

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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GOING FOR GOLD

Surely nobody on this planet, with access to a TV set, can have been unaware that, over the last two weeks or so, we have witnessed another Olympic Games. Indeed the Centennial Olympic Games, held in City, U.S.A., this month, celebrated the fact that it is one hundred years since a Frenchman decided to resuscitate the Olympic Games in Europe (albeit the games originated in Greece about 500 years B.C.).

The "spirit" of the games is supposed to encompass the ideal that winning is not nearly as important as "taking part" but judging from the sometimes hysterical demonstrations of delight on the part of the winners, and the doleful tears of the losers, one can only suppose that "taking part" comes only a close to second to winning. It also seems that winning is regarded so highly that some athletes are quite prepared to enhance their performance by illegal drug-taking and "to win at all costs." And sadly, it seems that the games, which perhaps at one time did bring the nations together in friendly rivalry, are being *commercialised* out of all proportion, and the staging of the games involves the outlay of vast sums of money in the hope of making even greater sums of money; making the actual athletics a mere side issue. And so it is not just a question of *the athletes* "going for gold"; fat businessmen were there as well, with the same idea: "Going for Gold".

"We're going for gold" seemed to be the theme of the games this year, and perhaps it could also be the theme of this article. Very few of the athletes interviewed said that they had come "to take part," but most assured us that they were "Going for gold." Obviously the best medal was the golden one, followed by silver and bronze and this order of merit shows that the respective value accorded to those three metals has never changed since Biblical times: illustrated perhaps ~~by the fact~~ that when Jesus sent out the twelve on their first commission He told them "to provide neither gold, silver nor brass in your purses." (Matt. 10: 9).

GOLD

Although gold is not nearly as useful a metal to man as iron or copper, gold has always fascinated man, and throughout the ages he has not only been dominated by it; but has been lured by its bright colour to endure terrible hardships; to murder; to inflict sufferings on others and even to go to war for it. To possess gold, to the majority of men, is the highest objective in life. Nations used to trade widely on the "gold standard" for when the value of coinage and paper money fluctuated wildly, gold was much more stable, and gold is still the final means of paying debts between nations. Man's interest in gold goes back to the dawn of time. In Genesis we read that the river which went out of Eden divided itself into four heads, and "the name of the first is called Pison, that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold and the gold of that land is good; there is bdellium and the

onyx stone." (Gen. 2:11).

Thereafter most wars in ancient times were principally for gold as loot, and Alexander the Great is said to have brought back vast quantities of it from his conquest of Persia. It was the promise of gold from the Indies which helped Columbus to get support for his expedition, but wherein he failed to find it others (The Conquistadors) followed, and inflicted unspeakable slaughter and barbarity on the natives of the West Indies, Mexico and Peru; illustrating the power of gold to debase men. The influx of this stolen gold, by Spain, flooded Europe with the metal, and many a fine lady sported a golden ornament which had cost the lives of many innocents.

During the dark ages gold-mining seems to have languished but the magic remained and alchemists sought the "Philosopher's Stone" which would turn base metals into gold. Later demands for gold world-wide led to large finds in Africa, Canada, U.S.A., South Africa etc., and many "Gold Rushes" demonstrated that gold has never lost its fatal fascination to man as thousands trekked over continents for thousands of miles, endured great privations, and often died in the process.

To the chemist and physicist gold is not a particularly interesting metal but is extremely ductile and from a single ounce a wire can be drawn 50 miles long and a three-inch cube of gold can be beaten flat enough to cover an acre of ground. Being a soft metal it is often alloyed with other metals to firm it up (i.e. for coinage) etc. and the fineness of gold is expressed in terms of carats; 24 carat gold being the most refined. Gold can resist chemical action better than other common metals, but can, however, be dissolved by a cocktail of certain acids which the ancients called "aqua regia" - (Royal Water) i.e. the "acid test" of the metal's integrity.

GOLD IN THE BIBLE

Notwithstanding the bad press given to gold and its known tendency to corrupt weak men, the metal has its legitimate uses, and figures quite largely in the Bible, especially the O.T. As we have seen, "gold from Havilah" appears as early as Genesis Chap. 2 and was used widely for *coinage*; for *chains* (Gen. 41:42); for *earrings* (Judges 8:26); for *rings* (S. of Solomon 5:14) and for *crowns* (Ps. 21:3 where David reflects upon all God's blessings to him and where God in addition to giving him length of days "settest a crown of pure gold upon his head"). Gold was used widely in the making of the temple and the tabernacle, and the vessels thereof. For example we read, "And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the holiest of all, which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold wherein was the golden pot that had manna and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant". (Heb. 9:4). The Queen of Sheba's gold (1 Kings 10:2) was legendary and she brought vast amounts to Solomon (who already had accumulated great quantities of it) and her gold is mentioned even by David (Ps. 72:15). David's personal contribution of 3,000 talents of gold for use in the temple building was from Ophir (a place unknown but thought by Josephus to have been in India and which involved a 3-year voyage in the getting there and back) and Eliphaz also mentions "the Gold of Ophir" as a reward for Job if he "repents". (Job. 22:24).

