

The **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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HAVE HOPE IN GOD

Last week a newspaper article highlighted the apparent increase in the suicide rate, not only in this country but in the world at large. Particularly alarming is the increase in suicides amongst young people: people who should be at their happiest stage of life. As a consequence, there was, according to the article, an urgent need for additional volunteers to man the 'phones at "Samaritan" Centres where counselling is given to those on the verge of ending it all. Various reasons have been advanced as likely causes for the increase, but clearly the general breakdown of society, and collapse of traditional values, have been largely to blame. The upsurge in divorce has caused massive unhappiness not only for the adults but also for the children, with a legacy of depression, estrangement and "tug-of-love" situations causing real anguish and heartbreak. Add to this the slough of despond caused by widespread unemployment sweeping the country: school-leavers unlikely ever to work, and middle-aged redundants scratching around for any kind of job but rarely finding it. Staff in the Citizens' Advice Bureaux are presently overwhelmed with enquiries from people, literally at their wits end, trying to meet their financial commitments. Many are over their ears in serious debt; small businesses are going bankrupt and homes are being re-possessed. These are obviously fertile areas for some finding it all too much to take, but, quite apart from those who want to end it all, there are vast numbers who eke out a wretched existence on a day-to-day basis, and some say "there is not much to live for": and some have "nothing to look forward to". Psychiatrists tell us that to sustain interest in life a person must always have something to look forward to, and certainly the most cheerful and happy people in this world seem to be those with interesting and varied lifestyles.

Several years ago, a film-crew from the USA took TV pictures of crowd scenes in some of the large cities in Britain: e.g. people struggling through the crowds in "rush-hour" London, Britain, etc., and described the British as "Those who rarely smile," and who look so worried and miserable. Nothing much has changed, I suppose, except that we probably look even more miserable. There is certainly a mood of hopelessness in many parts of the country just now; a mood which seems unlikely to change in the short term. One often encounters in this locality, a car-sticker (usually on the rear window) which states, rather cryptically, "There Is Hope" but which otherwise does not offer any clue as to where this hope might lie, and it must be quite baffling to passers-by. The theme of this article is that **THERE IS HOPE** and I shall try to be more forthcoming on the subject than the car-sticker. Yes, the world can be a cruel place; a sad and lonely place; but all its gloom can be greatly lightened by the **blessed hope** which is to be found in Christ Jesus. Suicide is such a tragic waste of life.

THE ONE HOPE

The word "Hope" comes from the Greek word *Elpis* and means "a desire of some good with the expectation of receiving it: confidence and anticipation." Faith is a close cousin to Hope and the writer to the Hebrews says that "**Faith is the substance (assurance) OF THINGS HOPED FOR . . .**" (Heb. 11:1). We are not likely to find a whole variety of hopes in the N.T. for Paul says that just as there is one body; one Spirit: one God; one Lord; one faith; and one baptism in the N.T. there is only one hope. That hope is centred in Jesus Christ and in God. Indeed, God is the "**God of hope**" and Paul prayed (for the Christians at Rome) that "**the GOD OF HOPE would fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may ABOUND IN HOPE, through the power of the Holy Spirit**" (Rom. 14:13).

Alexander Campbell remarked that hope differs from faith in that it always looks forward and never looks back. Not only does hope never look back but neither does it ever contemplate the present, for as Paul says, "**What a man sees what does he yet hope for.**" A hope fulfilled is cancelled thereby "**But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it**" (Rom. 8:24). Thus the Christian hope is yet future and will encompass only **good events**: albeit all events of the future will not be good. There is no discordant note or threatening cloud around the Christian hope – all is bright, cheerful, happy and glorious. "**The things hoped for**" have God's sacred guarantee of fulfilment, being based upon His covenants, charters, oaths and promises in which it is quite impossible for God to lie. Hope is a combination of desire and expectation. Many things may be desired without any expectancy of their arrival. Likewise we sometimes have to expect things we do not desire but in the Christian hope desirable things can be confidently expected. "Hope" is used *subjectively* and *objectively* in the scriptures in that, while it is often *a condition of the mind* it also refers to "the things hoped for."

HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL

When I was a small boy, many of my friends used to attend a regular religious gathering (for young people) called "The Band Of Hope" and, as can be imagined, this group was subjected to a great deal of ribaldry and mockery, especially for having the audacity to imagine that this "silly little band" should claim any exclusive rights to "Hope." Even today, people are largely cynical about hope: not just the Christian hope but hope generally. Samuel Johnson said, "Hope is itself a species of happiness, and, perhaps, the chief happiness which this world affords." La Rochefoucauld said, "Hope, deceitful as it is, serves at least to lead us to the end of life, along an agreeable road." Robert G. Ingersoll, the atheist, said, I suppose it can be truthfully said that hope is the only universal liar who never loses his reputation for veracity." Alexander Pope's well-known quotation on hope is:-

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast,
Man never *is*, but always *to be* blest."

