

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## UNBELIEF ACCUSES GOD

From time to time we hear religious people talking about 'their witness for Christ' or 'witnessing for God' and I often think that they use the word 'witnessing' illadvisedly. Followers of Christ are not, in my humble view, witnesses of God in any sense. All of Christ's witnesses gave their testimony about 2,000 years ago and since that time there have been no other witnesses having God's authority — notwithstanding the claims of some men to the contrary. Men today have no function as witnesses — rather we are the recipients of God's testimony and our duty is to consider that testimony and accept or reject it. Our function then, is more that of a jurymen than a witness — we ponder the evidence of the witnesses as recorded in the New Testament and make our verdict. 'Jehovah's Witnesses,' so-called, are witnesses in no sense whatsoever — they have seen nothing and heard nothing concerning Christ in His Kingdom. Christ's apostles were required to be eye-witnesses of Him and so, Paul, an apostle out of due season and not 'one of the twelve' had special meetings and conversations with Jesus. 'Witness' in Greek is *martus* and signifies one that gives testimony to the truth at the risk and expense of his own life and is the word from which 'martyr' comes. It is not therefore a word that we should bandy about.

Although not God's witnesses, we have however, probably all, at one time or another, been called to a court or tribunal to give evidence. In the daily transactions of life, Architects are called as professional witnesses in Planning Enquiries, Doctors are called as witnesses in Hospital accidents, Engineers are called as witnesses in Pit disasters, the Police are called as witnesses in Criminal proceedings and so on. We are no strangers, therefore, to the fact that witnesses are very necessary and extremely important in the rich pattern of day-to-day living. So important is a witness's testimony that, not so long ago, the evidence of a witness could suspend a man from the gallows — a sobering thought for the witness and especially for the man on the gallows. Thus a false witness has always been an abomination to God. Because there is a tendency for a man to be untruthful if the conditions are right, the legal system even in its infancy realised that some kind of sanction would have to be devised to encourage men to bear false-witness, and so witnesses were and are required to swear and aver that they will tell the truth, and, because they can swear by no greater, they swear by God. Even God Himself, because He could swear by no greater, swore by Himself to keep His covenant, and as Heb.6 says, "an oath for confirmation is to them (men) an end of all strife." This is exactly the drift of this

second paragraph of my article — this is exactly the point I am trying to make. If men are prepared to swear to tell the truth that is the end of all strife, i.e. we are then prepared to accept their evidence. Because God knew this He himself took an oath. Therefore, in the every-day transactions of life, we readily accept the testimony and statements of our fellowmen. Therefore, John says, (1 John 5:9) "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He testifieth of His Son. He that believeth on the Son hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son." If we believe in the Son we witness that we trust God — if we do not believe in the Son we have declared our distrust of God and in effect we are regarding God as a liar. Doubtless there are many in the world who would be shocked at such a suggestion, but John through the Holy Spirit 'lays it on the line' — the true consequence of rejecting the Son of God is to class God with the prevaricators of this world and treat Him as a liar. Unbelief charges God with falsehood.

God has not kept the world in ignorance concerning His Son. He has sent many witnesses into the world, from the beginning of time, to testify of Jesus. For a start, the Old Testament scriptures testified concerning the place, time, and manner of Christ's birth, lineage, manner of life, manner of death and ascension. Jesus, said on one occasion, to the Jews, "Ye search the scriptures because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of Me." (John 5). In the same chapter Jesus informed the Jews that He had no intention of bearing witness to Himself (self-praise is no honour) but "there is another that beareth witness of me . .

Ye sent unto John and he bare witness unto the truth." John the Baptist was thus an important witness from God to point out the Son (and the people respected John as a prophet). "But I have a greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me. (still John 5) "And the Father Himself, which hath sent Me hath borne witness of Me" (still John 5) "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one that accuseth thee, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?" This must have been a shattering conversation as far as the Jews were concerned but, apart from that, we learn that the scriptures testified of Jesus; John the Baptist bare witness of Jesus; but greater than this His works were His witness; and even greater still God Himself publicly acknowledged Jesus as His Son.

(1) That John Baptist's prime function was that of a witness to Christ there can be no doubt for we read, "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men might through him believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light" (John 1:6).

(2) There can be little doubt either that the works and wonders of Jesus were incontrovertible evidences to His deity. "And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?" (John 7:31). "Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you and ye believe not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me ... If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe me not, believe the works; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in Him ... Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles." (John 10 & 11).

(3) Regarding God's own personal witness to the deity of His Son, we read that three times God's voice was heard from the sky: first when Jesus was baptised of John in Jordan; second when at the transfiguration God proclaimed, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him." and thirdly (in John 12:30) when God's voice 'thundered' and was explained to the Jews who heard it by Jesus who said, "This voice came not because of me, but was for your sakes."

When we think about it we shall realise that no man ever had better attestation of character or pedigree (when by way of confirmation even God spoke on three occasions from heaven) and no claim ever enjoyed greater documentation. With knowledge comes responsibility and the world is without excuse if it rejects Christ's claim upon it. Jesus said, "The men of Nineveh shall rise up in judgment against this generation and shall condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold a greater than Jonas is here. The Queen of the South (or Sheba) shall rise up in judgment against this generation and shall condemn it, for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than Solomon is here."

Are we to be numbered with those who readily accept the testimony of men but reject the testimony of God, so making God to be a liar? Unbelief accuses God of deceit.

EDITOR.

## LOVE. The Greatest Thing in the World

No. 4 A Many Splendoured Thing.  
I Cor. 13; 4 - 5a

Do you know that beautiful hymn, "Loved with everlasting love?" (Church of Christ Hymnal No. 324. Redemption Songs No. 336). Here is the second verse:

Heaven above is softer blue,  
Earth around is sweeter green,  
Something lives in every hue,  
Christless eyes have never seen.

