

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

Vol. 59 No. 9

SEPTEMBER, 1991

A GLORY GILDS THE SACRED PAGE

We have all witnessed, in recent months, the alarming increase in attacks on the public by vicious dogs. Interfering with dogs (or with farmers) has proved, in the past, to be a real vote-loser for politicians, and governments have been reluctant to do much about these dangerous dogs (if indeed anything can be done). However, very recently, in the wake of ever-increasing public outcry at the ferocity and frequency of maulings by dogs the government have seemed poised to act.

The 'last straw' came when the little Asian girl was almost killed by pit-bull terriers and was seen on T.V. by millions of us, fighting for life in a hospital intensive-care ward. The morning after this attack, our Prime Minister, in high drama and obviously very angry, publicly assured the nation that all fighting dogs would be destroyed, and the streets of Britain made safe. A few days later, however, after more serious thought, a much cooler Home Secretary, admitted the difficulty in defining the breeds that were to die, and gave all dogs a reprieve subject to some being muzzled, and some neutered, permits being obtained and insurance cover taken out, etc. And now, just this week, the proposed legislation has again been watered down and the owners of pit-bull terriers, rottweilers, Japanese Tosas are quite jubilant, and regard the new proposals as largely ineffective and virtually un-enforceable. And so, the original intention of the Prime Minister to rid the country of dangerous fighting-dogs, praiseworthy as it was, has foundered on the rocks of reality: i.e., the difficulty to define certain breeds; to prove identity within that breed and also political agitation from the dog-owners lobby. **The spirit of the law was good, but could not be matched by the letter.**

This kind of thing happens quite often. Good ideas are not always easy to translate into words: and even when committed to print, lose something in the translation. The 'Poll Tax' (the rock upon which the career of Mrs Thatcher foundered) was based upon quite a sensible idea; (i.e. that everyone over 18 years should contribute to Local Authority spending) yet proved to be difficult to administer and impossible to enforce. There are countless other examples. The intention and the reality are often two very different things.

Importance of Words

Those who make the laws in any country have the immediate problem of drawing up the legislation, making it clear, easily understood and capable of being implemented. The intention of the politicians has to be accurately conveyed to the Civil Servants who then must skilfully draft the wording of the eventual Statute. Badly framed laws are a constant source of trouble and keep the courts busy for years making

decisions on the meaning of its terms. The British Civil Service is extremely accomplished at this kind of work, but even at that, some of the legislation on the Statute Book is so complex as to be almost impossible to read, and virtually incapable of being understood. Those who have to deal, each day, with laws and Statutory Instruments know **the importance of words**. Words have always been important but perhaps now, in these days, with all the paper-work and form filling which abounds, words are more important than ever. When dealing with Insurance Policies, or entering into business contracts, we are well advised 'to read the small print' for often there lurk a few words which can have an enormous effect upon subsequent events.

Recently we saw how, during the Gulf War, even the United Nations had great difficulty in reaching agreement over the meaning of a few simple words in the Resolutions (made by themselves) in restraining the aggression of Saddam Hussein. Words are of great importance.

Misuse of Language

Words constitute language, and language constitutes one of the main differences between man and the animal kingdom. Without language it would be difficult, if not impossible, to give expression to human feelings, thoughts, emotions or ideas. Language greatly facilitates communication amongst mankind and words allow us to make our wishes and our intentions clear to one another but, unfortunately, language can be used just as effectively to mislead and confuse. Words can, and are, used to conceal facts just as often as to express truth: ranging from a blatant lie to a terminological inexactitude. Since the televising of transactions in the House of Commons it is quite obvious that politicians use language to **disguise** truth, or lies, and to cloud an issue rather than clarify it: so much so that we are now so cynical as to rarely believe anything politicians say. No one seems to be exempt, whether in politics or religion, and those guilty of verbal 'cover-ups' range from American Presidents to clergymen of all denominations: for although the Bible has been unchanged for the last 2,000 years men abuse its simple language and very few see it alike. Even the translators of the KJV, as far back as 1611, said that, in their work on the translation, "they had shunned the obscurity of the Papists" (a reference to the then recent Catholic Rheims Version which, they claimed, was intentionally full of obscure words) "whereof their translation is full, and that of purpose to darken the sense, that since they must needs translate the Bible, yet by the language thereof, it may be kept from being understood." So here we have an accusation from the learned translators of the KJV that the Catholic Church purposely made their Rheims Version of the Bible obscure so that the common people would not readily understand it.

The Letter And The Spirit

And so, for whatever the reason, sometimes the spirit and the letter never quite synchronise. As we can imagine, God, in His eternal word, has never had any difficulty in clothing the spirit of His ordinances in the right words. David says, "**The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the judgements of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned and in keeping of them is great reward.**" (Ps. 19:7-11).

The apostle Paul was, of course, quite familiar with this elusive disparity between the spirit and the letter, and had occasion to take issue with the Christians at Corinth on the matter: (2 Cor. 3:6). Paul, in reply to some criticism from the Corinthians declared that God had made the apostles, "**able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit, for the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life.**" Probably

no remark made by Paul has been so badly mishandled or misapplied. There appears to be a widely held belief amongst theologians, and Christendom, that God's word is 'fairly flexible' and that anyone who intends to comply with it strictly, and entirely, is bent upon applying 'the letter of the law', without much regard to the spirit of it. For instance, if a man insists upon observing the ordinances of God precisely in the form of their original appointment, such as, say, the ordinance of Baptism, or the Lord's Supper, he would be accused by some of contending for 'the letter of the law: the letter that killeth'. In the meantime, those who approach those ordinances loosely would explain that they are seeking the spirit of the ordinance and are not so much concerned with the letter. They would say, "What do the mechanics of the actual baptising matter as long as we sincerely want to follow our Saviour? Sprinkling, pouring or immersion: what difference will it really make? Surely God will be as happy with the one as the other?" This, I think, is quite a fair representation of the attitude amongst the denominations, and those who advocate an exact application of the scriptures would certainly be regarded as sacrificing the spirit in the interests of the letter. The same is true in nearly every aspect of the denominational scene, whether it be vestments, instrumental music, clergy, women elders and preachers, etc. etc.