These sentiments of Pope's on worldly hope are not far wrong, for, in the world at large, man is rarely blessed but has to be content with promises that, some day, *he will be* blessed. However, Pope's remarks can never apply to those who seek God's blessings and His hope. God blesses men now, but will bless them even more in the world to come. Indeed men have **NO HOPE** unless they seek their hope in God. Solomon said, "**The hope of the righteous shall be gladness but the expectation of the wicked shall perish. When a wicked man dieth his expectation shall perish.**" (Pro. 11:7). Jeremiah could say, "**Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose HOPE the Lord is.**" (17:7). This is borne out by Paul's words to former Gentile aliens, when, speaking of their previous condition, he said, "**That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having NO HOPE, and without God in the world. But now, in Jesus Christ, ye who were sometimes afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.**" Thus the

Christian hope is, as the term suggests, restricted to those who have embraced the gospel of Christ, and thus is not enjoyed by the world at large. God certainly offers His hope to the world, on an on-going basis, but few express any interest in this gracious offer.

Again, Paul said to the church at Thessalonica **"But I would not have you ignorant brethren concerning them which are asleep (deceased) that ye sorrow not, even as others which have NO HOPE."** (1 Thess. 4:13). Plainly, Paul draws a distinction between those will die "in hope" of future happiness, and those who will die with no such hope. And the distinction consists of confessing Christ and devoting our lives to His service. Followers of Jesus have hope beyond death: those who reject (or just ignore) Christ and His gospel will die with no form of hope whatsoever. Thus the "voice from heaven" could say to John **"Write. Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."** (Rev. 14:13).

"THE THINGS HOPED FOR"

What, then, are some of the things hoped for?

(1) The hope of "the resurrection of the dead."

When Paul stood trial before the Sanhedrin he declared, **" . . . for the HOPE of the resurrection of the dead am I called in question"** (Acts 23:6) a fact he reiterated a little later when being tried by Felix: viz. **"And (I) have HOPE towards God, which they (the Jews) also allow, that there shall be a resurrection from the dead, both of the just and the unjust."** And when tried before Agrippa Paul said, **"And now I stand and am judged for THE HOPE of the promise made of God unto our Fathers . . . For which HOPE'S sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?"** (Acts 26:6). The apostle Peter said, **"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a LIVELY HOPE by the resurrection of the dead."** (1 Peter 1:3). Jesus said, **"I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me though he were dead yet shall he live"** (John 11:25). Paul says, **"If in this life only we have HOPE in Christ we are of all men most miserable. But now Christ is risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD. For, as in Adam all die, even so in Christ Jesus shall all be made alive."** (1 Cor, 15:19).

In view of this hope we need no longer fear the power of death but can ask with great confidence, even at an open graveside, **"O death where is thy sting: O grave where is thy victory?"**

(2) The hope of the Second Coming of a Triumphant Christ.

Paul advised all Christians **"To live soberly, righteously and Godly in this present evil world, looking for THAT BLESSED HOPE and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."** (Tit. 2:12). God's unfolding purposes will culminate in the destruction of this world and the glorious appearing of a triumphant Jesus on the last day. Peter urged his brethren to have a mature regard for the promises of God and said, **"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, AND HOPE TO THE END for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ"** (1 Peter 1:13). To **"see Him as He is"** is the HOPE of John (1 John 3:3). The men of Galilee who were favoured to witness Christ's ascent on high were informed that He would come again **"in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."** Paul says we should **"wait for His Son from heaven"** (1 Thess. 1:10). Heb. 9:28 says **"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many: and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin unto salvation."**

Thus the bright appearance of the Lord is one of the things we hope for, and confidently expect for as Paul says, **"When Christ, who is our life shall appear, then we shall also appear with Him in glory."** (Col. 3:4).

(3) The Hope of a Heavenly Dwelling.

Paul told **"the faithful brethren"** at Colossae that he gave thanks to God **"For the HOPE which is laid up for you IN HEAVEN, whereby ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel"** (Col. 1:5). Jehovah's Witnesses (so called) claim that only 144,000 will be allowed into heaven, and Christadelphians claim that man's hope is in a renovated Palestine, but the N.T. has no such ideas. Jesus, with His feet planted firmly on Palestinian soil said, **"I GO, to prepare a place for you . . ."** and the **"prepared place"** is not Palestine but heaven: and heaven is for all the faithful (not a few thousand). Again Jesus said, **"Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth . . . but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . . For where your treasure is there will be your heart be also."** (Matt. 6:19). Speaking to God's faithful the writer to the Hebrews says, **"For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have IN HEAVEN a better, and enduring substance."** (Heb. 10:34). The same writer also said, (of the faithful) **"But now they desire (not Canaan) but a better country that is, an HEAVENLY, wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God for He hath prepared for them a city."** (Heb. 11:16). And Peter describes the **"living hope"** of the Christians as **"an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, RESERVED IN HEAVEN for you."** (1 Peter 1:4).

(4) The Hope of Everlasting Life.

Jesus said that those who followed Him, and had **"left all"** to follow Him would not be losers thereby. They would receive not only great blessings in this life, but would receive **"in the world to come, everlasting life"** (Mark 10:30). Jesus also said, **"He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath life everlasting . . ."** (John 5:24) He also said, **"My sheep hear My voice and they follow Me. And I will give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish . . ."** (John 10:28). Paul said that God would reward every man according to his deeds and **"To those who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour"** God would give them **"Immortality and eternal life"** (Rom. 2:7). And Paul referred Titus to **"THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began"** (Titus 1:2). John said, **"And this is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life"** (1 John 2:25). John also said, **"And this is the record: that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is His Son."** (1 John 5:11).