What makes the difference? Why — these things are looked on with love. The many splendours of love shine out making all things more bright and beautiful.

It is our purpose to consider the fourteen gems which make up this wonderful Eternity Ring which we call LOVE. As each one comes to our notice and the light of understanding shines upon it, we see hidden depths of beauty and when we have considered them all, as we look over our studies we will see the whole is LOVE!

### (i) Love suffereth long.

Here is pure, beautiful patience. Whatever treatment is received, Love will remain placid. Use all the spite possible and Love remains smooth and unharassed. No amount of bitterness will spoil Love. However, it is misunderstood, deliberately or through ignorance, Love still keeps on with its good work. Love never takes revenge, never strives to 'get its own back.' It never returns evil for evil.

Joseph, the husband of Mary, provides an excellent illustration. (See Matt. 1 18-19). He and Mary were betrothed. They were, in modern language, 'engaged', and there had been no pre-marital intercourse, but Mary showed obvious signs she was pregnant. Joseph was now in a great dilemma. He did not know the whole truth. What appeared to be stark undeniable fact: His intended wife had been unfaithful. To a man like Joseph in those days it was quite unthinkable that he could now have

her for his wife. If the full rigour of the Jewish law had been invoked, she could have been stoned.

**BUT!** Joseph had true love for Mary. So Matthew records, "Joseph, her husband, being a righteous man, (This fact would prevent him marrying her) and not willing to make her a public example." (This shows his true love for her). Not because he was righteous because he loved. "He was minded to put her away privately." Certain things had to be done. The betrothal had to be broken but he decided to do these things with the least publicity. How frequently we display our lack of Love by our readiness to broadcast the faults and failings of others. Take note of that which Paul writes to the Colossians (3:12 - 14. v13) "Forebearing one another and forgiving one another ... even as the Lord forgave you." Yes, Love may weep, but Love does not retaliate.

### (ii) LOVE is Kind.

So much is contained in this adjective: Good-natured; Gentle; Tender; Affectionate. Love is never mechanical, it is always the product of intention. 'Good-natured,' is not limited to being prepared to give, but rather, always wishes well in such a positive sense that it expands to bring its own wishes to fruition. If Love is kind, then it is never — NEVER harsh, nor sour, nor morose, nor ill-natured. William Tyndale translated this phrase, "and is courteous."

No matter what the provocation, temptation or stress, Love is gentle and mild. Compare the effects of hatred; prompting harsh severity, unpleasant words and expressions, anger and the burning desire for revenge. How different is Love, mild and gentle and courteous. Love is always Polite.

### (iii) LOVE envieth not.

The Greek word which is here translated as 'envieth', has been given many translations. Such words as 'zealous', 'eager', 'anxious', and it is used both for and against, both good and bad. It occurs in I Cor. 12:31. "But DESIRE (covet in A.V.) earnestly the greater gifts." Here it has good overtones but in Acts 7:9 "The patriarchs, moved with JEALOUSY (A.V. envy) against Joseph." It is in this sense Paul uses it as a negative description of Love. The dictionary defines 'Envy' as, "Ill-will against others superiority, success or good fortune." Love does not have ill-will toward others because they have happiness, or wealth, or fame, or beauty, but more than just the negative attitude is displayed by Love. For Love positively delights when others' blessings are increased. With this attitude to other people, Love does not constantly make comparison between that which someone else possesses or can do, and its own possessions. There is no 'keeping up with the Jones's'. Envy is an uneasy discontentment at another's advancement: Love is truly pleased when others succeed.

### (iv) LOVE Vaunteth not itself.

By contrast with our last word, the Greek word here translated 'vaunteth' is used only in this instance in the N.T. It means 'boaster' or 'braggart'. A forceful, loud proclamation of one's own qualities and abilities. The claim always being made by word-of-mouth and not by deed. Such an attitude is brought about by a consideration of one's own superiority and a simultaneous contempt and disregard of every other person.

Some of Paul's descriptions of Love are the more impressive because he uses the negative, "Love does not": while at the same time making his reader realize Love does the positive opposite. Love always regards with esteem and always treats with affection. Boasting is seeking reluctant praise. He who uses his ability in the service of others has no need to boast. All the braggart really does prove to all his lack of Love.

**(v) LOVE is not puffed up.**

Here Paul Says, "Love is not haughty nor vain." When we considered the fourth jewel we saw the negation of the noisy claimant. This fifth gem is the antithesis of that inner feeling, pride. Love is not puffed up; those who have pride in their heart most surely are. Because these are 'inner' feelings, those who have such imagine that others cannot see them, but pride shows. Look at I Cor. 8; 1. and see how Paul contrasts that which 'puffs up' and Love. 'Knowledge — the amassing of data facts — puffeth up, Love edifieth — builds others up. With Love, success does not go to the head. However profuse the thanks, Love is not 'puffed up.'

While one may not boast and brag openly an inner feeling of pride and superiority generates arrogance and a general stand-offish attitude, a demeanour of condescension. Love never has those feelings but realises and acknowledges the good qualities of others and seeks to magnify these. Paul, you will remember, exhorts the Philippians to "lowliness of mind, each counting other better than himself."

Love is never puffed up.

Paul Jones

**GLEANINGS**

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

At the Helm

"God Himself is at the helm, ordering all things after the counsel of His own will. He has a plan, and He is carrying it out; He has a throne, and that throne rules over all. Our strength then is to 'sit still,' and look on — it may be with wonder, it may be with awe — but to look on with reverential trust, knowing that 'as for God, His way is perfect.'"

Hudson Taylor.

