

The **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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OUR SCHOOLMASTER

In a small town a few miles from here it is proposed to instal surveillance cameras high up on buildings to scan the streets below, and hopefully cut down on crime and violence. Apparently the system has been remarkably successful in other towns and people, when "big brother is watching," seem to behave more circumspectly. Predictably the local "Civil Rights" lobby have been actively opposing the proposal on the basis that there will be an intrusion of privacy. Members of the public have, at random, been interviewed on the streets, and the general consensus shown on T.V. One very elderly lady seemed to speak for most of us when she said that she was delighted with the idea, and that law-abiding subjects have nothing whatsoever to fear from surveillance. The apostle Paul expressed the same sentiment about 2,000 years ago when he said, "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil." (Rom. 13:3). As long as we remain law-abiding citizens we can live quite comfortably with any quantity of law; and all manner of scrutiny: it is when we decide to break the law that our troubles might start. In that same Chapter (Rom. 13) Paul goes to some length to show that Christians should be good citizens: scrupulously law-abiding. It must be difficult in some countries, under some vicious dictator, to be always law-abiding, but in this land we should give thanks to God for the very extensive degree of civil liberty enjoyed by all.

Quite apart from our reference to Romans Chapter 13, the Bible has a great deal to say about "the law" or "law" and many young Bible students are often puzzled and perplexed by this subject. Cruden says that "law (in the N.T.) when used alone, most frequently refers to the Mosaic law, but frequently includes the unauthorised additions to the law of Moses, by Jewish leaders." Thus the term "law" in the scriptures **nearly always means the law of Moses** and, as it occurs well over 100 times in the O.T. and over 160 times in the N.T. it is a subject worthy of our consideration. Much of how the law of Moses is now to be regarded we learn from the N.T., especially the writings of Paul, and while confessing only a very imperfect understanding of the subject personally, I offer the following remarks.

WHAT WAS INCLUDED

During the "Patriarchal Age", and up until the birth of Moses, there seems to have been no official codification of law although, obviously, there would be a generally accepted norm of behaviour amongst the various tribes and cultures. However, John says, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ". What exactly was encompassed by "the law"? The first instalment, and basic element,

of the law came in the form of the **Decalogue** (or ten commandments): Ex. 20:2-17. Added to this was the "Book Of The Covenant" (Ex. 24:7) which embraced all the statutes propounded (in Ex. Chaps. 20-23) concerning idolatry; menservants; women-servants; murder; manslaughter; menstealers; cursers of parents; smiters; theft; damage; trespass; borrowing; fornication; witchcraft; bestiality; strangers; widows; slander; false witness; justice; charitableness; the sabbath; the Year of Rest; and the Three Rests. Then there are the laws contained in the **Book Of Leviticus** and the Book Of Numbers concerning burnt offerings; meat offerings; first fruits; peace offerings; trespass offerings; just balances; the priests; laws of eating; prostitution; clean and unclean animals; necromancy; leprosy and leper cleansing; eating of blood; unlawful marriages; adultery; incest; sodomy; the sabbath; the Passover; the Day Of Atonement; the Jubilee; oppression; redeeming servants; disobedience; vows; tithing and "sundry laws". Then we have a collection of laws and regulations relating almost exclusively to ceremonial and religious observances such as purification and sacrifice; offerings, priests and vestments; circumcision; Levites and Nazarites.

The above list, while not fully comprehensive, gives us some idea of the broad compass of Moses' law, obviously intended to cover nearly every possible exigency in Jewish life and designed to provide all things necessary for the physical, emotional, moral and spiritual wellbeing of the people. It should be noted that sometimes the prophets and the Psalms were included in the Jewish conception of "The Law" and more than once Jesus said "It is written in **your law**" and went on to quote the words He had in mind: from the Psalms. (see John 1:34; 12:34 and 15:25). Paul also said to the Corinthians, "**In the law** it is written: With men of other tongues and other lips I will speak unto this people." This is a quote from Is. 28:11. And so "the law" is not always confined to the first five books of the O.T. (the Pentateuch) but can include the Prophets and the Psalms.

CHRIST'S ATTITUDE TO "THE LAW"

Whereas Jesus was often scathing towards Jewish hypocrisy in relation to Moses' law, especially withering in His contempt of the "Traditions Of The Elders", yet He generally respected and kept the law (concurrent, of course, with His positive intention to ultimately abrogate the law.) He took an independent attitude to Moses, and the law, and claimed that He was not only superior to the Temple (Matt. 12:6) but greater than Moses. He spoke (unlike the Scribes) with complete authority, (e.g. "But I say unto you . . .") while, at the same time, He declared, "**I came not to destroy the law or the prophets but to fulfil.**" All that the law, and the prophets stood for, found its fulfilment in Christ. When Christ died, as Testator of His own will, the "Royal Law" (Jas. 2:8) or "the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2) immediately sprang into force and "the law" of Moses was entirely annulled. The teaching of Jesus went behind the various enactments of the law and highlighted the grand principles upon which they were based; culminating in Christ's declaration that the entire law could in fact be summed in these few words, "**Thou shalt love the Lord Thy God, and thy neighbour as thyself.**" (Mark 12:30). Jesus caused much consternation and amazement amongst the Jews by drawing a distinction between "the weightier matters" of the law, i.e. Judgement, Mercy and Faith, and the meticulous attention to ritual: for many Jews were more concerned with ritual than religion. In the 'Sermon on the Mount' Jesus swept away all the false applications of the law and, bringing into focus the true principles of the law, showed that while the law required action, such action must come from proper motives. Although Jesus and his disciples were often criticised for failing to engage in ritual washings, and for a less than scrupulous observance of the sabbath, Jesus used such opportunities to show that the sabbath (and indeed all the law) was made for man, and not vice versa, and that, had the Jews properly understood the law they would have recognised that God's intention in all His enactments was for the ultimate

wellbeing of His chosen people, physically and spiritually. God always preferred mercy to sacrifice (Matt. 12:7).