CONCLUSION

Space is short and I have confined a mention **"Of the things hoped for"** to the above four items but there are, of course, many more. One rarely sees an article written on this subject and yet the Christian Hope is, as we have seen, referred to many times in the scriptures and Paul, to the Corinthians, said that the three abiding things were **"Faith, HOPE and charity (love)."** Paul also advises us that Christian hope is born of the gospel but even the things written in the O.T. **"were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have HOPE."** He also said that **"Patience produces experience and experience produces HOPE, and hope maketh not ashamed"** (Rom. 5:4).

Hope comes to us through the grace of God and is based on the promises of God. This hope is offered to everybody, but before we can hope in Christ we must also have trust in Him: and have faith in Him. We must repent of our past ways of life be immersed for the remission of our sins, and pledge ourselves thereafter to obey Christ in all things. Sadly the vast majority of people ignore God's offer, and walk down the broad way that leadeth to destruction. And tragically tens of thousands die in the world every day **"without hope."** They die as does the brute beast. Dr. Richardson in **"Memoirs of A. Campbell"** relates the following anecdote concerning a conversation between Alexander Campbell and Robert Owen, the materialist with whom Campbell engaged in public debate upon **"Evidences of Christianity"**. Mr. Owen visited Mr.

Campbell at Bethany to make suitable arrangements for their approaching public discussion and was shown around the property at the farm. When they came to the little cemetery belonging to the Campbell family, Mr. Owen stopped and addressed himself to Mr. Campbell and said, "There is one advantage I have over the Christian – I am not afraid to die. Most Christians have a fear in death; but once a few items of my business were settled I should be perfectly willing to die at any moment." "Well" answered Mr. Campbell, "You say you have no fear in death, but have you any hope in death?" After a solemn pause "No" said Mr. Owen. "Then" rejoined Mr. Campbell (pointing to an ox standing nearby) "You are on a level with that dumb brute. He has eaten until he is satisfied and stands in the shade whisking off the flies; and he has, like you, **neither hope nor fear in death.**"

The ocean of life can be a dangerous and a lonely place: with storms, angry billows, rocks and quicksands. Many have succumbed to the storms of life and have "made shipwreck of their faith." Some without faith are also without hope and it is very sad to hear of the increase in the number who take their own lives. Storm-tossed mariners on the sea of life need to have an anchor as well as skill and courage. "Hope", says the writer to the Hebrews is an anchor to the soul. He says, "**we have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the HOPE SET BEFORE US which hope we have as an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast . . .**" (6:18). May we all, dear readers, avail ourselves of this Christian hope, this anchor to the soul, and may we also, when we have it, seek to "**be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason for the HOPE that is within us, with meekness and fear.**" (1 Peter 3:15).

The Psalmist, Sweetsinger of Israel, like us all, had his full share of dull days and sad days. His remedy was to ask himself "**Why art thou cast down O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God.**"

If life becomes too much for us we should copy the Psalmist. Place our trust and our hope quite firmly in God.

"HOPE THOU in God." There's a lot to hope for.

EDITOR.

GLEANINGS

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

KNOWING

"I know the gloom amid the mirth
The longing for the love of earth;
But now I know the Love that fills,
That gladdens, blesses, crowns, and stills,
That nothing mars and nothing moves –
I know, I know that Jesus loves." F.R.H.

"AND THE LIFE"

"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6).

As Professor Joad would say, (a member of the "Brains Trust" many years ago) "It all depends what you mean by life."

That mighty man of God, the Apostle Paul, reminds us (in 1 Cor. 3:9) that we have a part to play, in seeking out in God's Word, not what Professor Joad would have said, but what the Holy Spirit would shew us: the real meaning of "AND THE LIFE."

"The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Genesis 2:7).

"And the angel said unto her, Fear not Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS

Then said Mary unto the angel. How shall this be seeing I know not a man? And the Angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:30,31,34,35).

"And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." (Luke 2:7).

"AND MAN BECAME A LIVING SOUL"

"THAT HOLY THING"

"AND THE LIFE":- PURE. HOLY. UNDEFILED. BLAMELESS. SPOTLESS.

Then came the fall of the first man, and the necessity for the coming of the second Adam, The first fell -

The second:- "I do always those things which please Him." (John 8:29).

"Which of you convicteth me of sin?" (John 8:46).

"I AM - THE LIFE"

God through Christ is available to human life.

TRANSMISSION: THE FATHER - THE SON.

"As the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in himself." (John 5:26).

"In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." (John 1:4).

"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me," (John 14:6).

HOLY GROUND

"Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." (Exodus 3:5).

"AND THE LIFE"

"For the Life Was Manifested."

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us);

That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." (I John: 1-4).

Apparent . . . unconcealed . . . prominent . . . in the foreground . . . in the limelight . . . clearly visible . . . very evident . . . for all to see.

"WHICH WE HAVE HEARD"

Peter and John before the council. "And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, and Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem." (Acts 4: 5-6).

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." (Acts 4:13) . . . "And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:18-20).

"THEY HAD BEEN WITH JESUS . . . WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD"

Compiled by Leonard Morgan.

INSPIRATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Few religious people deny the reality of the new birth. To be sure, a majority of them have warped ideas of the new birth, ranging from a mystical experience to self-consciousness; but few of them outwardly deny it. On the other hand, it is extremely easy to find among these people who profess to believe in the reality of the new birth a large number who deny the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. Others accept the fact that the Scriptures *were* the inspired word of God, but contend that we do not possess the inspired word of God today because we do not have the original documents. Others contend that only the Greek is inspired and no translation can be called the inspired word of God. Is it possible to have a new birth without having the verbally inspired word of God?