There was much trading of gold in Biblical times, as well as now, and an interesting passage in Rev. (18:11), describing the demise of Babylon and its merchants, catalogues the items of trade and places them *in order of merit and value*, with gold heading the list, viz. "And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her (Babylon) for no man buyeth their merchandise any more. The merchandise of GOLD, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine, and all manner of vessels of ivory, and all manner of vessels of the most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, frankincense and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts and

sheep, and horses and chariots, and slaves and souls of men." And so gold heads the list, and slaves (and men's souls) are at the bottom. The same metal put to a good use can, of course, also be put to an evil use and gold has been used widely in the pursuit of idolatry and false gods. Early on, God warned Israel "Ye shall not make with Me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold" (Ex. 20:23) but quite soon thereafter, as Moses came down from the mount, he was met with the singing and dancing of the people as they worshipped the golden calf "And Moses returned unto the Lord and said, Oh this people have sinned a great sin, and have made gods of gold." (Ex. 32:31). This was but the beginning of Israel's long flirtation with idolatry.

Nothing much had changed by NT times and gold was still as highly regarded: indeed it was one of three gifts brought by the wise men to the baby Jesus: "gold, frankincense and myrrh." It was still in short supply, however, to even the apostles, and Peter had to say to the beggar "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have I give unto thee." However, Peter's wonderful gift to the beggar turned out to be something gold could never have bought. Paul in turn, didn't see much of gold either, but it was of little interest to him, and he could say to the elders at Ephesus "I have coveted no man's silver or gold, or apparel, Yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me" (Acts 20:33).

Gold has its place but must be kept there. Jesus pointed this out to the Pharisees in Matt. 23 saying "Woe unto you ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple: it is nothing, but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple he is debtor." The gold of the temple could never be greater than *the actual temple* but there are still many involved in religion who are involved in it for the gold that can be made from it, and are "Going only for the gold."

VESSELS OF HONOUR

In every household whether in the kitchen, parlour or the bathroom there are various types of vessels and utensils made from different types of material; and designed for different purposes. Paul makes reference to this when he says, "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earthenware: and some to honour and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these (impurities previously mentioned) he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, prepared unto every good work" (Tim. 2:20). Yes, in a great big house there would be vessels of gold but unlikely in the poor man's house: but the principle remains the same; i.e. various vessels have differing purposes, from slop-pails and dustbins to vases and scent bottles. If a person wishes to be a noble (*or gold*) vessel in the Lord's great "house" (the church) then they must "purge themselves" from all false doctrines and other impurities, (mentioned immediately previously by Paul) and stand ready and prepared for the Master's use. Honour and dishonour refers to *the type* of use to which a vessel is put. The *material* from which a vessel is made was (and still is) a guide to its importance and value i.e. slop-pails are not usually made of gold or decorated with precious stones. God is looking for vessels unto honour, sanctified, meet for the Master's use and prepared unto every good work. Should we not be "Going for Gold"? Paul, himself, was, of course, a vessel of much dishonour prior to his transformation and conversion. Seek to be a vessel of Gold in the Lord's house.

Paul in his first epistle to the Christians at Corinth (3:9) says "For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry: ye are God's building. According to the grace which is given unto me as a wise master-builder I have laid the foundation and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus. Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood hay or stubble.

Every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." By God's grace Paul was the discreet master-builder who had laid the foundation of the Lord's church in Corinth. He was away from Corinth now, of course, and others would soon be building on that sure foundation. But what were they building? Paul predicts that the outcome of others' preaching efforts, the standard of workmanship, would vary widely and could be represented by the differences between gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and even stubble.

"Let every man take heed what he builds thereon" says Paul. Why? Because someday their workmanship will be critically examined and tested by a blowtorch. Wood, hay and stubble will obviously be blasted away at once, and only work of *substance and worth* will survive the test; i.e. the GOLD, silver and precious stones. Thus all our work in the Lord will one day be subjected to God's testing fire and only that which is of solid quality will survive. Do our efforts in the vineyard resemble *gold* or silver, precious stones or wood, hay or *even stubble*? Should we be aiming for gold? Yes, we should be "going for gold".

THE REFINER'S FIRE

The scriptures talk not only of gold but of "fine gold" reflecting the fact that even gold can hold impurities and requires to be put through a process of refinement; a process which involves a crucible of great heat, i.e. the refiner's fire. The analogy our afflictions in the crucible of life can be easily transferred to "The Refiner's Fire". The traumas, disappointments and tribulations of life have a refining effect upon our characters and hopefully we emerge from our troubles in a stronger condition. God said to Israel "And I will bring the third part (of Israel) through the fire and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried, they shall call on my name and I will hear them" (Zech. 13:9).

Job eventually understood the purpose of his afflictions and said that although he could not see God he could sense His presence, saying, "But He knoweth the way that I take; when He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10). The Psalmist said "The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times" (Ps. 12:6).

It is said that a refiner of gold repeatedly skins off the dross and impurities which come to the surface of the crucible until a point is reached when *he can see his own reflection* on the surface. Then he knows the work is complete. God likewise casts His children into the cauldron of adversity (or character building) *until such time* as their refinement of character is such *that His own image* is more easily seen in their lives. The apostle Peter eulogising on the lively hope of the gospel says "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:7).