PAUL'S PROBLEMS WITH JUDAIZERS

I suppose it was only to be expected that as young churches began to appear on the map (and before copies of the N.T. were available), "teething problems" amongst the congregations should occur. Paul's urgent epistles to the churches at Galatia, Rome and Corinth illustrate some of these problems but mainly the difficulty was with Judaizers; i.e. those Jewish Christians who mistakenly wanted to integrate substantial parts of the law of Moses into the Christian faith. Jewish Christians insisted that Gentile Christians be circumcised, keep the sabbath and various other items of the law. Indeed they considered that the gospel was exclusively for Jews (and this may well be true when we remember that it required a miraculous vision to make the apostle Peter preach to Gentiles). Paul regarded Judaizers as perverts of the gospel and in his letter to the Galatians places the curse of God upon all perverters of the gospel; repeating the curse for emphasis, **"and so I say again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."** (1:9). Four-fifths of the letter to the Galatians is taken up with Paul's response to Judaizers and to show that **"a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ"** (2:16), and that **"if righteousness came by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."** This was a strong argument, of course. What was the point in Christ being born, indeed crucified, if men could be justified by the Mosaic law? In Chapter 3 Paul asks some very searching questions of those unwilling to relinquish the law; e.g. **"This only would I learn of you. Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit and worketh miracles among you; doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"** Surely in seeking to answer these questions, Judaizers would have to admit that, at that time, God's preferences lay with **the faith** (the gospel) rather than with "the law" of Moses, and that the miracles (and other supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit) came by faith and **not the law**.

Paul also stressed that man's salvation came **not by law** but **BY PROMISE** and that that promise came to us via **Abraham** and not Moses, because the promise (that in Abraham's seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed) was made to Abraham 430 years before Moses ever existed. Thus we are all the children of Abraham (and of God) through faith in Christ Jesus; based on a **promise** given to Abraham; and nothing whatsoever to do with a **law** given to Moses (3:7). And Paul adds, elsewhere (Rom. 4:9) that when Abraham found favour with God by his acts of faith, such favour was bestowed more than 20 years before he was ever circumcised. Thus today, as in Paul's day, we gain favour with God by faith (a faith as strong as Abraham's), and that favour is not based in any way whatsoever upon law, or Moses, or circumcision. And so, Paul could say in the closing verses of Galatians, **"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but A NEW CREATURE"** (6:15).

Paul also used arguments based upon the 'Old' and 'New' Covenants. Oftentimes God had predicted, in the O.T., the coming of a **New Covenant**, which would be much superior to the old. Paul states (Heb. 8:6-13) that these prophecies had been fulfilled in his day. The New Covenant had arrived. Plainly God's employment of the word "New" meant that Moses' Covenant was now "Old" and would pass away. Christ came **"to take away the first (Covenant) that He might establish the second."** (Heb. 10:9). Christ took the law out of the way **"having blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and HATH TAKEN IT OUT OF THE WAY, nailing it to His cross."** (Col. 2:14). These words must be difficult to misunderstand. God has **"blotted out"** the law and **"taken it out of the way."** In Heb. 8:11 Paul says **"In that He (God) sayeth 'A NEW Covenant' He hath made the first**

old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.”

Faced with the strength of such language, those who wish to retain parts of Moses' law have tried to short-circuit Paul's unequivocal words by claiming that the law can be split up into compartments; e.g. "The Moral Law;" "The Ceremonial Law" and "The Judicial Law" and that the "Moral Law" remains. Paul seemed completely unaware of such distinctions, and certainly the N.T. **never ever** mentions them. Some Commentators have also said that the "Ten Commandments" were never abrogated but were intended for all men for all time. This is, of course, a nonsense for the Decalogue (10 Commandments) was **never ever** given to Gentiles, and indeed the first 4 of the 10 Commandments could never have been obeyed by Gentiles. Today we are not subject to the Decalogue, or any item of the Mosaic Law, but are liberated by the "Law of Christ"; and we abstain from stealing, adultery, bearing false witness, killing, coveting (and much more) **not because of the 10 Commandments** but because such things are **prohibited in the N.T.** by Christ and His inspired apostles. Have you noticed that those who wish to retain parts of Moses' law are very selective? It's quite common for them to want to keep the Sabbath, instrumental music, tithing and such like, but I've yet to meet the man who advocates the retention of circumcision.

THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW

In view of Paul's severe strictures on Judaizing Christians, and his comments on the law, it would seem a natural reaction for the Jews to ask **why** the Mosaic Law was not to continue. What then had been the purpose of the law? Paul anticipates the questions and says, "**Wherefore then serveth the law? It was ADDED BECAUSE OF TRANSGRESSIONS, UNTIL the seed should come, to whom the promise was made . . .**" (Gal. 3:6). Thus the law was temporary, which might seem a strange thing to say, given that it lasted almost 1,500 years, but such a period is not really a long time in God's eyes. It was to last UNTIL the coming of the Messiah: the One to whom the promise was made. It was ADDED because of transgressions; and was of value in that through its system of sacrifices, washings and purifications **it created an awareness of sin** (something plainly lacking in the world today). It also made men **accountable** for their actions.