**Ridicule is not argument**

"Ridicule is not argument, and leads to no safe conclusion. It is easy to appear to overthrow truth by ridicule. Voltaire has been compared to a schol-boy, exciting laughter by pencilling a moustache on some fine antique statuary. And Ingersoll sets up a man of straw, and then pelts it with ridicule; and unthinking people mistake the man of straw for a real image of the religion of Christ, and ridicule for argument. You might as well try to put out the stars with a watering-pot, or cannonade Gibraltar with pop guns and putty!"

Arthur T. Pierson.

**Accosted by a Sceptical Physician**

Peter Cartwright, was one day accosted by a sceptical physician who argued that belief in the soul was absurd because 'four out of the five senses disprove its existence.' Catechising Peter, he said, 'Did you ever feel a soul?' 'Yes.' 'Did you ever see a soul?' 'No.' 'Did you ever taste one?' 'No.' 'Did you ever hear one?' 'No.' 'Then how,' said the doctor, 'can you believe in a soul when four out of five senses tend so completely to deny its existence?' But the rugged philosopher saw at once that the line of reasoning would hold good in other directions and therefore he rejoined: 'Did you ever feel pain, sir?' 'Yes.' 'Did you ever see pain?' 'No.' 'Did you ever smell pain?' 'No.' 'Did you ever hear pain?' 'No.' "Then I do not believe in the existence of pain, for four out of the five senses tend to disprove it," said Peter.

Dinsdale Young.

**What shall it profit a man**

"For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matthew 16:26.

"This theory teaches that there is a natural supply for spiritual as well as for corporeal wants: that there is a connection between God and the soul as between

light and the eye, sound and the ear, food and the palate, truth and intellect, beauty and the imagination. And as we have bodily senses to lay hold on matter and supply bodily wants, through which we obtain, naturally, all needed material and things, so we have spiritual faculties to lay hold on God and supply spiritual wants, through them we obtain all needed spiritual things."

Theodore Parker.

### These carrion crows

"Then there are others who come to this book as sceptics. They marshall passage after passage, and try to get Matthew and Luke in a quarrel, and would have a discrepancy between what Paul and James say about faith and works; and they try the account of Moses concerning the creation by modern decisions in science, and resolve, that in all questions between the scientific explorer and the inspired writer, they will give the preference to the geologist. These men — these spiders I will say — suck poison out of the sweetest flowers. They fatten their infidelity upon the truths which have led thousands to heaven, and in their distorted visions, prophet seems to war with prophet, and evangelist with evangelist, and apostle with apostle; and if they can find some bad trait of character in a man of God mentioned in that Bible, these carrion crows caw and flap their wings over the carcase. Because they cannot understand how the whale swallowed Jonah, they attempt the more wonderful feat of swallowing the monster whale of modern scepticism."

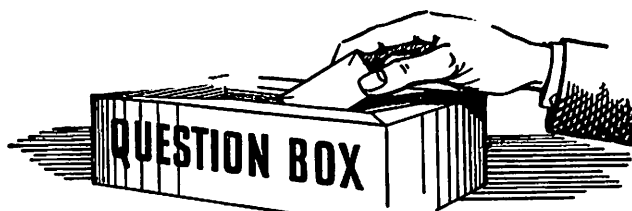
T. De Witt Talmage.

### Lord, more of thy presence

"As the king of Sodom said unto Abraham, "Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself," so say gracious souls, Give us more and more of the presence of God, and let the men of the world take the world and divide it amongst themselves. A soul that hath but tasted the sweetness of it (the divine presence) cannot but long for more of it, as those that had tasted of the grapes of Canaan longed to be in Canaan. They that have experienced the sweetness of the Divine presence cannot be satisfied with a little of it, but in every prayer this is the language of their souls: Lord, more of Thy presence!

Thomas Brooks.

Selected by Leonard Morgan.




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Conducted by  
Alf Marsden

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"Would you please comment on the teaching given in Hebrews 13:9-16. I would like to understand the meaning of Christ's sacrifice in relationship to the sacrificial system as given by God to the nation of Israel."

### The Context

I think it is important to place this teaching in the context of the rest of the Epistle to the Hebrews; failure to do this will result in an incomplete understanding.

The first point to understand is the contrast between the Levitical priesthood and the priesthood of Christ. Jesus was a priest after the order of Melchisedec, as the Writer says, "For he testifieth, Thou art a priest after the order of Melchisedec" (6:17). The Levitical priesthood could not achieve perfection; "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law) what

further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron" (6:11). The writer then goes on to say that if the priesthood is changed, then the law must of necessity be changed. The structure of the Levitical priesthood was rooted in the sons of Levi, but the Writer says, "It is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood" (6:14). The contrast is brought into sharp focus in verse 23, "And they truly were many priests because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (7:23-25). Christ was made priest. "not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life" (7:16). The Levitical priests, 'having infirmity,' offered sacrifices for themselves as well as for the people. The Son "offered up Himself." Law was sealed with the blood of animals; grace is sealed by the blood of Christ.

In view of the foregoing, I think we are now in a position to look at the teaching in chapter 13.

### Wholesome 'Food'

The Writer seems concerned that his readers should be extremely careful to understand Christ aright, for he says, "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein" (13:9). He does not say what these strange doctrines are, but it seems fairly obvious that they are concerned with the eating of meats of animals which have been used in sacrificial rites. Perhaps there is an echo of Paul's teaching here, "But meat commendeth us not to God" (1 Cor.8:8), so he may be referring to pagan sacrifices; or it could be that he was issuing a warning to Jews who were still seeking their salvation by following the sacrificial cult of their forefathers. Whoever these people may be, there is one cardinal point that he does not wish them to miss, these meats, he says, "have not profited them that have been occupied therein."