Faith tried by fire is much more precious than gold even very fine gold. May God be able to see, in an ever increasing degree, His own reflection in the lives of all His servants.

CONCLUSION

The Atlanta Games celebrated one hundred years of the Olympic Games. The people of Paul's day could have celebrated a history of 500 years of the Games and Paul; from the allusions he makes to the games; was obviously quite familiar with them. He mentions *wrestling* (Eph. 6:12) and *boxing* (1 Cor. 9:26) and mentions *running* and he mentions *the training* that athletes for these events must inflict upon themselves to gain a prize. For instance he said "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize. So run that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is

temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown but we an incorruptible. I therefore run not as uncertainly; so fight I not as one that beateth the air. But I keep under my body and keep it in subjection lest by any means, when I have preached to others I myself should be a castaway." And Paul was able to comment intelligently upon the race because he himself was a runner in it. Indeed it was his sole interest. He said "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." And in the closing stages of the race, in "the home straight" Paul could say, "I have fought a good fight. I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto ALL THEM that love his appearing." (2 Tim. 4:4). Paul was going for gold: the golden crown of righteousness - i.e. life everlasting with God.

We smile at the attempts the Egyptian Pharaohs made to take their gold with them for we know it can't be done. This however does not stop most men from trying to amass as much of the stuff as possible. Paul said "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out." (Tim 6:7). The only thing to follow the dead into the next world is their works: "and their works do follow them." The literal 24 carat gold must be left behind in the vaults for others to squabble over, and the spiritual gold (or silver, or wood hay or stubble) is carried forward into the next world to the Great Assayer who will test our work with a blast of fire and determine its true quality. It is up to us, in this lifetime, to "go for gold". Its the only chance we'll get.

EDITOR

GLEANINGS

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

LITTLE THINGS

The Lord Said

"Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."

Matthew 10: 42

LITTLE

Little drops of water, little grains of sand,
 Make the mighty ocean and the beautiful land.
 Little deeds of kindness, little words of love,
 Make our earth an Eden, like the Heaven above.
 Little deeds of mercy, sown by eager hands,
 Grow to bless the nations far in heathen lands.

LESSONS FROM LITTLE THINGS

"A cup of cold water . . . in no wise lose his reward." Matthew 10:42.

"A little oil in a cruse . . . The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.

1 Kings 17:12, 14.

"A little maid . . . Would God my Lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for He would recover him of his leprosy . . . Then went he down, and dipped himself

seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."

2 Kings 5:2, 3, 14.

"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

Galations 5:9.

A little member . . . "Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth."

James 3:5.

The little foxes . . . "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes."

Song of Solomon 2:15.

"Four things that are little - Ants - Conies - Locusts - Spiders." Proverbs 30:24-28.

A TINY THING

A hinge is a tiny thing, compared to the door on which it is placed; yet it swings the greatest door outward and inward. What seems to you a very unimportant question of right and wrong may prove the hinge on which your life swings toward good or evil destiny.

The Pilot.

WE QUOTE FARRAR

"Little self-denials, little honesties, little passing words of sympathy, little nameless acts of kindness, little silent victories over temptations: these are threads of gold which when woven together gleam out brightly in the pattern that God approves."

SOMEONE HAS SAID

"Kindness is love doing little things, things that seem scarcely worth doing, and yet which mean much to those for whom they are wrought. Kindness lends a hand when another is burdened. It speaks the cheerful word when a heart is discouraged. It gives a cup of cold water when one is thirsty, It is always doing good turns to somebody. It goes about performing little ministries with a touch of blessing. It scatters its favours everywhere. Few qualities do more to make a life bright and beautiful! Lord, make me kind today, full of love."

THE BIBLE SPEAKS

Rahab and the Spies

"Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall."

Joshua 2:15.

"Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee."

Joshua 2:18.

A LITTLE CHAMBER . . . A BED A TABLE

"Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be when He cometh to us, that he will turn in thither."

2 Kings 4:10.

A LITTLE MAID

"And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife."

2 Kings 5:2.

Selected by Leonard Morgan.

HEBREW SCRIPTURE ENIGMAS RESOLVED

(1) THE SEED OF THE WOMAN

The New Testament scriptures, the Apostle Paul's first letter to the evangelist Timothy chapter 2 verses 13 and 14 "For Adam was formed first, then Eve, and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor."

Definitions:

"Apostle," from the Greek word *apostolos*, means one who is sent or an envoy, in this case, as in most instances in the New Testament, it refers to a personal envoy of Jesus the Christ.

Christ is from the Greek word *christos* and means "anointed one", or "Messiah".

"Evangelist" is from the Greek word *euangelion* meaning "a messenger of good information".

The word "testament" is from the Greek word *diatheke* which means a will or testament. The Greeks had no word for the Hebrew word "berith". Their word *diatheke* was used consistently in the Greek scriptures where *berith* was intended. The word "covenant" is the nearest English equivalent to *berith*. So "covenant" should always be understood when we read "testament". A covenant is when one party lays down conditions on which benefits will be conferred. The other party has to agree with and comply with the conditions to gain the benefits.