Christ taught, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Later, in John 6:63, he said, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Peter enforces this in 1 Peter 1:22-23: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto an unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently: having been *begotten* again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible through the word of God, which liveth and abideth." (Please note carefully the emphasis upon the word.)

Now let us consider the teachings of these combined passages. Christ declares that in order for one to gain entrance into the kingdom of God he must experience the new birth which consists of the elements of water and spirit. He later expounds upon this thought and clarifies it by saying, "It is the Spirit that giveth life ... the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and they are life." Peter's statement further clarifies the function of the word in the new birth by pointing out that the word is the incorruptible seed by which we are spiritually begotten. In baptism, we experience the coming forth of water (Rom. 6:1-11).

If we do not possess the verbally inspired word of God today, we do not possess the truth, the incorruptible seed, which is necessary to the spiritual birth. If we do not possess the inspired word of God today, we do not possess the words which are spirit and life. If the Bible which we possess today is not God's divinely inspired word, it is sterile. Sterile seed produces no life.

Peter affirms in 1 Peter 1:23 that "the word of God liveth and abideth forever." It was alive (liveth) and would continue to live forever. Only a limited faith and faulty vision would affirm that we must have the original manuscripts of the original writers in order to have an inspired New Testament. When Christ and the apostles quoted from the Old Testament, they did not have access to the original documents penned by Moses and the prophets and often quoted from the Septuagint or Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures.

The early Church used the **Septuagint** which drew criticism from unbelieving Jews. One passage of dispute was Isaiah 7:14. The Jews contended that the Septuagint's translation of the Hebrew *almah* into the Greek *parthenos*, which indisputably means virgin, was inaccurate and should be "young woman." (Modern scholarship, so-called, is really ancient unbelief). When Matthew penned his gospel, he either quoted from the Septuagint or used his own inspired translation and chose the Greek word *parthenos*. Is the Septuagint's *parthenos* any less inspired than Matthew's?

Symbolism and Reality

Words are symbols which stand for a reality. For example, the letters w-a-t-e-r stand for an element of creation composed of two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen and chemically delineated as H₂O. In Greek the letters are transliterated h-u-d-o-r. Neither the symbols H₂O, water nor *hudor* are water. The next time you get thirsty, cut the word "water" or "hudor" out of this article and try drinking it! But all three

symbols represent, to those who know their meaning, the same element. Translators are not divinely guided today, but when they accurately translate the words of one language into those of another, neither the truth nor the inspiration is lost. A translation ceases to be truth or inspired only when the reality behind the symbol in the original language is lost. All religious truth is inspired or it is not the truth (see John 16:13). We are not born of the letters w-a-t-e-r and s-p-i-r-i-t, but of the realities they convey.

The word translated "inspiration" means "God breathed." In other words, God breathed his word into the instruments of revelation. It was not just some vague idea that he gave, but the very words themselves which God intended to convey to them. **"But we received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth but which the spirit teacheth, combining spiritual things with spiritual words"** (1 Cor. 2:12,13). The "spiritual things" are the realities, and the words symbolise them. The words which the writers used were words taught by the Spirit or breathed in by God.

It would seem as foolish to affirm that we must have the original documents penned by men and breathed in by God as it would affirm that we must have the original breath which God breathed into Adam in order to have the breath of life in us. Although the original breath was extinguished at the death of Adam, through the power of God, the breath of life continues to give life to the flesh. And likewise, although the original documents which were inspired of God have long since disappeared, God through his power sustains his word which quickens the souls of men.

God did not create Adam and breathe into him the breath of life just to let it vanish at Adam's death. Neither did he breathe into the apostles the breath of spiritual life to let it disappear at their death. We may not know how God has preserved his word for us – do we fully understand how he has preserved the breath of life? - but by faith we accept the fact that if God loved us enough to reveal his will to us and give his Son to die for us, he loves us enough to preserve his word for us so that we might take advantage of that death.

To ensure that we have the word of God and not a mutated seed, it may be wise to compare translations or study from the original languages, but let us never allow our faith to be so small as to demand the original autographs of the original writers on the original documents before we accept them. After all, how would we be sure that they were the original autographs? Our faith must not be in the integrity of man so much as in the integrity of God. Either we must deny the reality of the new birth and consequently salvation, or we must accept the fact that the New Testament is divinely inspired and divinely preserved by God.

D. Campbell.

No Man Careth for My Soul

David said, **"I poured out my complaint ... I looked on my right hand and beheld, but there was no man that would know me; refuge failed me; no man careth for my soul"** (Ps. 142:2,4). David was right! Indeed, very few people care whether we live or die. We would be shocked to learn how few people care enough for us to breathe even our name once in prayer to God. The question is: do we care?

What does it mean to care for the souls of others? It means that we must have a deep and heartfelt conviction of the worth of the soul. Jesus placed its value above the total wealth of this universe. There is no amount of wealth that can equal the worth of just one soul!