The law was good and wholesome but was imperfect (i.e. incomplete) and was weak (Rom. 8:3). Its main weakness and incompleteness lay in the fact that although it could define sin, it could not remove sin. It was added because of transgressions and gave the people a consciousness of their sins. Without law sin is invisible. Paul said that "**Without law, sin was dead**" (Rom. 7:8) and admitted that he himself would not have recognised sin, as sin, without the law: (quoting the example of covetousness Rom. 7:7). Once a law is made sin springs to life: previously it has gone unnoticed. If no law exists, no law can be broken. "Sin" is a contravention of God's law: thus no law, no sin. Laws and rules can radically change a whole environment even although such rules are not God's but made by men. Apparently there was nothing wrong with praying to one's God until Daniel's enemies persuaded King Darius to make a law prohibiting it. Once this law was made the whole situation changed dramatically and Daniel would have certainly died but for the intervention of God. This obtains even in the most trivial things of life: e.g. parking laws suddenly appearing on streets previously free of them, etc. Men could pass the time away kicking a ball around and having good fun, but once laws and rules were made governing the game, referees were required (not only to interpret the rules but to punish those who contravened them).

Some have suggested that law not only defines sin, and quantifies it: but might also encourage it. Children might pass a building every day and scarcely notice it. Once a sign is attached to the building saying "No Entry" the children would seek an

early opportunity to trespass into it. This not a fault in law, or statute, but a quirk of human nature dating back, perhaps, to the Garden of Eden and 'forbidden fruit'.

Sin, however, requires to be shown up for the dreadful thing it is, and the law of Moses was able to do this albeit not, itself, the remedy for sin. The world had to wait until the coming of the Lamb of God, and the shedding of His precious blood. "Wherefore", says Paul, "The law was our SCHOOLMASTER to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." (Gal.3:24). Thus the law was temporary and served its purpose well, but when the fulness of time was come it was replaced by "the hearing of faith." Paul says, "BUT WHEN THE FULNESS OF TIME was come, God sent forth His Son . . . to redeem them that were under the law." (Gal. 4:4). Moses' law could not redeem or restore.

CONCLUSION

Space has gone and there is little room left for conclusions, but it does seem to be true that mankind does behave better under surveillance and supervision; whether in small things or large. I certainly remember the bedlam that used to prevail in our classroom at school if the teacher stepped out for a minute. And building site workers had a reputation at one time for playing cards all day in the site-hut when the foreman was away. This is another quirk of human nature, and we need law and we need supervision. Because Paul asserted that the law had gone, some Jews probably imagined that they could now do as they pleased. Paul anticipated this and explained that liberty did not mean licence. He said, "Brethren, ye have been called to liberty: only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but BY LOVE, SERVE ANOTHER. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Gal. 5:13). And so, "the law of Christ" is not codified and systematised like the law of Moses was, but is enshrined in these few simple but ageless words, "Love God, and thy neighbour as thyself" which, if we endeavour to do, we shall not go so very far wrong. Peter, likewise assuring the early Christians of liberty, exhorted them to sobriety and discretion "not using their liberty as a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God, Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the King." (1 Peter 2:16).

EDITOR.

GLEANINGS

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

KNOWING

I know the pang of forfeit breath,
When life in sin was life in death;
But now I know His life is mine,
And nothing shall that cord untwine,
Rejoicing in the life He gives,
Because I know that Jesus lives."

F.R.H.

THE SIN OF PRAYERLESSNESS

"God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you." 1 Samuel 12:23.

"How few of us have placed prayerlessness among our possible sins! And how even fewer have placed the omission to pray for others, in the black list of sins against the Holy Lord! We have called it thoughtlessness, or negligence, or even apathy, but we have not called it sin. But how this word sin, as used in this unfamiliar relationship,

broadens and deepens the ministry and obligation of prayer! My needy brother has a right to my prayers. They are to be regarded as part of his capital strength. They constitute a part of the forces which were purposed to make him victorious in all the battles of life. My prayers for him are part of his army. I control some of his vital equipment. Without my co-operation in prayer he is weakened and maimed.

HE IS IMPOVERISHED

If I refuse him my prayers I deprive him of so much of his heritage. I defraud him. I wrong him in a far more deadly manner than if I refuse to pay a material debt. I disclaim my spiritual debts, and he is impoverished in the central resources of the soul. I help him into moral bankruptcy by depriving him of his sacred dues. Thus do I wrong my brother, and thus do I sin against God.

THE OBLIGATION OF PRAYER

All this, I say, is a very lofty conception of the obligation of prayer. It is something we owe to others, and if we refuse to pay we leave them poor indeed. On the other hand, how uplifting is the conception that by my prayers I am increasing a man's moral capital. I am helping him to mobilise his spiritual forces. I am sending him and army corps to enable him to meet his enemy at the gate and overthrow him. I may share in his warfare, and I may rejoice and glory in his triumph."

J. H. Jowett.

THERE ARE THREE KINDS OF SILENCE

"There are three kinds of silence," said Madame Guyon: "Silence from words is good: inordinate speaking tends to evil. Silence or rest from desires and passions is better: it promotes quietness of spirit. But best of all is silence from wandering and unnecessary thoughts: that is essential to internal recollection, and it lays a foundation for a proper regulation and quietness in other respects."

QUIET RESTING PLACES

"And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." Isaiah 32:18.