The New Testament scriptures were written in Greek, presumably because it was the international language of that time.

IN WHAT WAY WAS EVE DECEIVED?

Adam and Eve in their state of innocence were given one simple test of their trust in their Creator, not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Satan appeared to Eve as a snake:

The Hebrew scriptures, called by Christians the Old Testament, the first book, Genesis, chapter 3 verses 1 to 6 "Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, Did God say, You shall not eat of any tree of the garden? And the woman said to the serpent, We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but God said, You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die. But the serpent said to the woman, You will not really die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate".

Eve was deceived into thinking that God is devious, that God was holding back from her something beneficial, Satan having said "for God knows - that you will be like God"

The issue contested (and finally vindicated) through the whole Bible from beginning to end, is God's veracity. The lie is: God is devious. The Truth is: the God is totally holy and absolutely honourable. Satan is trying to gain supremacy by casting doubt on God's veracity.

The Letter by the Lord's brother James, chapter 1 verses 16 and 17 "Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren, Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from

above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow cast by corners." Also the Apostle John's first letter, chapter 1 verse 5 "This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all".

NOTE HOW EVE SUCCUMBED TO THE TEMPTATION:

The New Testament, the Apostle John's first letter chapter 2 verses 15 to 16: "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If any one loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world. Also the world passes away, and the lust of it; but he who does God's will abides for ever"

1) "The lust of the flesh": "the woman saw that the tree was good for food".

2) "The lust of the eyes": Eve saw that "it was a delight to the eyes".

3) "The pride of life": "the tree was to be desired to make one wise". Satan's words were: "your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil".

Temptation always comes in one or more of these three ways. Eve should have protested: "God would not lie to me", but she succumbed to the attractiveness of the temptation and concluded: that Satan must be right, because it looked good and she could not see anything wrong with it and that God was deceiving her in denying her what would be to her advantage because it would be to His advantage. After all didn't Satan say "you will be like God". So came sin, guilt and tragedy into the world.

Verse 13 "the LORD God said unto the woman. What is this you have done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I ate."

Instead of nipping it in the bud, Adam was weak and turned the blame on God. His words were "the woman you gave me."

Verse 12 "The man said. The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."

WHAT ABOUT SATAN?

Verses 14 and 15 "the LORD God said unto the serpent. Because you have done this, you are cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field, upon your belly shall you go, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed, it shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

Only relatively recently has medical science discovered that women have "seed" as well as men and that it is the combination of these that produces a child.

Here it talks pointedly of the woman's seed but not the man's, of her offspring, not his. How was a woman going to have offspring without a man being involved?

When would Satan's head be bruised by this offspring of the woman?

From the beginning of the Hebrew scriptures, we have statements and incidents that do not make sense, until they are seen fulfilled in the introduction of the new covenant.

REFERRING TO SATAN AS THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD, THE LORD JESUS TALKS OF HIS IMPENDING EXECUTION: -

The Gospel according to the Apostle John chapter 12 verses 31 to 33 "Now is the judgement of this world now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw everyone to Me. This He said, signifying what kind of death He would die" . . .

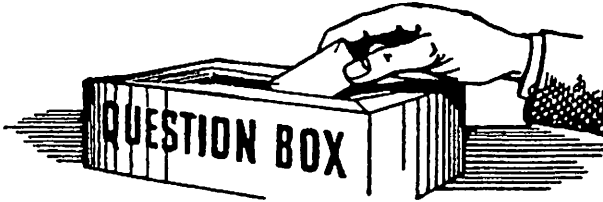
AND ALSO OF HIS TRIUMPHANT RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION:-

John 14:27 to 30 "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you, not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. You heard Me say to you, I go away, and I will come to you. If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced, because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. And now I

have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place, you may believe. I will no longer talk much with you, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no power over Me."

So Satan bruised the Lord's heel. In so doing his head was crushed.

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Conducted by
Alf Marsden

"What should be the main ingredients of the Breaking of Bread Service?"

By 'ingredients' I take it that the questioner has in mind those aspects of praise and worship which most assemblies of Christ normally engage themselves in, so I shall proceed along those lines. I think it might also help if I gave a little background to illustrate the importance of the Breaking of Bread Service.

THE BREAKING OF BREAD SERVICE

Why do we have a Breaking of Bread Service? (sometimes called the Lord's Supper, or the Eucharist). The simple answer is, I suppose, because the Lord Himself ordained it. We hold it on the Lord's Day, and this is the first day of the week, Sunday. A special honour was reserved by the Apostles for Sunday or Resurrection Day. It was on the first day of the week when Jesus appeared to His disciples. Luke 24: John 20: 1-26.

Pentecost, of course, was the Jewish harvest festival held on the 50th day after the 2nd day of the Passover. See Lev. 23:11, 15. The Holy Spirit fell on the disciples on the first day of the week. The Christians at Troas in Paul's time seem to have regarded that day as the stated one on which they were to assemble to break bread. Acts 20:7. On the same day the Christians were to lay by in store money which they were to give to charitable work. 1 Cor. 16:2. We remember, of course, that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper after eating of the Paschal Feast. The object was to keep Him in remembrance (His body symbolised in the bread; the new covenant in His blood symbolised by the cup). Luke 22: 19, 20. It was to 'show forth His death till He come'. 1 Cor. 11:25, 26.