He then goes on to tell christians that they should have nothing whatever to do with sacrificial foods, "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle" (v10). As we know from our O.T. teaching, the Levitical priests could share in practically all of the food of the sacrificial victims; (see Lev.6:26;10:14f; Numbers 18:9f); the one sacrifice which they were forbidden to eat of was the one when blood was taken into the holy place as a sin-offering for the people, as it is written, "And no sin-offering, whereof any of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of the congregation to reconcile withal in the holy place, shall be eaten; it shall be burnt in the fire" (Lev.6:30). This, of course, would include the sin-offering on the Day of Atonement. This eating of sacrificial foods Paul actually refers to as 'eating of the altar,' "And they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar" (1 Cor.9:13). If we read from Heb. 9:11-14, the Writer there is at pains to point out the excellence of the sacrifice of Christ against the sacrificial offerings of the Levitical priests, and later in the same chapter he says, "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figure of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Not yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others, etc. "We have already established that the Levitical priests had no right to eat of the food of the sin-offering, consequently he is declaring that they had no right to be partakers of the Christians' 'altar', and he is not referring to the altar itself, but to the victim on it, Christ Himself.

The Writer then goes on to refer to the ritual burning of the bodies of the sacrificial beasts which had been used as sin-offerings; this ritual was to avoid pollution of the

city. For the same reason, criminals were customarily put to death outside the city gate. In this way he sees in the sacrifice of Jesus the magnitude of His suffering for the people, "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without (outside) the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." In this way, the Writer correctly sees and portrays the place of Jesus' death as a fulfilment of the law concerning the sin-offering.

### The Christian's Direction

"Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." Leviticus chapter 16 teaches us about the sacrifices made on the Day of Atonement, particularly about the goat offered for the Lord, and the scapegoat. The Lord's goat was offered as a sin-offering, and all the iniquities of the children of Israel, together with their transgressions in all their sins were laid upon the scapegoat and it was sent out by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. Lev. 16:26 goes on to say, "And he that let go the goat for the scapegoat shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward come into the camp." So evidently, the man who let go the scapegoat, after he had been ritually cleansed, returned to the safety of the camp. In contrast to this, the Writer to the Hebrews exhorts christians to remain 'outside the camp,' with Jesus, in the unclean and unsafe world. This is a tremendous thought, indicating as it does that wherever the Lord is there should His followers be with Him, bearing His reproach, feeling the reproach of the world against themselves, perhaps suffering because of Him, but gladly joying to be with Him, because, as the Writer says, "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

The Writer ends this particular section by giving christians an exhilarating exhortation as to what they should do in an alien environment, "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." The christian has to show his gratitude by sharing the benefits of Christ's sacrifice with others. His gracious name should be ever on our lips; His saving power should be told abroad 'in season, and out of season;' His healing balm for a sin-wracked world should be our constant theme. Jesus, our Christ, our Lord, our Saviour. Yes, we will come to You outside the camp.

The few verses we have considered are, to my mind, some of the most beautiful in the Bible. We feel as if we are on holy ground. May this always be our experience as we see the beauty and symmetry of the Word. and as we consider the One whom it portrays. (*All questions to Alf Marsden, 377 Billinge Road, Highfield, Wigan.*)

## COMPASSION

(II COR. ch.8 and ch.9)

(Scripture references at end of each para)

Anxiety that innovations will lead to excesses and deviations is understandable. Emphasis on the external and ceremonial can develop to a stage where it becomes a deviation or even a blasphemy. For example, desire to have fine carved furniture for the table and chairs used at the breaking of the bread can assume an importance that over-shadows the significance of the emblems themselves. Such tendencies often start in small and innocent ways: flowers on the table, decorative cloths to cover the loaf and the cup, fine art work on the plate and the drinking vessel, stained glass windows etc. All these things are very innocent in themselves until for example, one comes to refer to the wooden table as the 'Lord's table,' and the stone or brick building as the 'house of God,' thus taking away from the true house of God purchased with the precious blood of our Saviour, glory that is due to it. Once this stage is reached it's not long before crosses are erected and revered, so-called



pictures of Christ are introduced into literature and displayed in pictures on walls thus tending to blasphemy. One can also understand the anxiety of those who have seen oversights setting up schools whether it be Bible schools, Sunday schools or colleges which have grown to such an extent that the tail now wags the dog.

Many systems start with genuine and sincere motives but eventually get out of hand. Usually they are set up by brethren who wish to deal with an emergency it appearing to them to be the wisest way of doing it at that time. In an area where a group of churches are small and lacking resources, a group of brethren might decide to appeal to brethren of the different assemblies to pool their resources in order for example, to support evangelists, or alternatively to set up a school for training preachers. The danger is that such an organisation could become so powerful that either the individual assemblies do not develop as they should, or when they do develop to such a stage that they could be self-sufficient they find themselves over-ruled by the organisation. In a similar manner a magazine could be promoted either by an assembly or individual brethren through which the views of contributors are disseminated. The influence of the magazine over it's readers could gain such power that it comes to be regarded as an authoritative organ of the church. The question arises, are these things anti-scriptural to start with, or do they only become anti-scriptural when they begin to have an influence which they ought not to have. We can see that a legalistic approach would lead us to conclude either; anything not specifically authorised in the scriptures is anti-scriptural or at the other extreme; anything may be indulged in provided it is not specifically condemned in the scriptures. This subject covers a wide field but the aspect of it with which this article is concerned is the exercise of compassion toward those in physical need.