"Stillness in suffering must belong to full consecration. Let us joy in the thought that we can be nearer to God in the centre of the flame than we could in the open air on a bed of roses. Oh to be kept in the unspeakable stillness which belongs to the 'secret place of the Most High.'"

Mrs. Chas. Cowman.

BE STILL AND KNOW

"Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." Psalm 46:10-11.

"I EXHORT therefore, that . . . supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men." 1 Timothy 2:1

THE HIGHEST PRIVILEGE

"Learn to count it the highest privilege of your life to be a channel through whose prayers God's blessing can be brought down to earth. It is the Holy Spirit who breathes God's own desire into us and enables us to intercede for souls."

Dr. Andrew Murray.

I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Luke 22:32

"We all value the prayers of fellow-saints. But here is something far better. What the Lord did for Peter, He is constantly doing for us. Satan is plotting to overthrow us but the Saviour is praying for us and thus upholding us. This secret service is going on for you. Even while you are ignorant of danger He is foregrounding you."

“He who for men their surety stood,
And poured on earth His precious blood,
Pursues in heaven His mighty plan,
The Saviour and the Friend of man.”

“Wait on thy God continually.” Hosea 12:6

Prayer is the creator as well as the channel of devotion. The spirit of devotion is the spirit of prayer. Prayer and devotion are united as soul and body are united, as life and heart are united. There is no real prayer without devotion — no devotion without prayer. Prayer is as essential as food is, to life.”

E. M. Bounds.

“Call upon me . . . I will deliver thee and thou shall glorify me.” Psalm 50:15

“I prayed, He heard and delivered; but prayer is not only a force to help us in our hard places; it is a great spiritual force to lift us up to God.”

Dr. Andrew Murray.

“I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.” Genesis 32:26

“Prayer prevails. It brings power. It brings life. It brings God. Let us dare to be definite with God; let us dare to lay hold of the promises and to wait in faith until the answer comes,”

Mrs. Chas. Cowman.

LISTENING FOR GOD

“Prayer is listening for God, hearing what God has to say, consenting to what God does say, asking of God power to obey. To neglect these things is to be powerless when we meet the lepers, and the palsied men of the world.”

G. Campbell Morgan.

“In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.” Isaiah 30:15

“It is through the quiet mind that God’s strength and guidance flows, enabling us to do the work He has chosen for us. Without this quietness perfect trust in God cannot, exist, and only perfect trust can keep a quiet mind. In one ruffled moment years of blessing can be checked.”

Q. Barker.

WE QUOTE — J. H. JOWETT

“When I was in Northfield . . . I went out early one morning to conduct a camp meeting away in the woods. The camp dwellers were two or three hundred men from the Water Street Mission in New York. At the beginning of the service prayer was offered for me; and the prayer opened with this inspired supplication:-

“Oh Lord, we thank Thee for our brother. Now blot him out! Reveal Thy glory to us in such blazing splendour that he shall be forgotten.”

“LORD TEACH US TO PRAY.”

Leonard Morgan.

“WHO RULES YOUR LIFE ?

Ten generations passed from Adam to Noah with the pursuant result of increased wickedness and rebellion to God. God could find only eight people on earth who respected and obeyed his will (Gen. 6:5-13). He therefore determined to destroy the remainder of the earth’s population for one simple reason — man had sought to overthrow the rule of his Maker.

Since “whatsoever things as were written aforesaid were written for our learning” (1 Cor. 10:11), it would seem that man would finally learn to respect and obey his God, but it is not so. Man still asserts his autonomy. He still seeks to govern himself,

just as he has always done. He writes his own religious creeds, establishes his own churches, and defies the very God whom he claims to worship. He writes his own civil laws and moral (or immoral) codes; he claims the right to self-sovereignty and totally ignores the instructions of his God. He has assumed that the freedom to rebel are one and the same. He has mistaken free will for autonomy and assumed that the ability to make a choice is sufficient justification for any choice he wants to make.

It is not remarkable that the atheist and the sectarian should make this mistake, but it is unthinkable that one who seriously claims to be a New Testament Christian, a citizen of the kingdom of Christ, should be so presumptuous as to claim the right of self-rule. It is unbelievable that one who professes to honour Christ as his king would involve himself in an alliance with those who have formed their own vehicles for supplanting the sovereignty of God and for exercising human autonomy, whether in the civil or in the religious realms.

Human government was established by men in rebellion to God (1 Sam. 8:7). Their purpose was to supplant the rightful rule of God and to arrogate to man a position for which he was not created and is not qualified.

Deceived by the devil into believing that he might become his own god by throwing off the rule of Jehovah, man succeeded only in turning from his righteous and lawful Master to an unrighteous and unlawful one. Man is a serving creature, and serve he will, whether he intends to or not (Rom. 6:16-18).

We ought to obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29).

J. W. WILLIAMS.



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

“In a world that seems to be increasingly sinful, what should we be teaching our young people in the church?”

We realise, of course, that when the questioner speaks about the ‘world’ she means the people in it. We must never forget that when God created the heavens and the earth He saw **that** part of Creation, along with all other parts, as ‘good’. He placed our first parents in the paradise of Eden, and gave them a free will; that was also ‘good’. Satan, however, invaded that paradise, deluded our first parents, and they obeyed him rather than obeying God. Consequently, the very first lesson we must teach — and it must be taught with force and conviction — is that Satan is **real**, and that he is responsible for the sin that is in the world. In the words of our beloved brother Paul, **“sin entered into the world, and DEATH by sin”**; so also, we have to echo the words of our brother Peter, **“your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour”**. (1 Peter 5:8). Let there be no mistake. Unless we can convince **all** people, let alone our young people, that sin and Satan exist, then we can only present Jesus as ‘a good man’ who tried to teach people a good moral code. Let us not be afraid of teaching about the consequences of sin, because it is the canker which is eating away the soul of the world.