I have given this brief resume to show that the first day of the week was a very important day both for the Lord and the Apostles. The Breaking of Bread on this day was for remembrance, thanksgiving, prayer, and celebration (of the resurrection), and so on. Today, when we meet on the first day of the week for the Breaking of Bread, all of these 'ingredients' must be attended to, and we do despite to the Lord if we try to alter it in any way.

THE 'INGREDIENTS'

The Service should be held every Lord's day and all Christians who can **should** attend. Even though we meet corporately in our various assemblies, the Service is intensely individual and personal; we are saved individually and we walk individually, but the fellowship with other saints is of incalculable benefit. So we praise, pray, worship and give thanks both corporately and individually.

Each assembly is autonomous. This has given rise to the fact that there are differences in

the way that some assemblies administer the Feast. Some use one cup, others more than one, while others have individual containers for the wine. As regards the Bread, some use wafers, others a baked bun of some description. The principle is that there should be a 'joint sharing', and each assembly must decide in its collective wisdom which method best expresses the principle. In my opinion, there should be no acrimonious debate or discontinuance of fellowship inter-assembly; the Lord will sort it out at the end. We can rest assured that Satan benefits most from seeing the Lord's Body torn apart by internal strife.

Mutual ministry extends across a wide area of the Church's work. I remember the time when mutual ministry meant, in some people's minds, 'mutual mouth'. i.e., the ministry of preaching and teaching from the platform; that is part of mutual ministry, of course, but there is obviously more than that. We minister to each other in what we call 'the prayers of the Church', and I think we would all agree that any brother in this part of the worship-service has the right to unburden his heart in prayer of behalf of other Christians. We also minister to each other in visitation, help when in need, consolation when trouble strikes, and in so many other ways; this surely is the essence of fellowship in the Church; long may we maintain it. In our assemblies we want to develop the 'thinking Christian', and the 'leave it to him' attitude is anathema to most thinking Christians. I would like to remind readers of what the post-Pentecostal converts did (see Acts 2:42).

Every Lord's Day, as we get out of our cars and engage ourselves in pleasantries and small-talk, we must disabuse our minds of the idea that we are meeting in order to demonstrate our compliance with God's command; we should always have at the fore-front of our minds that our primary objective is to worship God and His Christ, and that every activity we engage ourselves in should be to that end. 'To worship' means 'to adore', and to adore indicates to our minds that we approach with the utmost respect and reverence; it seems that these very desirable elements are missing in many respects. There is a general hubbub before the Service starts, and we do not seem to get the contemplative mood that we ought to have. The Lord has promised to be with us in Spirit when we meet in His name, but if He appeared before us on one Lord's Day, I wonder what our reaction would be? As we saw that patient and loving face, perhaps smiling a little sadly at us, but always in love; and as we saw the marks of suffering inflicted by unthinking and uncaring men; would we not want to prostrate ourselves before Him and cry, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?" But surely the Spirit-filled life must always understand that He is ever present in Spirit, both in our Meetings, and in our personal lives. Why should our reactions be different? This is a great puzzle to me. I would like to leave you with two trite sayings. One is that "familiarity breeds contempt"; most Christians would hold up holy hands in horror at the mere suggestion that they were in any way contemptuous of the Lord, but perhaps our actions say something different. The other one is, "absence makes the heart grow fonder"; I'm not too sure that this applies across the physical/spiritual divide.

We usually praise God by singing hymns and spiritual songs. This is an avenue for elevating God and His Christ, but at the same time it also elevates our own hearts. How often have we been thrilled and inspired by great hymns sung from the heart? I have never understood why some Christians, who seem not to have any vocal or respiratory problems, can stand with mouths closed when the praises to God are ringing in their ears; a great mystery. It is a shout of acclamation, if you will, or it is the quiet and deeply reverent soul reaching out to its Creator. And even when the voice has grown weak and tremulous, the melodies can still come from the heart and race through the mind, and remind us that thanksgiving is not only for this life, but will continue through eternity.

CONCLUSION

So there it is. The 'ingredients' of worship, prayer, praise, and thanksgiving must always be present in the Breaking of Bread Service on the Lord's Day. But remember; everything

must be done 'before God'. If we keep that in mind, then our worship will be designed to please Him.

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

IN THE MINISTRY

Who qualifies as a minister? Does the term only apply, as used in the world today? Do priests, vicars, pastors, elders and deacons exclusively come under this calling? For the answer we need look at the origin of the word "minister".

In the Hebrew "minister" comes from the root verb *SHARATH* which had the meaning of, one who serves. In the New Testament Greek an equivalent word is "*DIAKONOS*", a literal meaning is, through (Dia) and dust (Konis). It would have the meaning of one, who became dusty by running in the service of God and fellow humans. This, it may be noted, refers to both men and women. In some of our Bibles, "minister" is translated as "DEACON". A more accurate meaning would be to minister (one who ministers or serves). Indeed a servant.