We are obliged "to work that which is good toward all men especially toward them that are of the household of faith, as we have opportunity."<sup>1</sup> So as the opportunity arises we must to the best of our ability meet it. It is true that the Holy Spirit in his wisdom guided Paul to advise the Corinthian church on a sensible systematic way of collecting money to meet the needs of the poor at Jerusalem. "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come."<sup>2</sup> We also ought to be guided by the wisdom of this passage, but it is obviously not a hard and fast rule to be enforced on all occasions. Paul requires Timothy to "Charge them that rich in this present world, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute and willing to sympathise."<sup>3</sup> It would be foolish to insist that any money, food, or clothing that the rich wish to pass on to others must be done through the weekly collection of the church. Also, emergency measures call for emergency action as when the brethren "sold lands and houses and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet."<sup>4</sup> We must remember that "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath"<sup>5</sup> so that when an "ass falls into the pit,"<sup>6</sup> compassion demands that we in effect break the sabbath. The onus is on us to remember our Lord and Saviour in the breaking of the bread, but if on the way to the meeting place we see a man who has been knocked down in an accident and nobody is there to help him, compassion demands that we attend to that man even though it might mean that we miss the breaking of the bread. It would not be right on the other hand for someone to take this as an excuse for missing the breaking of the bread on the slightest pretext. We can see the wisdom of there being no hard and fast meticulous legislation in these things. Rather we are given guiding principles such as "Not to do evil that good may come"<sup>7</sup> and "Do things honourable in the sight of all men."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gal. 6.10. <sup>2</sup> I. Cor. 16.2. <sup>3</sup> I. Tim. 6.17-18. <sup>4</sup> Acts 4.35. <sup>5</sup> Mark. 2.27. <sup>6</sup> Luke. 14.5. <sup>7</sup> Rom. 3.8. <sup>8</sup> II Cor. 8.21.

It would be wrong for Christians to shelve the responsibility of seeing to the needs of their destitute relatives onto the church, "That the church be not burdened." Also there would be no excuse for a church setting up medical facilities in areas where these are readily available. Also where there are brethren with the facilities for taking-in and looking after orphans the church should not be burdened with the task of setting up an orphan home. We know the possible harmful effects of institutionalisation and that the ideal thing is for brethren to take into their own homes, orphans etc. The ideal and most compassionate thing being to give them as near a normal home background as possible, but in the case of our Indian brethren we are dealing with a situation where the magnitude of the problem is so great that this can rarely be done. Now the ass has fallen into the pit on the sabbath. Do we have compassion on it and get it out or not? These children are much more valuable than many asses, many of them children of our own brethren. 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 sufferings?<sup>9</sup> "As we therefore have opportunity let us do good to all men, especially they that are of the household of faith."<sup>10</sup>(above).

<sup>9</sup> I. Tim. 5.6. <sup>10</sup> II Cor. 8.4.

The information supplied to me is this, that there is an indigenous work going on mainly in Andra Pradesh, being carried out by our Indian brethren with some support from overseas. This is in both preaching the gospel and helping those who are destitute. There are many many lepers, devoid of medical aid and destitute, outcasts from society. Our brethren are helping them to set up homes and agricultural colonies (sometimes with government aid), which hopefully will become self-supporting. Also brethren have set up homes for the children of these lepers, because it is known that if the children are separated from their parents at an early age there is little risk of them contracting the disease themselves whereas if they lived with their parents by the time they are sixteen they also will probably have leprosy. The parents then knowing the risk to their children and also being unable to support them themselves are grateful when they find those who are kind enough to look after the children for them. Generally speaking Indians will not take the children of lepers into their homes, and the problem is so great there are not enough interested Christian Indians with the facilities to look after them. Therefore emergency measures have to be taken.

A man with a broken leg requires crutches and is grateful for them but, when his leg is healthy, with due respect for the assistance the crutches have given him he then lays them on one side. An infant church may feel that it needs the assistance of an evangelist but when the church is established and able to care for itself then there is no justification for clinging on to the evangelist. Whilst our brethren in India are in this plight they need these homes. It may be they develop to the stage when these homes are no longer required and then with loving respect for the help they have received from them they can lay them on one side. On the other hand there would be no excuse for setting up such homes in the affluent countries of England and U.S.A. where there are more than enough brethren to relieve the churches of the burden. However, we who are relatively rich must be ready to "sympathise and willing to distribute"<sup>11</sup> to those who are really destitute<sup>11</sup> even though they may be in a far distant country, just as the brethren in Corinth were encouraged to contribute to the needs of the brethren in far distant Jerusalem.<sup>12</sup> Now the questions begin to arise in our minds. How should we do it? To what extent should we do it? Shall we send money? How shall we send the money? To whom should we send the money? Shall we pay for medicine or shall we send medicine? Shall we pay for the services of a doctor or a nurse or shall we contribute to the support of a doctor or a nurse whilst

the need lasts? Shall we agree to the money that we send being used for food or shelter or implements that they can use to grow their own food? When will it become unscriptural or anti-scriptural? (How many hairs must a man have on his chin before we can call it a beard?). These are issues which we must all face and concerning which we must all make decisions for which we will all be personally responsible. To what extent do we have fellowship with our brethren in their dilemma and to what extent do we, in compassion, extend assistance to those who are not our brethren. It may be that some with clear conscience can take certain actions and others not, but each brother and sister "stands or falls before his own Lord."<sup>13</sup> We are however accountable should we do something which causes our brother to stumble.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> I. Tim. 5.16. <sup>12</sup> I Cor. 16.3. <sup>13</sup> Rom. 14.4. <sup>14</sup> I. Cor. 8.13.

I feel however obliged to point out the dangers of 'anti-ism.' It may be that a brother or sister' conscience will not allow them to pay someone to render medical aid whereas on the other hand they will throw their home wide open to people whom they know to be destitute and in need. Such a person is to be commended and no one has a right to stand in judgement on them. Equally another person might not have the ability or facilities to assist those about whom he is concerned but he is able and prepared to pay someone else to do it and so have fellowship with them in that work. But those who finish up doing nothing at all because of their anti-ism or otherwise, they are spiritually sick.<sup>15</sup> Brethren, don't allow scruples of conscience to become a cover for indifference or indolence.