We must have a deep and thorough sense of the danger to which the soul is exposed. While the soul has the potential to dwell eternally in heaven, it also has the potential to dwell eternally in hell. Jesus taught us that more will go to hell than to

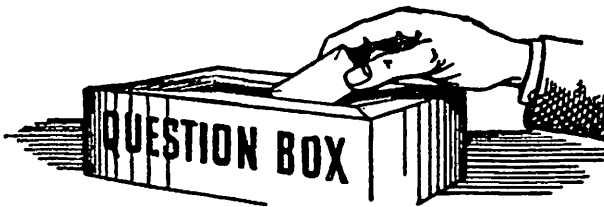
heaven. He taught his disciples that they should not fear man who could only kill the body, but rather they should fear God who could destroy both body and soul in hell.

If we really care for souls of others we need to, in tender solicitude, reach out to them. Paul instructed Christians to seek their fallen brethren and try to restore them; but be sure to do it in a spirit of meekness, tenderness and a willingness to forgive one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us.

If we really care, we will dispense zealous exertion for their salvation. Jude instructed Christians, "**And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.**"

This caring for the souls of others falls upon the shoulders of some very specific people. Paul instructed fathers that they were responsible for the spiritual welfare of their children. Then in Hebrews 13:17, pastors are exhorted to fulfill their duty, by watching for the souls of those over whom they have oversight. The main work of the elders is that of caring for the souls of people, especially, God's people. Then, in Hebrews 10:24-25, the Holy Spirit broadens this care to be the concern of every Christian. Christians caring for Christians! We are to be exhorting and encouraging others to be faithful to the Lord, day by day.

K. Marshall.



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

"Would you please explain 1 Cor. 2:16. What is the difference between the 'mind of the Lord', and the 'mind of Christ'?"

I think it would be helpful to quote 1 Cor. 2:16; it reads, "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

THE CONTEXT

In 1 Cor. 2, Paul contrasts the world's wisdom with the wisdom of God. He asserts, "**But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory**" (v7). This 'wisdom in a mystery' was the revelation of God concerning Christ, as he makes clear in Eph. 1:9,10. None of the princes of this world discerned this for, Paul says, "**Had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory**" (1 Cor. 2:8). He makes it clear that the natural man of the world could not have known these things because they are 'spiritually discerned', and he is indicating here that in general the world is spiritually ignorant. Therefore, the spirit which permeates the world results in a wisdom which decrees that to preach Christ is foolishness, but it is precisely this kind of 'foolishness' which God has used in order to make the revelation of His mind to mankind concerning salvation. So we see man's wisdom at variance with God's wisdom, even to the extent that man was willing to crucify the Lord of glory in order to demonstrate to God how 'foolish' He really was. This sets the scene for us to explore the mind of God in more detail.

THE MIND OF THE LORD

This, of course, is 'the mind of God'. The Greek word used for 'mind' is **NOUS**, and indicates purpose, and counsel(s). We understand, of course, that the purposes and counsels of God are *His* exclusively. The mind of God is unsearchable by man.

Isaiah made this plain in O.T. times, **“Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him”** (Isa. 40:13, but read from v12 to v17). How can the *created* teach anything to the Creator. The clay hath no power over the potter; he either discards it if unsuitable, or works it according to his desire. Because God is God, natural, created man must always be inferior to Him; as Isaiah says again, **“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts”** (Isa. 55:8,9).

We are left with the very definite idea that God, in His dealings with man down the ages, has revealed to man only those things which He wanted him to know, and which were for his good. This revelation has been considerable, of course, and is contained in the Book we call the Bible; but even though considerable, it is by no means *everything*. God’s express purpose has been that man should be saved from sin, and He has counselled people all down the ages to this end. His ultimate revelation was in His Son, and in His Son He revealed Himself to the extent that His love, compassion, grace, and power were quite evident to all. He spoke His thoughts *through* His Son, as He had done through others in earlier days. In doing this, He made it clear that even though there are many blessings *laid out* for us here on earth, there are many more delights *laid up* for us in Heaven, and since we cannot search His Will, we have little knowledge of the extent of the delights which His Almighty Power can bring into being: remember, He created the heavens and the earth with a *word*, **“Let there be light, and there was light.”** He spoke, and it was done. *He* did not use any cosmological machine in order to further His Divine Will. He is GOD, and may we never forget that: Isaiah didn’t, **“For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for him”** (Isa. 64:4). The most amazing thing to me, though, is that the Christian, *while here on earth*, can begin to plumb the deep things of God. The in-dwelling Holy Spirit is our Mentor and Counsellor; listen to Paul again, **“For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God”** (1 Cor. 2:11). In v10 he says, **“The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”** That Holy Spirit in-dwells *us*, dear brethren. Let us listen to His promptings.

Therefore, we must conclude, I believe, that man, with his considerable scientific knowledge, is yet strictly limited in his knowledge of cosmic reality. Stephen W. Hawkin, in a recent book entitled *“A Brief History of Time”*, propounds a concept know as ‘Theory of Everything’, as a theory in which all of space and time are unified. He reaches a conclusion like this, and I quote, **“We shall all . . . be able to take part in the discussion of why it is that we and the universe exist. If we find the answer to that, it would be the ultimate triumph of human reason – for then we should know the mind of God.”** Unquote. This desire of man to know the ultimate reality – the mind of God – is thought to be the end of human reason, bolstered by the all-compassing benefits of scientific knowledge, no doubt. But I seem to recall that this glittering prize was dangled before Adam and Eve in the Garden, **“then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil”** (Gen. 3:5). Perhaps man’s aspirations in this respect are like the Alchemist’s dream of turning base metals into gold and silver. Anyway, God has said that it can’t be done, and for the Christian that should be the end of the matter, irrespective of the multitude of mathematical equations that man may advance for knowing the mind of God.