Let us also, in our teaching, elevate the Church. It is His Body, and as such should stand out as a beacon in the world. It is good that the autonomy of individual assemblies should be maintained, but we must always keep before us the glory of the Church universal, those thousands of souls who have seen and acknowledged the

ravages of sin, and have sought succour in the welcoming bosom of the Body of Christ, the Church. Individually, let us strive to uphold that glory, and not only uphold it, but add to it by the demonstration of the Spirit in our lives. So, then, are there specific sins that we should teach our young people to avoid? Yes, I believe there are many, and I want to discuss one or two of them with you.

DRUGS

If I were to make a film about narcotism I could call it, after another film of the same name, 'The Great Escape'. Escapism is a flight from reality. We have to differentiate, of course, between the **controlled** use of drugs for medicinal purposes, and drug abuse; it is drug abuse which is posing the greater problem

What is it that causes many young people to turn to drugs? Well, the reasons are many and varied, but one reason I have noticed is the sense of excitement which can be engendered. Many young people find the pace of life very pedestrian. They are also experiencing many problems which seem to be intractable; broken homes, unemployment which means loss of cash to spend, frustrations which they seem unable to cope with, and many other things which, they say, make life 'boring'. So they turn to drugs in order to escape the realities of life. They may turn to the Amphetamines (the so-called 'speed' drugs, or 'pep pills'). These produce a feeling of well-being, of exhilaration, an increase of muscular efficiency and extreme wakefulness. There is also, rather depressingly, a vociferous lobby calling for the legalisation of the drug Cannabis (known also as pot, hemp, grass, hashish, weed, or marijuana). This drug produces a feeling of contentment and euphoria, but it is also a hallucinatory drug if taken in large doses. I remember once, when I was in the Samaritans, picking up a young man who had taken a large dose of Cannabis; he cowered in one corner of the back seat of the car because he had the hallucination that the houses as we passed them were going to fall in on him. So how do we in the Church counter this harmfully-induced excitement and euphoria?

How long is it since you, dear brother, sister, experienced the excitement and euphoria of being a child of God? Those Spirit-activated days when we would have done anything for the Lord. Small wonder that our young people don't feel a sense of excitement when they see their elders, with faltering step, looking upon Church life as a chore. I'm not looking for the sort of media-induced emotion that we often see (although a little more emotion wouldn't come amiss), nor do I want to change our assemblies into imitation night-clubs, but I **am** calling for a Church which is vibrant with Life and expectation, expressing the hopes and aspirations which initially 'turned the world upside down'. If our young people, when we teach them, say that they have learned about drugs at school, let's tell them that this is what **the Church** is teaching them. Let's present the Church as authoritative in **all** aspects of the Christian life, and not a building that we unwillingly make our way to once a week. Let people see that **our faith** will give us the euphoria that we need within a healthy and Spirit-filled body.

HOMO . . . OR HETERO . . .

The polarity of sex was a creation of God; He created man and woman. The relationship between man and woman was for the mutual expression of love, and for the express purpose of procreation, consequently, they should marry. In these days we have lost a perfectly nice word from our vocabulary because it has become associated with undesirable things; I refer, of course, to the word 'gay'. The 'undesirable' thing I am referring to, as you will have guessed, is homosexuality. Why do I say that it is undesirable? Because **God** through the Apostle Paul says so. Further than that, it must be classified as sinful because it is evidently against the wishes of God as regards relationships.

At this point someone may say, "Well, wait a minute, Alf. It is said medically that homosexuality is a genetic malfunction. So if God created the human species, as

you say, then He created them with something which He now condemns as sinful. Surely this is a bit capricious." Not so. The creation of God must inevitably be good, because He could not have created anything less good than He is Himself. Furthermore, any relationship which cannot produce what God evidently intended, i.e. the procreation of the human race, must be against His expressed wishes. But perhaps the human race, by its own disobedience to God, engenders its own physical and genetic malfunctions. Let's look at the relevant scripture.

The opening chapters of the Roman letter are scathing in their denunciation of both Gentiles and Jews; they point to immorality on a large scale. In Rom. 1:26 we read, **"For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature. And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet (due)."** Who knows what physical diseases and malfunctions man has brought upon himself down the ages? But one thing is certain according to Paul. The accrued debt, built up down the ages, by man's disobedience to God, will be paid in full. There is not the slightest doubt — and there is strong evidence to support this — that nature will recompense these acts in men's own **bodies and souls**. It seems to me that homosexual activities are increasing, and I cannot believe that this is because people are born that way. It seems to be a new experience, a new lust, and the Church must speak against it in the strongest possible terms as regards its teaching; not so as to victimise anyone, but to protect **Itself** against this type of error. If people of the world want to persist in these things, then the Roman letter teaches us that God will give them over to that.