The finest example of a faithful and true minister is that of our Lord Jesus. You see, a minister provides both spiritual and practical help. Jesus provided this all throughout His earthly ministry. All, the Apostles were ministers. We note Paul was greatly favoured and blessed by becoming the Apostle or minister to the Gentiles.

Part of our ministry is to serve others just as Martha did. In Scripture we find many examples of women witnessing and serving; certainly not an exclusive domain of man. We must realise we all have a share in the ministry: find out what it is and begin to work at it. We all have talents of some sort or another, so use them to the glory of God, and be blessed.

We are here to serve Church, Christ and yes, the brethren. Use your talent, great or small, to its full capacity, in this you will be blessed. It's ordained by God.

Praise the Lord . . .

Andrew P. Sharpe,
Newtongrange.

ROBERT BROWN (1918 - 1996)

(ULVERSTON)

AN APPRECIATION

Robert Brown was born on May 21st, 1918. He died on July 13th, 1996. "Bob" as he was best known to many brethren and friends - was baptised in September, 1950 in Hindley, and immediately became active in the work of that congregation. Later his wife Emmie was also baptised, then their two sons - Rodney and Colin - followed their parents' example.

After Emmie's death Bob married Miriam Partington (on April 16th, 1966), and subsequently both became active workers in the congregation at Ince - formed by brethren from Hindley. In 1976 they, along with their daughter Joanna, moved to Ulverston, where the congregation met in a hired Hall. The brethren purchased a building which had been part of the town's Corn Mill (built in the seventeenth century), and Bob devoted many hours daily working on it. Brethren from other congregations helped, but it is true to say that Bob did more - far more - than anyone else to transform this building into an attractive place of worship for the Lord. In a very real sense our meetinghouse is a permanent memorial to him.

When Jean and I came to live in Ulverston (in 1987), Bob was already actively involved in church work - preaching and teaching publicly, and ever-ready to engage in private

discussion of the Scriptures with others. He was truly a faithful fellow-worker, a beloved brother and friend. When he was incapacitated - by chronic heart disease - in January, 1995 (an illness from which he never recovered), he was sorely missed in the work of this congregation.

He was a man of many talents, and he applied them in practical helpfulness to others. He often quoted the words, "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers" (Gal. 6:10) - and he did just that! If there was a "job to be done", he was ready and able to do it. With many others, the local, class for the blind benefited from his skills in weaving, basketwork and other handicrafts.

At the service of thanksgiving on July 19th local brethren, along with others from churches of Christ elsewhere, were joined by many friends from the community. The writer officiated, assisted by Graham Gorton, a long-time friend who paid tribute to the spiritual help and guidance Bob gave to him and others. The interment was in Ulverston Cemetery.

During his illness Bob often testified that he was "ready to go," and spoke of "going home" to the Lord. Shortly before he died he referred to Paul's words, "I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better." That was what he longed for, and we rejoice to know that he is now at home with the Lord. "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'they will rest from their labour, for their deeds will follow them'" (Rev. 14:13).

We assure Miriam, Joanna, and the rest of the family of our love for them and our prayers on their behalf. We commend them to "the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort," confident that His grace will ever sustain them. "The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deut. 33:27).

A. E. Winstanley.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Oct 6 Genesis 3:1-19 1 John 2:7-17
 Oct 13 Jeremiah 9:1-16 1 John 2:18-29
 Oct 20 Proverbs 28:1-14 1 John 3:1-10
 Oct 27 Genesis 4:1-16 1 John 3:11-24

LOVE

John has a great deal to say about love in this letter. He realised that it was love (*agape*) that bound the saints together. Gnosticism was out to destroy Christian fellowship because it produced an elitism amongst its adherents. Gnostics had a contempt and even hatred for lesser people. Their system was loveless to the core. "That is why John insists all over this letter that the true test of Christianity is love for the brethren" (Barclay).

It is not an easy thing to love all our brethren in Christ. We need the power of the Spirit within us to make it happen. Not all of us see everything alike. Some saints we feel closer to than others. But we must

love one another despite the many differences that exist. It was the apostle Peter who wrote: "**And above all things have fervent love among yourselves: for love shall cover the multitude of sins**" (1 Peter 4:8).

I recall here the letter to the church in Ephesus which is found in Revelation chapter two. We read: "**Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first**" (verses 4-5, N.I.V.). It is a tragedy for members of a congregation to lose their love one for another. It can only end in splits and oblivion (as has often been the case in history).

In the final analysis, love is what it is all about. I read this somewhere: "Love never gives up. It is impervious to assault. It outlasts everything else. It validates every other gift. It confirms every righteous action. It is the only transforming, energising power which can ever restore true order to a chaotic

universe". Alexander Campbell once said: "The genius of Christianity is love . . . It contemplates the reformation of the world upon a new principle. It aims at conquering men by love. And he is a superficial philosopher who cannot see that this is the only rational way to promote purity and happiness - for these are inseparable companions". Jeremy Taylor once declared: "Love is the greatest thing that God can give us, for He Himself is love; and it is the greatest thing we can give to God, for it will also give ourselves, and carry with it all that is ours. The apostle calls it the bond of perfection; it is the old, the new, and great commandment of all the commandments, for it is the fulfilling of the whole law. It does the work of all the other graces without any instrument but its own immediate virtue".