THE MIND OF CHRIST

In view of what I have said regarding God revealing Himself in Christ, the reader may ask, **“Well, what should be so different about the mind of Christ?”** I have tried

to point out, with the aid of Scripture, that the mind of God is so vast and unknowable, that man will never apprehend the full scope of it by natural and scientific means. On the other hand, Christians are exhorted to *have* the mind of Christ. **“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,”** Paul writes to the saints at Philippi (Phil. 2:5). This is essential for the well-being of the Church, as Paul explains, **“that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind”** (2:2). If the Church follows this directive, then it will be permeated by the mind of Christ, and not by man.

It is the mind which determines our attitude to life and to other people. If we are asked to have the same mind as someone else, then that mind must be an exceptional one: in the case of Christ it was, and is. If we are exhorted to *have* the mind of Christ, then we must be able to achieve what He achieved; not in the sense of being able to be the Saviour of the world, but in our attitude to life in general. I like the words of J. B. Phillips on Phil. 2:5, **“Let your attitude to life be that of Christ Jesus himself. For he, who had always been God by nature, did not cling to his privileges as God’s equal, but stripped himself of every advantage by consenting to be a slave by nature and being born a man.”** Oh! how often *we* try to *elevate* ourselves rather than humbling ourselves. How difficult we find it sometimes to give up some little thing, and yet *He* gave up the joys of Heaven quite willingly. Furthermore, what about obedience? Sometimes, it seems to me, we have the strange idea that when we were obedient to the terms of the Gospel in Baptism that this is all that God requires of us. Obedience is on-going all through our lives. Christ procured our salvation, and in doing so He was expressly carrying out the plan of God, obedient to it in every sense. Don’t we Christians realise that by having the mind of Christ we have become extended instruments in God’s glorious plan for mankind? Listen to Paul again, **“continue to work out (at) your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and do what pleases Him”** (2:12,13 N.I.V.).

The mind of God, and the mind of Christ. In the first case unsearchable in its eternal, omnipotent, and omniscient power; in the second case, revealed in all its quality, sincerity, and glory, so that we can be partakers of it to the continuity of the Church, and the glory which should be attached thereto. Brethren, we should marvel that God has conceived this great plan for the salvation of mankind, and privileged that we should be instrumental in furthering it.

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

OUR JOB: EVANGELISE

Our job is to take the gospel to every soul on earth. No one argues with that, But our actions fall short. We have allowed other activities to sideline our primary obligation. It’s so easy to become consumed with other things. Even “church activities” can become sidetracked, and we can become so concerned with “self-feeding” and “self-serving” that we don’t reach the outside.

So many of our church activities have turned inward. Many of our activities are structured for us. Many of our buildings are built for us.

I HAVE OTHER SHEEP

Earth’s population is staggering. There are 4½ billion souls on this planet. Nothing is as important as reaching out to each of these never-dying souls. God’s love and grace sent him in hot pursuit of the lost. It should spur us on the same evangelistic mission.

Remember Jesus’ words?

“I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice” (John 10:14-16).

Jesus looked beyond his immediate disciples. Beyond Jew and Gentile. He looked across centuries and said **"I have other sheep . . ."** He sees his sheep where we do not. Gold is gleaming where we haven't discovered it. Jesus can look at atheists and see them as potential preachers and teachers. He can look with eyes of compassion on drunkards and prostitutes and see them as potential sons and daughters of God. He can look into the darkened corners where we've never dared go and say, "These are my sheep."

They may not have heard his gospel yet. But they are there. Waiting to hear the message. Waiting to be won. They are his. We must claim them for him.

I MUST BRING THEM

Jesus views these people saying, **"I must bring them."** Hear that imperative note? **"I must bring them."** Jesus lived and died under the pressure of that great must.

What of us? Are we living under this great "must"?

RESULTS ASSURED

The results are assured: **" . . . They will heed my voice,"** he promised. When the gospel is delivered, men will hear it, believe it, obey it. Wherever we go, they will heed it if we will preach it. Not every person. Some may push you away. Some may scoff. Some may remain hard and indifferent. But, praise God, some will heed. No matter what nation. State. Community. Jesus has some sheep there waiting to be claimed.

Paul was terribly discouraged with his work in Corinth because there were no results. The Lord tapped him on the shoulder one day and said, "Paul, don't be afraid, I have much people in this city." Hallelujah! He must have thought, "I don't know who they are, I surely haven't had much success in finding good prospects. And I don't know where they are. They may be over there in the idol temple. They may be wallowing in moral filth. But they belong to Jesus. I'll search until I find them and bring them to him."

Does he still have sheep which haven't been brought into the fold! Yes. More than ever. Where? Everywhere. In factories. Businesses. Homes. Farms. Hospitals. On buses. Trains. Airplanes. Cars. Everywhere.

EVANGELISM IS THE ISSUE

George McLeod said it well:

"I simply argue that the cross be raised again at the centre of the marketplace as well as on the steeple of the church. I'm rediscovering the claim that Jesus was not crucified in a Cathedral between two candles, but on a Cross between two thieves. On the town garbage heap, on a crossroad so cosmopolitan they had to write his title in Hebrew, and in Latin, and in Greek. Or shall we say, in English, in Bantu, and in Afrikaans. At the kind of place where cynics talk smut, and thieves curse, and soldiers gamble. Because that is where he died and that is what he died about, that is where we as Christians should be and what we should be about."

