to teach, "Thous shalt not kill, except in some circumstances"; "Thous shalt not commit adultery, except in some circumstances." *Doctrinal situationism is no different in principle from moral situationism!* Both constitute a violation of God's law. Frankly, I do not trust human compassion as a means of determining God's will.

### Not A Matter of Human Judgment

Our brother refers us to the dictates of human conscience. He admonished, "If you have opportunity to assist the poor whichever way your conscience permits you to do it then get on with it and do it that way, providing you are 'not doing evil that good may come.'.. (p.107). This begs the issue. Perverting the pattern for the work of the church is "doing evil." Unless one can prove that the church is authorized to build hospitals and support medical personnel, he cannot relegate the matter to human judgment. Before we can discuss whether or not it is *expedient* for the church to build and support a hospital and its staff, we must first prove that it is *scriptural* for the church to do so. Expediency does not open up programmes of work not otherwise authorized; it excludes programmes of work for which there is authority on the grounds that this is not the wisest action to follow.

### Speak Where The Bible Speaks

The principle of having New Testament authority for all which we do and practice is central to the Restoration Movement; Campbell said, "We speak where the Bible speaks and are silent where the Bible is silent." The application of this principle was seen with reference to infant baptism; the church did not practice it. This principle is reflected in 1 Peter 4:11 — "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God

... ” This is also reflected in the masthead of *The Scripture Standard* which states, “Pleading for a complete return to Christianity as it was in the beginning.” In the beginning, did churches support hospitals and medical personnel from the first day of the week collection? Just which verse did brother Ashurst cite to give New Testament authority for church support of medical personnel and hospitals?

*Secondly, this is divisive.* All brethren can unite in doing that for which there is authority in the Bible. Just as every man can give up his denominational names in order to wear the biblical name Christian, every man can unite on forsaking every programme of work for which there is no Bible authority. However, the involvement of the church in works which are labelled “good” on the grounds of one man’s assessment of what is “human compassion” or a “good work” is divisive. Every man has a different set of works which he will label “good” in which to involve the church; each of these works will be things which someone else objects to, resulting in a divided brotherhood. Hence, brother Ashurst’s concepts result in division, not unity. This is seen exemplified by the differences in Kim Boland and David Brady’s letter. This issue divides brethren.

In conclusion, I want to thank the Editor for allowing me to participate in this exchange. May the Lord give us wisdom from above through the study of His word to better understand how we should behave ourselves in the church of God, the pillar and ground of the truth. (1 Tim. 3:15).

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

### MARCH 1982

- 7, Genesis 3            I Cor. 15,21-58.\*  
 14, Job 19,14-29    I Cor. 16  
 21, Psalm 69,1-17   II Cor. 1,1-20  
 28, Psalm 107,1-15 II Cor. 1,21 to 2,17

### CERTAINTIES

1. Resurrection of Jesus. This month our first verse tells the supreme truth of the ages. It follows that the triumph of Jesus over death leads on to ... 2. A consummation of God’s eternal purpose (Eph. 3,11). He is the first fruits (Rom. 11,16) of human redemption. The harvest is to be gathered when He returns to be united with His people to complete His UNIVERSAL kingdom — “the end” (v.24).

We may find it hard to conceive a greater unity than the TRINITY (a word under suspicion). Certainly Scripture attributes all the attributes of the Godhead to each personality described and existing to us as Father,

Son and Holy Spirit. These are to be finally united under God the Father — with us! a glorification beyond present comprehension.

3. Life after death. Some earnest but mistaken members at Corinth had been so deeply concerned about loved friends or relatives who had passed away before coming to the point of decision for baptism, that they had been baptised on their behalf. They must have believed in resurrection, but so must all Christians as did the apostle himself.