<sup>15</sup> II Pet. 1.9

The disciples particularly Judas expressed concern that the oil used for anointing Jesus could have been sold and the money given to the poor. Jesus' retort was that "The poor ye have always with you"<sup>16</sup> because He knew that, for one thing, Judas did not care for the poor.<sup>17</sup> If he was really concerned about the poor then he had had plenty of opportunity for assisting them and had not taken it. 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."<sup>18</sup> (The same applies to our concern for the lost in preaching the gospel). There is on the one hand the danger of losing our first love.<sup>18</sup> Forgetting the love engendered within us by he who "Loved me and gave himself for me"<sup>19</sup> which engendered within us the desire to serve him with the whole of our being. On the other hand there is the danger of saying that love and faith are the only things that matter and whether we carry out with precision the commands of our Lord with regard to, for example the breaking of bread and baptism it does not really matter as long as we have faith and love, forgetting that he said "If ye love me ye will keep my commandments."<sup>20</sup> A wilful refusal to carry out any of our Saviours' instructions is evidence of a lack of love for him. Let us both love him and because of our love for him endeavour to carry out all his requests. This involves doing every good work whether it is in preaching the gospel or helping the physically needy. Paul told the Thessalonians "Comfort your hearts and stablish them in every good work and word."<sup>21</sup> How can a person claim to have faith in Christ or love for his brethren if he does not assist them in both their spiritual and physical needs? It is notable that when James says "Faith if it hath not works is dead in itself"<sup>22</sup> he was not dealing with ceremonial doctrine and the preaching of the gospel, (though it would apply equally in such cases) but he was dealing with "If a brother or sister be naked, and in lack of daily food, and one of you say unto them, go in peace, be ye warmed and filled: and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what does it profit?"<sup>23</sup> Practical assistance is an essential part of our Christian life. It is true religion. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world"<sup>24</sup> and this

does not mean just knocking on the door and saying, 'Hello.' Who can persuade the sceptic that one has had a change of life if one doesn't do "Works worthy of repentance?"<sup>25</sup> Has it never struck us that the reason why the Hebrew writer advises us to assemble together is in order to "provoke one-another unto love and good works."<sup>26</sup>

It is so easy to concentrate on worship and study as though they were the panacea for all our spiritual ills that we forget to be benevolent, yet the same Hebrew writer says "To do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices is God well pleased."<sup>27</sup> It is to our shame that we should need reminding of this, because having experienced the love of God and learned from him what love is all about, by the selfless sacrifice of our Saviour, we should automatically love one-another. "But concerning love of the brethren ye have no need that one write unto you, for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one-another,"<sup>28</sup> "and that not in word only but also in deed."<sup>29</sup> The very purpose of Jesus dying on the cross was in order to regenerate us unto love and good works. "For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them."<sup>30</sup> The good works that we do are the evidence and the only evidence that we have been created anew in Christ Jesus. The evidence of Dorcas' love was in the clothes which she had made. The clothes that the widows, who were weeping over her death, held in their hands.<sup>31</sup> They knew that Dorcas had loved them. With her sacrifices God was well pleased. She had fulfilled "THE LAW OF CHRIST."<sup>32</sup> In the same manner we should bear one another's burdens. In Ephesians Paul advises "Him who stole to steal no more but to labour working with his hands the thing that is good that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need."<sup>33</sup> He contrasts their previous manner of life they "past feeling gave themselves up to lasciviousness to work all uncleanness with greediness"<sup>34</sup> with the saying "But ye did not so learn Christ."<sup>35</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Matt. 26 & 11. <sup>17</sup> John 12. 5-8. <sup>18</sup> Rev. 2.4. <sup>19</sup> Gal. 2.20. <sup>20</sup> John 14.15. <sup>21</sup> II Thess. 2.17. <sup>22</sup> James 2.17. <sup>23</sup> James 2, 15, 16. <sup>24</sup> James 1.27. <sup>25</sup> Acts 26.20 and Luke 3.7. <sup>26</sup> Heb. 10.24. <sup>27</sup> Heb. 13.16. <sup>28</sup> I. Thess. 4.9. <sup>29</sup> I John 3.18. <sup>30</sup> Eph. 2.10. <sup>31</sup> Acts 9.36-39. <sup>32</sup> Gal. 6.2. <sup>33</sup> Eph. 4.28. <sup>34</sup> Eph. 4.19. <sup>35</sup> Eph 4.20.

How did we learn Christ? When Jesus said "Believe me for my very works sake"<sup>36</sup> did he mean that when He healed people He only did it to prove His Messiah-ship or was it that He really did care? In the ministry of the Messiah we see the multifaceted wisdom of God. Luke tells us that when Jesus saw the widow of Nain with her dead son "he had compassion on her and said unto her, "Weep not," and "He came nigh and touched the bier."<sup>37</sup> How often in the scriptures do we see compassion of Jesus prompting actions which bespoke his love? When the multitude had followed Him for three days it says "He had compassion on the multitude because they had nothing to eat."<sup>38</sup> Jesus didn't need to touch the blind men's eyes He only needed to say the word but "Being moved with compassion he touched their eyes."<sup>39</sup> To John's enquiries he said "Tell John what things ye have seen and heard! The blind received their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up the poor have good tidings preached to them."<sup>40</sup> How did we learn Christ? Has it altered our former manner of life? When one member suffers do we all suffer?<sup>41</sup> Are we moved with compassion to do works which betray the love of Christ which is in us? Have we "escaped from the corruption that is in the world by selfish desire and become partakers of the divine nature?"<sup>42</sup> If we have not added to "Our godliness love of the brethren and in our love of the brethren love,"<sup>43</sup> and if we relegate the teaching of this sort of thing to a secondary place, then we are "blind seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from our old sins."<sup>43</sup>