John tells us that there is something we should not love. **"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, the love of the Father is not in Him"** (1 John 2:15). What is **"the world"**? The best definition I have read is: "Pagan society with its false values, its false standards and its false gods". In other words, **"the world"** is composed of that great body of mankind which refuses to recognise the right of God to govern their lives. But the minority (Christians) must never conform to the ways of the majority. The remnant must remain faithful and strong and true to the voice of God.

THE DEVIL AND THE ANTICHRIST

John in this first epistle speaks of **"the wicked one"** and **"the devil"** (2:13, 14; 3:8-10). The devil was very real to him, as he should be to all of us. The work of Jesus is well summed up in these words: **"He that commits sin is of the devil; for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil"** (3:8). I like the fact that Jesus came to destroy the works of Satan, but not the servants of Satan. By His sacrifice on Calvary, He has given us all the opportunity to repent of

our sins and turn and serve the true God. Jesus knew all the consequences of sin, including the danger of eternal separation from God. His willingness to go as far as He did is proof positive that the final punishment for sin hardly bears thinking about. The devil's days are numbered and his defeat and destruction are certain (Revelation 20:10). Remember, hell is actually prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41).

The **"antichrist"** is a terrible title. But of whom does the apostle speak? We read: **"He is antichrist, that denies the Father and the Son"** (2:22). This helps us, as do the words in verse 19: **"They (antichrists) went out from us, but they were not of us . . ."** MacKnight has written: "I am inclined to think that by antichrist he means those false prophets, or teachers, who were foretold by our Lord to arise about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, and who were now gone abroad. Some of these denied the humanity of Jesus Christ, others of them denied His divinity: and as both sorts opposed Christ, by denying the redemption of the world through His death, I suppose it is of them chiefly that John speaks in his epistles . . ."

DIFFICULT VERSES

I marked in my Bible years ago the following verses as difficult ones: 2:22; 2:27; 3:3; 3:6. Let us briefly consider each.

"But you have an unction from the Holy One and you know all things" (2:20). The word "unction" is a translation of the Greek word *chrisma* and "signifies an unguent, or an anointing" (W. E. Vine). In fact, it is translated twice as **"anointing"** in verse 27. There is an allusion here to anointings carried out in O.T. times (1Samuel 10:1; 16:13; Exodus 28:41; 40:15). To quote Macknight again: "In allusion to that ancient rite, John calls the communication of the spiritual gifts to the primitive Christians, especially the gift of discerning spirits, an unction, because it was an endowment bestowed by God, for preventing the faithful from being deceived by false teachers . . ." Not all

agree with Macknight. There are others of the view that this verse simply refers to the gift of the Spirit bestowed at the baptism of the believer (Acts 2:38).

"But the anointing which you have received of Him abides in you, and you need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, you shall abide in Him" (2:27). I think this verse is tied in with verse twenty and again I think that Macknight is right in saying that it has reference to the gift of discerning spirits (1 Corinthians 12:10). This gift was not general, but granted only to certain individuals. These individuals could easily judge others by this gift. They had no need to be taught how to distinguish pretenders to inspiration from those who were really inspired. "John did not mean that Christians in general had no need of being taught the doctrines of the gospel in the ordinary method . . ." (J.M.).

"And every man that has this hope in Him (*Christ*) purifies himself as He (*Christ*) is pure" (3:3). The hope of which John speaks is detailed in verse two. But how does this hope purify the Christian? Albert Barnes has written: "The particular thought here is, that the hope of being like Christ, and of being permitted to dwell with Him, will lead a man to earnest efforts to become holy, and will be actually followed by such a result". John Scott has commented: ". . . since Christ is pure, and when we shall see Him we shall be alike Him, we must ensure that the process of purification is begun now and begin to purify ourselves. The clarification that "him" and "he" refer to Christ Himself helps us in our understanding of the verse.

"Whoever abides in Him sins not: whosoever sins has not seen Him, neither known Him" (3:6). John cannot mean here that all who live in Jesus are sinless. This would be clearly wrong and would, of course, contradict what he previously wrote (1:8-10). Again the words should be carefully studied within

their context. From the study of the Greek, a better translation of the verse would be: "No-one who continually abides in Him makes a habit of sinning: no-one who habitually sins has seen or known Him". So we see that John is not speaking about individual acts of sin but about habitual attitudes. C. H. Dodd wrote: "We are children of God and sin is abnormal and unnatural to us". David Smith has commented: "The believer may fall into sin, but he will not walk in it". Truly the Divine nature within the regenerate believer asserts itself against all evil (3:9).

Ian S. Davidson, Motherwell.

TEST YOUR BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE

1. Who hid in the desert of En-Gedi?
2. Who was Saul's father?
3. Gideon came from which tribe?
4. Who succeeded Belshazzar as king?
5. Who was Goliath's brother?
6. What did God give Ezekiel to eat?
7. Who carried Jesus' cross?
8. How many were shipwrecked with Paul off Malta?
9. In which two books do we find the genealogy of Jesus?
10. Who was Peter's brother?