INTEGRITY

It is axiomatic that the Church as regards Its teaching must be sound, as regards Its dealings; honest; as regards Its truth, unimpeachable. Paul taught Timothy that **"the Church of the living God is the pillar and ground of the truth."** (1 Tim. 3:15). We Christians know who the foundation of the Church is, but what is built on the foundation must give the same stability as would the pillar in any building which needed maximum stability. I have always considered that commitment goes hand in hand with integrity, because only people who are committed can maintain the soundness, honesty, and truth which God demands of them. We should not be afraid to spell out what membership of the Church entails as regards integrity and commitment. Once we have put our 'hands to the plough' there is no point in looking back, not, that is, if we want to 'plough a straight furrow'. How demeaning it is for Christ when, as the first 'chill wind' blows, those who have little commitment seek shelter outside the Church in a hostile environment, rather than in the Church where the everlasting arms of God can protect them. Yes, integrity would be high on my list of essential teaching, especially for young Christians. Let's not take our example from some of our elders who may not display the integrity and commitment of which I am speaking, but from the Christ Himself who displayed it to the full.

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

THE DENOMINATIONS

SUBSTITUTES FOR CHRISTIANITY

3. — SPIRITUALISM

Spiritualism is a wide name which may cover many things. It may refer to definitely scientific research societies, which have little or no religious significance, such as the Society for Psychological Research, the Psychic Evidence Society, or the London Spiritualist

Alliance founded by Alfred Russell Wallace. On the other hand, it may refer to centres carried on by individuals who are mediums earning their living by giving messages from the dead, or to independent organised Spiritualist Churches, or finally to Spiritualist Churches which belong to some national organisation. Of the latter there are two groups: (1) Churches of the Spiritualist National Union, Hollins Chambers, 64a, Bride Street, Manchester, and (2) Churches of the Greater World Christian Spiritualist League, 3 Lansdowne Road, Holland Park, London, W1.1. All forms of Spiritualism unite in asserting the survival of the dead (which, of course, is a normal article of Christian belief), and further that it is possible to communicate with the dead through mediums and to receive their help and advice. In those forms which take on a definitely religious aspect this latter article of faith is embodied in the worship practices.

Less Orthodox

The S.N.U. is the older body, having been inaugurated in 1890 as The Spiritualists' National Federation, and assuming its present title in 1901. It is affiliated to the International Spiritualists' Federation, which works in 13 countries. All must subscribe to the Seven Principles, which are: The Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the communion of spirits and ministry of angels, the survival of man, personal responsibility, compensation here or hereafter for all good and evil deeds, eternal progression open to every human soul. Jesus Christ is regarded as the special teacher of the Western world! It does not take much insight to see how far this is removed from orthodox Christian doctrine. Services are held twice on Sundays including hymns, readings (not necessarily from the Bible), prayers, address and clairvoyance.

More Orthodox

The more orthodox body, from the Christian point of view is the G.W.C.S.L., which was founded in 1931. It holds a Trinitarian belief of sorts, accepts the redemptive power of Christ, holds more closely to the teaching of Jesus as the foundation of life, besides holding to the usual Spiritualist tenets. It claims to be definitely Christian in its outlook. Sunday services generally include special intercession for the sick, and there are definite healing services. The body claims to be under the direction of a spirit guide named 'Zodiac,' who was a teacher in the Temple at the time of Christ! He is identified with the scribe who asked Jesus what was the chief commandment (see Mark xii. 28-34). The League maintains a night shelter for homeless women in London, and is otherwise keen on social activities.

Necromancy versus the Communion of Saints

Spiritualism as the attempt to communicate with the dead (necromancy) is of course as old as the hills. It was very prevalent in Canaan when Israel entered and was strictly forbidden by the Law. In modern times, as psychical research, it has appealed to scientific-minded men such as Alfred Russell Wallace, Frederick Myers, W. T. Stead and Sir Oliver Lodge. It includes such things as telepathic writing, the vagaries of the poltergeist, and many other phenomena which are and have been open to deceit and charlatanism. The findings of the Society for Psychical Research provide both positive and negative evidence. That the dead live on after physical death, or at least that the Christian dead do, is simple Christian truth and no prerogative of Spiritualism. It is truth based, however, not on the appearances of the dead, but on the Resurrection of our Lord 'who brought life and immortality to light.' Not only so, but the Church has always taught the doctrine of the 'communion of saints', the Church on earth and the Church in heaven are not divided in worship, where, amongst other things, 'we come to the spirits of just men made perfect' and are ever surrounded 'by a cloud of witnesses.' In our fellowship with Christ we have fellowship with the blessed dead:

Let saints on earth in concert sing
 With those whose work is done;
 For all the servants of our King
 In earth and heaven are one.

Where this doctrine is clearly held, Spiritualism as such makes little or no headway. In nineteenth century debased Protestantism this doctrine was sadly neglected, with the result that many have been won to seeking comfort from attempts at communication with the dead.

Two Things

Two things remain to be said. First, whatever the truth of psychological phenomena, it is quite clear that our Lord did not intend us to seek guidance or (cold) comfort from the spirits of the dead for our way of life here or hereafter. That guidance we have in Him alone. Secondly, I remember wading through that pathetic volume, *Raymond*, and being struck with its amazing unoriginality and dullness, coming from such a great mind as that of Sir Oliver Lodge. On the evidence before me, especially the evidence of communication with men like Socrates and Plato, Shakespeare and Milton. I am forced to the conclusion which I think was first expressed by C. E. M. Joad, that if man's spirits live on, certainly their minds do not!

W. ROBINSON

TREASURER'S REPORT

My report on 1993 will be brief. I received over £800 of subscriptions in December and thank you for prompt payment. This is shown in the large bank balance that was carried over into 1994.