We must get to the people with the message. There is no time for petty, insignificant issues. The issue is evangelism. Evangelism must be our aim, our priority, our consuming passion. We must lay our lives and our fortunes on the altar for evangelism.

J. R. Barnett.

Do good in the world for it will do you the world of good

Make peace in the Church not pieces of the Church

Paul did not tell us to walk worthy of our vacation, but of our vocation

Only the One who hung upon a cross can effectively get rid of the hang-ups in your life

SCRIPTURE READINGS

July 3	Daniel 3:8-30	Acts 4:1-22
July 10	Psalms 2:	Acts 4:23-37
July 17	Prov. 12:1-22	Acts 5:1-16
July 24	Jer. 38:1-18	Acts 5:17-42
July 31	Exod. 20:1-17	Acts 6:

PERSECUTION

The early disciples suffered much for their Lord. Many of them resisted unto blood. They believed that serving Jesus was a cause worth living for and a cause worth dying for. For example, the apostle Paul later said: **“And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Spirit witnesses in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry, which I have of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God”** (Acts 20:22-24). Oh to have a faith like that!

The apostles succoured the minds of their persecuted brethren and exhorted them to constant patience and perseverance. Peter wrote in his first epistle: **“Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf”** (4:16). It was the Lord who said: **“Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for their’s is the kingdom of heaven”** (Matthew 5:10). Of course, the Lord Himself suffered much persecution and, therefore, could rightly encourage His followers. Jesus has never asked us to do anything that He was not prepared to do Himself. He is a wonderful Saviour because **“when He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judges righteously; who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree: by whose stripes you were healed”** (1 Peter 2:23-24).

THE SANHEDRIN AND PETER

The Sanhedrin was the supreme court of the Jews. It was composed of seventy-one members. Scribes, Rabbis and Pharisees, priests and Sadducees, and elders were all represented on it. William Barclay has written “When we read Peter’s speech and remember to whom it was spoken, we recognise one of the world’s greatest demonstrations of courage. It was spoken to an audience of the wealthiest, the most intellectual and the most powerful in the land and yet Peter, the Galilean fisherman, stands before them rather as their judge than as their victim. Further, this was the very court which had condemned Jesus to death. Peter knew that he was taking his life in his hands.”

Peter was a different man now before the Sanhedrin because he was filled with the Holy Spirit. He stood not on his own strength, but in the strength of Almighty God. No more was he to deny his Lord. In fact, he was now to become one of God’s great servants in taking the gospel message to a hostile world.

I like what he said in his defence to the Sanhedrin: **“We ought to obey God rather than men”** (Acts 5:29). And despite the beating he received with the other apostles, we read: **“They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ”** (5:41-42). Their faith and steadfastness are an example to us all.

ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA

Ananias and Sapphira were guilty of lying about the price they received from a sale of land. Peter was not taken in by their deception. He accused them of lying to the Holy Spirit and, therefore, to God.

One commentator has detailed the background to the affair thus: “The original congregation of saints in Jerusalem included many widows within its fold. All the members were Jews, among whom the synagogues always cared for

their widows with special concern. A voluntary arrangement was introduced among the saints whereby those who wanted to could sell their real-estate and chattels and deposit the receipts with the apostles. The apostles then purchased and distributed a daily allotment of food, paid for from the fund that was created under his agreement. There was no compulsion to sell and even those who did so were not obliged to bring it to the apostles. Ananias and his wife were perhaps motivated by desire for praise . . .”

Why was God so severe with them? It is a question I have often thought about. We must remember that such events happened in the early days of Christianity. A directness of dealing was, therefore, essential for the fulfilment of the Divine purpose. Such directness is no longer essential as the New Covenant Scriptures are now available to give guidelines for spiritual and moral behaviour. Albert Barnes commented: “In the very beginning of the Christian Church it was important, by a decided and awful act, to impress upon the Church and the world the danger and guilt of hypocrisy . . . If the apostles showed that they could detect hypocrisy, even where most artfully concealed, it would establish the Divine authority of their message.”

IAN S. DAVIDSON, Motherwell.

A THOUGHT

Holidays are an important part of the family year. The weeks of anticipation, the careful planning, scrimping and saving, seem all worthwhile when we get away. Leisure and time off is very necessary. When God is in the picture, an added bonus is received. Try to make the holiday fit in with a visit to a local church. Take time to be holy.

REST

After the disciples first preaching tour, Jesus said to them, “Come aside into a desert place and rest awhile . . .” Mark 6:31. He went on to comment that there were, “many coming and going,

and they had no leisure so much as to eat.” Have you found yourself saying, “I am so busy, I can hardly find time to sit down and relax?” If so, plan some leisure time in your holiday. Even take time to be holy.

SHARING

A second element for a successful holiday is sharing. A time of sharing the chores, the planning, the errands, yes even the word of God. Show the faith, share the faith, live the faith. In this you will show to others that indeed you are a Church member. Take time to be holy.

ADVENTURE

An ideal holiday also involves a spirit of adventure. Do this by exploring a new area. Look around. A Christian family might be in the area. Share the love of God with them. Let it be seen. Take time to be holy.

When going on holiday take someone with you. Share it. When going away make sure that you take Jesus with you. In Him, is all joy, pleasure and happiness to be found. Just don't keep the faith – share it.