A JOURNEY INTO FAITH

Recovering from one of my illnesses, I decided to write down some of my memoirs of my life in the Church. This was purely for the benefit of my family so they would perhaps understand some of the events which had influenced me. One or two brothers read it and said it was worthy of a wider audience; hence the notice.

It is not an autobiography, nor is it a history; it is simply an account of one Christian's walk along the road which we all must walk. I have tried to make it readable, interesting, and in some places, entertaining. It tells of some of the joys

and frustrations, particularly of my early days in the Church; but above all - to me anyway - it brought to mind all the help I had received from brethren in a fellowship which I would not have missed for the world.

Please, please, do not look upon this as a 'sales pitch'; as I say, publication was never my original intention. Printing costs will be kept to a minimum because Bro. Trevor Ralph has kindly consented to print it on the C.W. press in Birmingham.

As you will appreciate, numbers to be printed are critical. If anyone is interested please let me know a.s.a.p. You can reach me by telephone on 01942 207968. My address is in the *Standard*.

Yours in Him,
Alf Marsden.

THANKS

Miriam and Joanna Brown sincerely thank all who by way of letters, cards, telephone calls and prayers, have supported and encouraged them during Robert's illness and death. They also very much appreciate the unstinting help of local brethren and friends, and are thankful to God for all these expressions of love.

COMING EVENTS

(For your diary)

ANNUAL SOCIAL

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

The format for the social will be slightly different this year. Our speakers are brothers Graeme Pearson and Bill Cook, who will give lessons on their recent Ghanaian experience.

We will also be having community singing and choir participation. The hymns to be sung will be culled from the new Favourite Hymns of the Church hymn book.

The timetable for the afternoon will be as follows:

- 4.00 p.m. Tea
 - 5.00 p.m. Community Singing
 - 5.30 p.m. First Speaker
 - 6.00 p.m. Interval
 - 6.20 p.m. Community Singing
 - 6.30 p.m. Second Speaker
 - 7.00 p.m. Community Singing
 - 7.15 p.m. Close/Refreshments
- A warm welcome is extended to all.

ANNIVERSARY MEETING

125th Anniversary at Kentish Town
on SATURDAY, 12th OCTOBER, 1996
3.00 p.m. and 6.00 p.m.

Tea at 4.45 p.m.

Speaker: Jon Glessinger

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Bramhall Green, Manchester: It is with much joy that we report the baptism of Lyndsay Nathan, youngest daughter of Raymond and Marcella, on 8th August, 1996, at Longshoot, Wigan. We are delighted that now the whole family is part of the family of God. We would like to thank the brethren at Longshoot for their hospitality.

We wish Brian and Katrina (Nee Nathan) Moss, who were married on July 20th, all God's blessings as they start out on their new life together. They have arrived in New Mexico and we know that they will be an asset to Brian's home congregation. We will miss them.

Gretchen Ashurst.

APPEAL FROM GHANA

Many Christians in many parts of the country continue to drop notes expressing their appreciation to all, who through freewill offering are supporting the Lord's work here in Ghana. In the last month, several copies of the health book entitled

Where There Is No Doctor, were received by some congregations from brother Graeme Pearson. The book will serve a very useful purpose when carefully studied and applied to daily living. We hope soon most Christian families who take lessons from this book will come to realise that this will reduce their medical bills. Self protection against disease will have many long term benefits. We shall plead for further donations to enable others to get copies. Other gifts such as clothes, study materials, etc. were also received with much gratitude. We hope for a response to these appeals. The funds to support ongoing building work to hold church assemblies are very encouraging. Apparently this is one area of our appeal (support for building church meeting places) which continue for a few years. The need is high for simple and decent buildings to meet and worship God. May God bless your generosity.

Wisdom Kobla Kpehor, Secretary.

Anyone wishing to help in this work please contact Graeme Pearson. Cheques should be made payable to Graeme Pearson (Ghana Appeal) and sent to Graeme Pearson, 13 Fairways, Dunfermline, Fife, Scotland, KY12 0DU. Telephone: 01383 728624.

SUBSCRIPTION RATE INCREASE

I would like to draw your attention to the new subscription rates for the *Scripture Standard*. These new rates are shown below and take effect from your next renewal.

This increase is higher than usual but is necessary to cover the cost of publishing the magazine through 1997. The new rates take account of our new printing costs (51p per copy) and the new postal rates (20p UK; 31p surface mail; 63p air mail). Our recent income has not been sufficient to cover costs and so I have made these changes to prevent a serious situation developing next year.

I trust you will continue to subscribe and that the magazine can contribute to your spiritual life in the future.

John Kneller, Treasurer.

- 10. Andrew (John 1:40).
- 9. Matthew and Luke.
- 8. 276 (Acts 27:37).
- 7. Simon the Cyrenian (Mark 15:21).
- 6. Scroll (Ezekiel 2:8-9).
- 5. Lahmi (1 Chronicles 20:5).
- 4. Darius (Daniel 5:32).
- 3. Manasseh (Judges 6:15).
- 2. Kish (1 Samuel 9:1-2).
- 1. David (1 Samuel 24:1).

ANSWERS

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