Postal charges increased substantially on copies sent overseas with the virtual elimination of printed paper rates on single copies. Only eleven months postage is shown in this balance as the January postage was paid in the previous year.

Our generally amicable relations with the bank have been strained recently by the imposition of heavy charges when exchanging foreign currency cheques. Perhaps our overseas subscribers might consider paying two years at a time? This would half our costs and may be less trouble to you.

Could I again remind you to check the address label on your magazine wrapper. The top line of the label includes the date (month/year) when your subscription becomes due. Remember to make your cheque payable to "THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD" rather than to me when renewing.

Thanks for your letters and the good wishes and encouragement you send to us. Your support is appreciated.

BALANCE SHEET FOR 1993

INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
Bank Account 1/1/93	1356.82	Printing	3624.00
		Postage	546.76
Bank Interest	56.74	Sundries	70.90
Subscriptions	2839.97		<hr/>
Gifts	1491.99	Bank Account 1/1/94	1503.86
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	5745.52		5745.52
	<hr/>		<hr/>

J. K. Kneller (Treasurer)

I have examined the books, receipts, etc., and find them to be correct and in good order.

J. H. Currie (Auditor) 24th January, 1994.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

April 3	Jeremiah 31:23-40	Heb. 8
April 10	Exodus 24:	Heb. 9:1-22
April 17	Psalm 40:	Heb. 9:23 to 10:18
April 24	Habakkuk 2:	Heb. 10:19-39

THE NEW COVENANT

We read: **“But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which He is mediator is superior to the old one and is founded on better promises”** (8:6, N.I.V.). The new covenant, of course, was the subject of prophecy and the Hebrew writer gives a lengthy quote from the book of Jeremiah (31:31-34), which is well worth studying in detail. The old covenant, based upon the flesh of Abraham, was entered at birth. The child knew nothing about it. As one writer puts it: “He did not know God. He was first introduced into the covenant and then taught to know the Lord. The new covenant was to be different. It was not to be based upon the flesh, but upon the spirit. It was to be the result of a personal choice, an individual acceptance of God. It would not be necessary to teach those under the new covenant to know God, for they had to know Him to be in the covenant.”

The comparison of the nature of the two great covenants is, I think, an important study for all Christians. There is a vast difference between the two. The first is of law: The second is of grace. However, from my reading of many religious magazines and books on the new covenant a lot of folks still think in the terms of law. For example, they see the New Covenant Scriptures as a written code, the apostolic letters as a compilation of judgements, statutes and judicial requirements. They feel that these demand perfect obedience under threat of eternal condemnation. But what are these letters? they are actually letters of love written to those caught up in the human predicament. They

were written to assure the readers that they have eternal life. One commentator has written: “They are letters of correction, admonition and exhortation. They were never intended to develop legal or technical specialists, but lovers of God and men . . . Our obedience is not to a written code but to a loving Saviour. His commandments do not constitute ‘laying down the law’ for us, but a lifting up to love. Our compliance is not conformity to a code but the response of love to a person. He said: **‘If a man love me, he will keep my words’** (John 14:23).”

THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST

What constitutes a sacrifice? Alexander Campbell wrote: “In its literal primary acceptance, it is ‘the solemn and religious infliction of death upon an innocent and unoffending victim, usually by shedding its blood’”. Before Jesus, literally millions of animals were sacrificed for the sins of the people. But as the Hebrew writer declared: **“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins”** (10:4). Thus Jesus offered Himself as a real and all sufficient sacrifice for the sins of all the world. All the previous sacrifices pointed to this one. The Lord Jesus’ shed life blood on Calvary was the final offering. **“But now He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgement, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and He will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him”** (9:26-28, N.I.V.).

Sacrifice, as respects God, is a propitiation; as respects sinners. It is a reconciliation; as respects sin, it is an expiation; as respects the saved, it is a redemption. Again, Campbell has written: “The sacrifice of Jesus is, indeed, infinite in value; as respects the actual reconciliation and redemption of sinners, it is limited to those only who believe on and obey the Saviour.” God has done His

part and it is up to man to respond accordingly. The willingness of the Son of God to go as far as the cross should show clearly to all mankind the terribleness of sin and the need to be cleansed from it. What is wonderful is this: “. . . the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all our sin” (1 John 1:7).

One of the great titles of Jesus is “**The Lamb of God.**” (I must emphasise here that the term “Lamb” never refers to Jesus’ humility and meekness, but always to His sacrifice.) John the Baptist once said of Jesus: “**Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world**” (John 1:29). The apostle Peter wrote: **Forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conduct received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot . . .**” (1 Peter 1:18-19). The word “Lamb” is a key word in the book of Revelation. For example, we read: “**Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing**” (5:12). “**They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes**” (7:16 -17) “**And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it: and His servants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads**” (22:3-4).

PERSEVERENCE

Chapter 10 includes a call to perseverance. One thing the Christian must have is staying power. The reward of dwelling with God for ever is for those who remain faithful unto the end. Paul wrote: “**I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course. I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown**

of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not me only, but unto all them that love His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

It is one thing to set off on a journey; it is another thing to complete it. I personally know a number of people who had begun a life for Christ, but have since fallen by the wayside. What got into them? Jesus has given us the answer in His Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:3-23; Mark 4:3-20; Luke 8:5-15). But note His words: “**But that on the good ground are they, who in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it and bring forth fruit with patience**” (Luke 8:15). “Patience” is very much tied to perseverance. In the Greek the word is *hupomone*, which is one of the noblest of N.T. words. Chrysostom calls *hupomone* “a root of all the goods, mother of piety, fruit that never withers, a fortress that is never taken, a harbour that knows no storms.” He calls it “the queen of virtues, the foundation of right actions, peace in war, calm in tempest, security in plots.” Barclay said: “It is the quality which keeps a man on his feet with his face to the wind. It is the virtue which can transmute the hardest trial into glory because beyond the pain it sees the goal.”