To believe otherwise would be totally wrong for it would make life hopelessly foolish. There are some who say “When you are dead you are done for” but that would make suffering for Christ foolish. Such suffering as Paul had recently experienced had brought him face to face with death (II Cor. 1,9). It was his daily experience, but if the dead do not rise what would it signify? It would make one indifferent to good or evil — perish the thought — “evil communications of this kind corrupt human behaviour” (v.33).

The idea of a god or an organisation which does not reward or punish,

offends the most simple-minded. We cannot see a balance of justice in this life, but are sure with Abraham that the Lord of all the earth will do right (Gen. 18,25).

### Reason and Revelation

It was natural that the question should arise, we feel, "With what body?" The human body disintegrates in the earth — how could that be raised? The answer initially is simply — with God nothing is impossible! Paul gives time and thought to the answer. First there is a reference to the natural world. The germ of life in the seed perishes in the earth before the new life comes into being. So the new life which was imparted to the christian at his birth has to die before taking up its final spiritual body, form or being. This must be a development from the natural body but a spiritual entity related to our present human body through what we have thought, spoken or acted in this human life. How wonderful this gift of our heavenly Father of what we have forfeited through sin, and which has been retrieved, redeemed, restored. The apostle's relation of the wonders of nature and creation bring us face to face with God's handiwork in the heavens and on the earth to reveal His wonders of spiritual power. We view the contrast between our earthly and heavenly destiny with increasing wonder at the divine love. How better can we be than humbly to abound in the work? (v.58).

### That Collection

We assume not many months passed before our "Second" to Corinthians was written. Sosthenes was with Paul when he wrote the first and Timothy when he wrote the "second." Meanwhile, Timothy had been to Corinth, and Titus had gone at Paul's request. Paul was awaiting Titus with some anxiety when he wrote the "second." Meanwhile there had been much communication among the churches concerning financial or

material help to the poor members of the church in Judaea. It is certain that both Macedonian and Galatian churches were but no doubt others in addition to Achaia in which Corinth was situated had been moved to join in the benevolence. We expect that conditions in Judaea had become extremely difficult. Josephus records the deterioration due to discontent and factionalism among the Jews. The strife between rival Jewish sects was growing in violence and the christian minority would be suffering persecution and poverty.

We have understood that one thing which marked out the early christians was in fact their love for one another, but it was certainly not an exclusive love. The commandment was "all men" (and of course this included women and children), but gave priority to fellow-christians. Shall we ever realise the extent to which in these days we are feeling in our political circumstances — at least in the "western world" the sacred influence of the life of Jesus? The Welfare State is not an invention of man but has come VERY LATE from the WORK and WORDS of Jesus. Charity was unknown in the heathen world. The Mosaic Law required it among Jews, but outflow of love came only from Jesus. The final word is GOD SO LOVED, and His sun shines alike on just and unjust. The strictly trained Jew is exciting the love of the despised Gentiles to make sacrifices for the wellbeing of their Jewish brethren for the glory of God! In a few weeks we will look at this outpouring of love again.

### Tribulation and Consolation

The necessary rebuke and correction in the first letter gave Paul the grief of an anxious and loving father, and he could not wait for the return of Titus whom he had sent to get assurance of its reception, and acceptance. He therefore left Ephesus to meet Titus on his return journey through Macedonia via Troas.

He had endured perils at Ephesus so great that he despaired of life at one point. We assume the riot recorded in Acts 19 was the occasion. We remember the mob would have torn him to pieces had they caught him. Some influential friends in the city, and his own brethren prevented his being exposed in that way. From that town we know he had a wide influence over the whole province. Upon arrival at Troas an opportunity to preach offered but he could not stay in his anxiety to meet Titus and get relief for his anxiety. So crossing into Macedonia he did meet Titus, and must have written at once and sent Titus back with the letter. When we consider the earnestness of Paul's soul we are not surprised at the outpouring of relief and the general characteristics of the letter.