We have need to wake-up, otherwise we might not "make our calling and election sure."<sup>43</sup> Paul in writing to Titus requires him to have "men who are able to stop

mouths of those who overthrow whole houses"<sup>44</sup> particularly those who were meticulous in the carrying-out of humanly ordained rituals, "jewish fables,"<sup>44</sup> who when they had opportunity to do "any good work always failed the test."<sup>44</sup> In that letter he reminds them that "Jesus gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works."<sup>45</sup> Note that it is concerning the good works that Paul says "these things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no man despise thee?"<sup>45</sup> Good works are essential. Regeneration is essential. Love must be the motivating force that brings about the good works.<sup>46</sup> Without it our good works are empty, and without it our good works will not profit US anything.<sup>46</sup> Without love there is the danger of exaggerating the good we do as did Ananias and Sapphira.<sup>47</sup> There is no room for boasting, "Not of works that no man should glory."<sup>48</sup> We should by our good work GLORIFY GOD.<sup>49</sup> Jesus tells us to "let our light so shine that they will glorify our Father in heaven."<sup>50</sup> If a change is not evident in us if good works do not follow, how will they glorify our Father?

<sup>36</sup> John 14.11. <sup>37</sup> Luke 7.13. <sup>38</sup> Matt. 15.32. <sup>39</sup> Matt. 20.34. <sup>40</sup> Luke 7.23. <sup>41</sup> I. Cor. 12.26. <sup>42</sup> II Pet. 1.4. <sup>43</sup> II Pet 1.7, 9, 10. <sup>44</sup> Titus. 1.11, 14, 16. <sup>45</sup> Titus. 2.14, 15. <sup>46</sup> I Cor. 13.13. <sup>47</sup> Acts chapter 5. <sup>48</sup> Eph. 2.9. <sup>49</sup> I Pet. 2.12. <sup>50</sup> Matt 5.16.

"The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good tidings preached to them. And blessed is he whosoever shall find non occasion of stumbling in me."<sup>40</sup>

(The above article has been sent in by brother Ashurst in response to the recent question by our good brother Willis, of Dayton, Ohio. The article is long by usual 'S.S.' standards but obviously I was reluctant to split into two. Ed.)

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

### AUGUST 1981

2 II Chron.24,15-25	Mark 15,1-20
9 Psalm 22,1-24	Mark 15,21-41
16 Job 19,19-29	Mark 15,42 to 16,8
23 Genesis 14,1-9	Mark 16,9-20
30 Nehemiah 1	I Thess.1 to 2,9

### THE FINAL TRIAL

We have seen the obvious injustice and mockery of the initial trials of Jesus. There appear to have been three, one before Annas at his house (John 18,13), one before the high priest himself (Caiaphas) and one before the whole "council", members of which had been working for evidence against Jesus by hook or by crook.

Mark seems to have summarised these, and reported the conclusion (14,60-64). The supreme official council of the Jewish authorities merely exhibited the foregone conclusion of condemnation for blasphemy, punishable

by death according to the law of Moses. The confession of the truth enabled them to pass sentence upon the perfect Son of Man, and holy Son of God. There must however be some accusation of breach of Roman law to compel Pilate, its representative, to execute a sentence of death as the privilege had been withdrawn from the Jews on account of their intransigence under Roman rule (regarded by them of course as oppression). So the title KING of the Jews must be the ground for the death sentence. The Emperor could not brook such a claim. Hence the first question of Pilate "Art thou the King of the Jews?"

We find from the accounts that he declared Jesus innocent three times (John 18,38; 19,6; Luke 23,4 & 14). In spite of his personal conviction of Jesus's innocence and the warning from his own wife (Matt.27,19), and because of his fear of a riot, he did in effect pass sentence of death. We ask how could the people who had heard Jesus gladly (Mark 12,37) be persuaded to shout "Crucify Him?" The explanation is apparently that they had been

disappointed of some tremendous call for vigilant manifestation of worldly power and were ready tools for the hatred of the religious rulers. Pilate feared the mob more because Jewish religious discontent had already extracted a measure of tolerance from Rome. The people had surely forgotten the mastery of the storm, the calming of the demoniacs and the diseases which had fled at His presence, His word and His holy touch. The dreadful humiliation He was now receiving at Jewish and Roman hands without resistance indicated to them powerlessness and not surprisingly therefore His claim to be their king (Son of David) to be false. It was decreed in the divine wisdom that He should be "despised and rejected of men," "One from Whom we hid our faces" (Isaiah 53,3).

#### PILATE'S SURRENDER"

"He knew that for envy they had delivered Him up" (Matt.27,18). He knew that the charges were trumped up and false. Rome had nothing to fear from His kingship. One wonders how much indeed he already knew of Jesus. He must have known of His "stirring up the people throughout Jewry" (Luke 23,5), and the harmless nature of the work was watched by Rome we may be sure. He did have glimpse of a true MAN in Jesus, and he feared Him. He longed to release Him. He wanted to escape the predicament. He tried to put it on Herod, but failed — they agreed Jesus was innocent. Herod made "fun" of Him, and vented spite on Him through his men at arms. Pilate presented Him to the people in His degraded and disgraced condition, hoping for pity. He scourged Him thinking this might satisfy their thirst for blood (John 19,5).

Finally almost in spite and terrible sarcasm "Behold your King," and again "What I have written, I have written" (John 19,22). The verdict of history is terrible. He did have power to release Him, but those who delivered Him up,

and drove a Roman judge to crucify an innocent person, had the greater sin. It seems as though the fiends of hell gathered around in the persons of those concerned in this fearful and greatest crime to work together against perfect goodness and divine love. How Jesus towered above His tormentors! There was a second and first warning when Peter denied his Master. There were many warnings when Pilate surrendered to mob violence, and inflicted the lowest form of execution upon the SON OF GOD. "All have sinned" and "the Lord hath laid on HIM the iniquity of us all". When we think of sins like these we wonder the more at the possibility of God's forgiveness. Every spiteful thought however puts us in line with Judas, Caiaphas and Pilate. At some point human sin and weakness are with us all. Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed. Is there not in our hearts a profound pity for the actors in this tragedy? Do we say and mean it — "Lead us not into trial" (Matt.6,13). It is a very humbling prayer, and we do have an assurance that we shall not be tried more than we are able to bear (I Cor.10,13).