I am reminded here why Jesus was willing to suffer and die for us with such steadfast endurance. “. . . and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame and is set down at the right hand of God” (12:1-2). I like what the Hebrew writer went on to say: “**Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart**” (12:3, N.I.V.). Brethren in Christ, may we keep right on to the end of the road in the knowledge that our happy abode is at the end of it. It is worth striving

for! It is even worth dying for!

IAN S. DAVIDSON,
Motherwell.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Dennyloanhead: the church here is pleased to announce that Bro. Tom Sharp was received into fellowship on 23rd January, 1994. We pray and trust that our brother will continue steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and be a worthy and profitable servant of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

JOE MALCOLM (Sec.)

Wigan, Longshoot: We are pleased, once more, to be able to report the addition of another soul to the Lord's body. On Sunday, 30th January, Gary Stanton expressed his desire to give his life to the Lord Jesus and was baptised.

We praise God for Gary's decision and that the power of the gospel is still evident in the preaching and examples of Christians. We pray that as Gary grows in grace and knowledge of God's word he will prove to be a useful worker of the Lord.

D. MELLING

Beulah Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield: We have great pleasure in announcing further additions to the church here. Sis. Mandy Dunne has recently moved here from Johannesburg where she was a member and has now taken up fellowship with us. Her husband Simon, has attended our meetings along with her, and Lord's Day 16th January, he made the decision to be immersed into Christ. We thank the Lord for Simon's conversion and pray that he and his wife will be blessed in their new life here and with the fellowship of the brethren at Kirkby.

T. WOODHOUSE (Sec.)

May I take this opportunity to express my thanks and appreciation of the many cards I received wishing me well during the time I was ill in recent months. They

gave me a "lift" and it was good to know that I was in the thoughts and prayers of my brothers and sisters. I am well on the way to full recovery, thanks be to the Lord.

TOM WOODHOUSE

SPECIAL BIRTHDAY

The Church at Wallacestone wish to record that Sis. Helen Read celebrated her one hundredth birthday on Thursday, 20th January, 1994. An avid reader of the "S.S." she will no doubt reprove me when next I see her for sending this notice, because even on such an occasion, she didn't want any fuss. Her faith and dedication have been an inspiration to us all and when you visit her, you come away uplifted.

Sister "Nellie" we love you in the Lord and we want you to know it.

JAMES GRANT (Sec.)

COMING EVENTS

Tranent Social: 19th March at 4 p.m.
Loch Centre.

Kirkcaldy Annual Social:

April 16th at 3.30 p.m.

Speaker: A.E. Winstanley.

Kirkcaldy Ladies' Day:

April 30th

Speakers:

Pat Moncrieff (Haddington)

Barbara Starrs (Newcastle)

Theme: Prayer

Registration & Coffee 10.00 a.m.

Contact: Fay Hughes (0592) 263531

GHANA APPEAL

On January, 24th 1994 I received a letter and report from the church in Accra which was too late to go into the February edition of the Scripture Standard. As this consisted of four typed pages I shall condense their request and report

They consider it "all joy to share with you what great works the Lord is doing among us here in Ghana." The church is growing rapidly in the Volta Region.

There are men in the church there who are well educated/trained in the Scriptures, full of zeal, faith and a lot of working experience behind them.

These new churches have their share of difficulties and problems which they must overcome. Their basic requirements are modest meeting places (to rent), benches, hymn books and Aladdin lamps are urgently required.

“The work must not be left in this infant stage to develop itself. It must be supported . . . Brethren we know that as the church grows, more responsibilities and financial burdens come to bear . . . however, we pray that as much as the Good Lord continues to bless the Labour of your hands, you will not turn your back on us . . . Kindly give good thought to these issues raised and show your usual generosity . . . Yours in the Lord’s Kingdom.”

As I write we have £660 in the bank and since we began this appeal, in excess of £43,000 has been collected to date.

Thank you IMB your cheque was received on 21/1/94 Receipt No. 498 is still in the book.

Cheques should be made out to “Graeme Pearson (Ghana Appeal)” and sent to . . . 13 Fairways, Dunfermline, Fife. KY12 0DU. Tel. (0383) 728624.

IS THIS YOU

Sometime when you’re feeling important,
Sometime when your ego’s in bloom;
Sometimes when you take it for granted
You’re the best qualified in the room;
Sometime when you feel that your going
Would leave an unfilled hole,
Just follow this simple instruction
And see how it humbles your soul:-

Take a bucket and fill it with water,
Put your hand in it up to the wrist;
Pull it out and the hole that’s remaining,
Is a measure of how you’ll be missed,
You may splash all you please, when
you enter,
You can stir up the water galore,
But stop! And you’ll find in a minute
That it looks quite the same as before.

The moral in this quaint example
Is that you do the best you can,
Be proud of yourself; but remember –
There’s no indispensable man.
‘Woodstock Bulletin’

SACRIFICE

When he has more than he can eat
To feed a stranger’s not a feat.
When he has more than he can spend
It isn’t hard to give or lend.
Who gives what he’ll never miss
Will never know what giving is.
He’ll win few praises from his Lord
Who does but what he can afford.

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