Have a good holiday.

A. P. SHARP,
Newtongrange.

LIFE IS LIKE A BOOK

Your life is like a book. The title page is your name. The preface is your introduction to the world. The pages are a daily chronicle of your efforts, trials, pleasures, discouragements, ambitions and achievements. The principal subject of your book may be business, romance, tragedy, comedy, science, literature or religion. Day by day your thoughts and acts are being transcribed.

What you will record on the remaining pages is of vital importance. Hour by hour a record is being made which will stand for all time. One day “Finis” must be written. Let it then be said of your book that it is a record of noble purpose, generous service and work well done.

OBITUARIES

Dennyloanhead: We deeply regret to report the passing on April 26th, 1994, of our esteemed Bro. Andrew Scobie at the age of 58 years. Andrew had been ill for some time yet never complained, and was always present at the Lord's Table, and all other gatherings of the church, until eventually prevented by his illness.

He was baptised into Christ at the tender age of 12 years at Wallacestone, where he worshipped regularly and grew into a mature Christian. In 1965 Andrew and his wife Jenny came to work with the church at Dennyloanhead where he zealously served the church until his passing. A keen Bible student, he loved the Lord's work and it was a joy to hear him so ably proclaim, and defend, the faith. The church here is very much poorer by his loss and we pray that the Lord may help us by raising others to take his place.

Bro. Ian Davidson, Motherwell, conducted the funeral service at Camelon Crematorium, at which a large number of brethren and friends gathered to pay their last respects.

We commend dear sister Jenny and her family: and also our dear sister Margaret Scobie (Andrew's mother) to the grace and comfort of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Joe Malcolm (Sec.)

Hindley: The church here regrets to report the passing of our brother John Breakell, in his 91st year.

For 20 years he has served the church here: and as an elder for part of that time.

Of his earlier life this writer has little knowledge. He was born in a poor but loving Christian home, and for a time worked in the pits but later in Insurance where he had a reputation for integrity.

Our brother had more than his fair share of trouble: and whereas some brethren lose their partner, John lost three wives. A lesser man would have been crushed under such sorrow but

John had total trust and confidence in God's providence. Like Job of old, he could say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him, for I know my Redeemer liveth."

Over the last few years our brother suffered much from ill health and memory loss but always retained his reliance on God.

John was well versed in God's word and preached from an early age both in his native Lancashire, in Wales and many churches in the land: setting out in simple terms "the unsearchable riches of Christ." Being a good communicator made him excellent at visiting the sick and bringing comfort to others.

To his family we offer our deepest sympathy in their loss. We, his brothers and sisters, await the Lord's return when we, with John, will meet the Lord in the air. The funeral took place on 15th April, 1994, in the church building and later at Wigan Crematorium: the writer officiating.

John Morgan

THANKS

Alf and Edna Marsden wish to thank all brethren and friends who have visited, telephoned, sent cards, and prayed for us during Alf's recent illness. The fellowship of the church is indeed wonderful.

John Wilson, Newtongrange, would like to thank all the brethren and friends who have sent cards and made telephone calls during his recent illness and visits to hospital. These have been a great source of encouragement and John and family have greatly appreciated them.

Jenny Scobie, the five 'boys' and sister Mrs. Margaret Scobie would like to thank all those who have supported them during the long period of Andrew's illness with visits and telephone calls. Also for the cards and other tokens of sympathy at Andrew's funeral: and for their presence on that sad occasion.

THE HEAVENS DECLARE THE GLORY OF GOD

Here I could indulge in a great many learned statistics, which, however, would not be of the slightest use to you. The average mind (the author's mind included) is simply not fit to follow such calculations with any degree of comfort.

Take light, for example. Light travels at the rate of 186,000 miles per second. It goes seven times round the earth while you snap your fingers once. And yet the light from the nearest of the fixed stars (Alpha Centauri, if you want the correct address) must travel four and one third years at the rate of 186,000 miles per second ere it strikes our eyes.

The sun can reach us in eight minutes and Jupiter in three minutes, but the Pole Star, which plays such an important role in the science of navigation, would need 466 years to send us a single ray of light.

Alas most of us get slightly dizzy when we are asked to "imagine" such a distance, and the very idea of a light-year, or the distance covered by a single ray of light in a single year, or $365 \times 24 \times 60 \times 60 \times 186,000$ miles, becomes something so enormous that as a rule we say "Oh, yes," and then go out and play with the cat or turn on the radio.

But we are all familiar with railway trains. Let us try it that way: An ordinary passenger train, going day and night without stops, would need five-sevenths of a year to reach the moon.

But it would need three hundred years to get to the Sun. It would need 8,300 years to get to the suburbs where the planet Neptune lives.

All that, however, would be mere child's play compared to a trip to the nearest of the fixed stars, for that would mean a voyage of 75,000,000 years.

As for the Pole Star, the train would need 700,000,000 years to get there and 700,000,000 is a long time, a very long time.

If we put the duration of life for the average human being at about 70 years (which is a very sanguine estimate), 10,000,000 generations of human beings would have been born and would have died ere that train got to the star of the mariner.

Daily Express.

Beware of the half-truth because you may get hold of the wrong half.

Christ is not valued at all unless He is valued above all

Christianity has not been weighed in the balances and found wanting.

It is the balance in which we shall all be weighed.

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