#### THE EMPTY TOMB

From the gloomy picture of man's lowest infamy and weakness, we turn to our Saviour's triumph. Death could not hold Him. Mark records the strange boldness of Joseph of Arimathea, significant of the assurance that the goodness of Jesus had made its impression in some educated quarters (as also with Nicodemus).

He was showing respect to a dead man, and fulfilling the divine word — "with the rich in His death" (Isaiah 53,9). It was to the humble loving and devoted women to whom the truth was revealed first because they came to embalm with loving care a dead body! Words can hardly describe their shock and amazement, and to Mary Magdalene first the awful fear that she would not be able to "show her last respects." Then the inexpressible

delight to hear Him say "Mary!" Will not the inexpressible delight be ours when "we shall see Him as He is" (I John 3,2)? "Lord, keep me thine for ever, nor let me faithless prove." Then the varied appearances with five accounts, difficult it may be to piece together, but providing unshakeable assurance to those who knew Him best and closest. The terror of the women soon passed over to joy. They shunned publicity except to the disciples, who had to be rebuked for not at first accepting the report of the empty tomb. They too were mourning and weeping for a lost friend, brother, companion, master, teacher, leader. We try probably unsuccessfully to feel as they felt when the fact of resurrection came home to them. They had forty days of visits and instruction (Acts 1,3), specifically the apostles, but He appeared to many more (I Cor.15,4-8). Quite soon many more heard the truth — including Joseph, Nicodemus, Caiaphas and Pilate. Did they accept it?

### THE GREAT COMMISSION

The concluding verses of this gospel were apparently added by a different writer. The somewhat abrupt ending at verse 8 seemed to require some concluding additional information about the appearances of Jesus, and these are provided in agreement with other records. That Jesus gave the commission as it is recorded here there can be no doubt and it is stated in brief and concise words.

We may compare it with John 3,16 as the basic commandment for propagation as John 3,16 is the basic statement of the truth that God loves. We refer to Matthew 28,19 & 20 and Luke 24,27 and John 20,31 for expansion of "Go preach ... whosoever believeth and is baptised" with the first instructions given to repentant believers by Peter in Acts 2,38 with the promise of the Holy Spirit and His work as given in more detail in the concluding verses of Mark (17-20). That the signs followed there can be no doubt and their purpose was fulfilled when the

churches were established and the New Testament completed. Whatever hand concluded Mark's gospel, we have no reason to doubt its inspiration.

R. B. Scott

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Kitwe, Zambia:** In Zambia heated baptismal tanks in a church building are not the custom. The "baptismal tank" is the nearest river, having checked for crocodiles, and the water heating is free of charge by the African sunshine.

At Chambeshi, during the Sunday morning service in the mudbrick meeting place, a young man and a young woman with a baby on her back confessed their faith in Jesus Christ after the preaching. Immediately the entire congregation marched through the bush — there were no snakes — and witnessed the baptising of the two young people at the river. The Sunday services were then resumed at the church meeting place, as everyone returned singing from the river, with the Lord's Supper and the new Christians broke bread.

A similar story could be told of other congregations on the Copperbelt. At Kamatipa seven men and women put on Christ in baptism at the local river. At Race Course, one of our weaker congregations, there were five baptisms and more are expected. And thrilling news comes from Chinsali in Zambia's Northern Province where there have been twelve baptisms — from the pioneer evangelism of American teacher, Sam Ezell. We believe that teaching people to believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and be baptised is good and Biblical and we make no apology for it! — Chester and Angela Woodhall.

**Slamannan District:** The Quarterly Mutual Benefit Meeting was held at Haddington on Saturday, 7th June when the subject under discussion was "Has the age of miracles ceased and if so what do we make of the claims of miracles in

these days?" In the chair was Bro. Moncrieff (Haddington) and the speakers were Brother Black (Dalmellington) and Bro. J. Colgan (Tranent). The subject was ably introduced by the two speakers and an hour's discussion followed. Perhaps less than the usual heat was generated but an enjoyable time was had nevertheless. We were pleased to welcome two visitors from the 'States' — Joe Norton and Wayne McKamie from McGregor, Texas, who are holidaying in Britain just now. — H. Davidson.

### WANTED: GREAT HEARTS

The Word is solemn, therefore don't trifle.

The task is difficult, therefore don't relax.

The opportunity is brief, therefore don't delay.

The path is narrow, therefore don't wander.

The prize is glorious, therefore don't faint.

### PRAYER

Prayer is the impulse of the renewed soul; and the constancy of its beat is the test and measure of its spiritual life.

(O. Winslow)

Prayer will make us leave off sinning, or sinning will make us leave off praying.

(A. Fuller)

### A CHURCH MEMBER

Am I an active member, the kind who would be missed?

Or am I quite contented that my name is on the list?

Do I attend the meetings and mingle with the flock?

Or would I rather stay at home and criticise and knock?

Am I alert to do my part to help the work along?

Or am I satisfied to know that I at least belong?

### THE NURSES PRAYER

Dearest Lord, may I see Thee today and every day, in the person of Thy sick and whilst nursing them minister unto Thee.

Though Thou hidest Thyself behind the unattractive disguise of the irritable, the exacting, the unreasonable, may I still recognise Thee and say, Jesus, my Patient, how sweet it is to serve Thee. Lord, give me this seeking faith, then my work will never be monotonous.

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