While he found abundant reason for thanks and comfort, he must have learned of continuing opposition and slandering tongues, making considerable defence necessary. It does appear that some had accused him of weakness of purpose. However, he is able to give advice to modify their severe handling of the one who had disgraced the church, but through the apostle's instructions brought to repentance. We find in this letter much to recommend the character and work of Titus. What a comfort Paul did have in some of his companions. We cannot help thinking that one of those unnamed and reliable brethren was the beloved physician! We will look at them later.

R. B. Scott

\* We mistakenly omitted 15,35-38 on the card.

### WHAT IS PREJUDICE?

IT is the lock on the door of the closed mind. It is the ignorance we usually mistake for reason. It is the first enemy of information and progress. It is intellectual astigmatism. It is a perfect combination of conceit and ignorance. Prejudice never saved a soul nor settled any

question in the light of truth and justice. It is the defence of the devil, shell of a petrified mind, and ceiling on understanding.

Prejudice is the adjunct of a weak cause. It is that which prevents a person from investigating the teachings of the Word of God to see if what he has practised in religion is in God's Book. Prejudice is that which causes one to attack the person preaching when Scriptural arguments cannot be given in answer. In fact, when one manifests a prejudiced attitude he is admitting defeat in logical reasoning but still refuses to pay heed to anything different from what he already holds.

It is that which will keep many persons from obedience to the gospel of Christ. We plead with you to lay aside all prejudice and study with us the Book of God. Then let us do Bible things in Bible ways; call Bible things by Bible names; and be content with a "thus saith the Lord". If we were all to use the Bible as our standard of religion, division would cease and unity prevail which is that which our Lord so fervently prayed for (John 17:20-21). Lay aside your prejudice; study with an open mind.

Author unknown.

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Buckie, Scotland.** Our hearts were gladdened on Saturday, 28th November, when we witnessed the baptism of Jean Mair. Our sister is the granddaughter of our late brother William Jappy, and may she find true peace and happiness in the service of the One whom we know means Life Eternal.

J. Geddes.

**Cape Town, R.S.A.** I am especially writing to you and all others over there, to express, and pray that the joys and the "innumerable blessings we without doubt have witnessed and enjoyed



during the year of 1981, shall be ours to enjoy and share Lord willing for the coming year of 1982. In other words, "a very Happy, prosperous New Year both in the spiritual and the physical." The Lord also blessing all efforts you one and all shall put forth in the reaching of the lost, and to the upbuilding of the Saints, in that part of the Lord's Vineyard. "All news up to date, is that a special Gospel service I conducted, which I termed two and a half hours worthwhile enjoying and spending, was held on the 29th November 1981, the theme was "TIME IS PRECIOUS", lessons were . . . "What About Jesus?", "If You Are not a Christian?" morning service we had 30, in the evening we had over 60 present visitors, and some members of other congregations.

And while there were no immediate results, we are still praying, Lord willing we may be privileged to witness, it later, since we are aware that there are some who have expressed "it will not be long Br. Hartle." Attendances still remain fairly commendable, which includes B/ study and C/ meetings in the week. (Sorry this meeting was held with the Bokmakierie Congregation I am labouring with).

T. W. Hartle.

## EVANGELIST FLOGGED IN ZAIRE

Kitwe, Zambia. Frustrated leaders of certain rival denominations reported Muposa Mulenga to the local authorities as a "troublemaker." His hut was surrounded and, under armed escort, Mulenga was taken to the local lock-up, flogged and put behind bars. There are several congregations in the Mokambo area of Zaire which result mainly from his preaching and this had caused offence to his denominational rivals. Eventually, Mulenga was taken under armed escort to go and collect from relatives and friends his "fine" or ransom money. Very hungry and weak when finally allowed to go free, the officer-in-charge told him that if he objected to his treatment, he could sue them! There are about eighty congregations and preaching points in Zaire — of course, some are closer to the truth than others. However, someone like Mulenga is a sincere evangelist for the Church of Christ. He is supported by family marketing activities and has received his training as an evangelist from Woodhall's part-time preacher training programme.

Chester and Angela Woodhall.

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