"The spirit of the law is that the church should have government: so the letter should not be allowed to get in the way. If we can't get male elders then God will be just as pleased with women elders, as long as the church has government. If we can't get male elders with all the qualifications then surely if a man has most of the qualifications, that should do nicely." These are the kind of remarks we commonly hear in justification of all manner of religious innovation: in a bid to offset the spirit of the ordinance against the letter.

The Glory of Moses Exceeded

It certainly would be wrong for us to be so concerned with the method of baptising, or the distribution of the elements on the Lord's Table, that we lost the spirit of these ordinances: but surely that does not mean that we can substitute our method for God's.

Closer examination of Paul's remarks (2 Cor. 3:7), however, show that he was not suggesting a difference between spirit and letter, in God's word but was contrasting two differing religious systems: the Jewish and the Christian. He was relating the N.T. to the O.T. In stating that "the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life" Paul went on to say, "But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance, which glory was to be done away. How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious. For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory." And so clearly Paul is not relating the spirit to the letter within the same ordinance, but contrasting two very different "ministries", the "ministry of condemnation" (the Law of Moses) and the "ministration of the spirit" (the gospel of Jesus Christ). "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John 1:17).

The Law of Moses, glorious as it was, could only condemn the guilty; it could not save them. Paul here identifies what he calls "the ministration of death" – it was that "written and engraven on stones" i.e. the ten commandments. The Mosaic law prescribed penalties (including the death penalty): not pardon. Besides, no one ever complied with all the Law, and was, therefore, guilty of all, for James (2:10) reminds us "that whosoever shall keep the whole law and offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Barnes says, "A law which contains a provision for the pardon of offenders, and permits them to escape, would be a burlesque in legislation." That's what Paul meant by "the letter that killeth." The law was in letter only and its effect was to produce a sense of guilt, danger, condemnation and a deeper sense of sin. Even in Christ's day the Jews applied themselves to an exact observance of the Law with cold formality:

and entered little upon its real meaning. The **“ministration of the spirit”** (the gospel of Christ) is so different, of course. Whereas the letter killeth: the spirit giveth life. The Law was but our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ and in His gospel we find not death and condemnation, but Life and pardon. Jesus saves. The Law condemned: the gospel pardons. The first introduction of Moses’ Law killed 3,000; at the first preaching of the gospel 3,000 were saved. In Christ we are reconciled again to God and have the promise of everlasting life. God’s will is no longer engraven on tablets of stone but is enshrined in the hearts of men. Paul could say God’s grace is now manifest **“by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”**

Paul’s other purpose (or one of his purposes) in saying these things was not so much to observe that quite often the spirit of a law is not quite matched by the letter, but rather was to stress to the Corinthian Christians that they should take the gospel, and those who brought the message to them, more seriously. If man’s words are important: God’s are more so. Paul reminds us, here, that God sent even **“the ministration of condemnation”** into the world **with great glory**, insomuch that Moses’ face shone with such dazzling radiance that none could venture near him. Paul argues that the coming into the world of **“the ministration of the spirit”** is also attended with great glory; with **“much more”** glory in fact, than that given to Moses and that the gospel work (and the workers) deserved better attention and greater respect.

Paul, and the others, in preaching the glad tidings, were God’s chosen vessels and the only channel through whom the words of life would come, and **God’s glory** crowned their work and words. Perhaps this should make us, in this age, think similarly, and regard all work in the Lord’s vineyard as a great honour and of paramount concern. Words are important: especially the **“wonderful words of life.”** May we be encouraged to make them more widely known, and to rejoice that whereas **“the letter that killeth”** has gone, Christ’s spirit of Life remains.

EDITOR

GLEANINGS

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

CALLED OUT . . . OF DARKNESS . . . INTO HIS MARVELLOUS LIGHT

“Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.”

1 Peter 2:9 (RV)

“YE ARE – an elect race – a royal priesthood – a holy nation – a people for God’s own possession –

THAT YE MAY – show forth the excellencies of HIM who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.”

WE QUOTE CAMPBELL MORGAN

“An **“elect race”** will exhibit to the world the excellencies of the creative power of God.

The **“royal priesthood”** will exhibit the excellencies of the redeeming power of God.

The **“holy nation”** will exhibit the excellencies of the government of God.

And, lastly, and finally, and inclusively, and exhaustively, a **“people God – possessed”** will reveal to the world the excellencies of His love. All these things constitute the lifting power of God,

How is the world to know these things?

The Church is the means through which they are to be revealed.

THE BIBLE SPEAKS

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

In Him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon us.”

Ephesians 1:3-7 (R.S.V.)

PAUL SAID

“For we are fellow workmen for God; you are God’s field, God’s building.”

1 Corinthians 3:9 (R.S.V.).

SOMEONE HAS SAID

“There’s a blessed story of redeeming love,
How it keeps us thinking of the joys above,
How it lightens sorrow, trouble, grief and care,
Let us tell it, sing it, shout it, everywhere.

CALLED YOU OUT

“I will build my church” MY Ecclesia
DIVINE GOVERNMENT A God-governed people.

A called-out people belonging to Christ.

The Church exists for a purpose God’s instrument.

YE ARE — THAT YE MAY

“A PEOPLE FOR GOD’S OWN POSSESSION”

CALLED OUT

“. that ye may show forth the excellencies of HIM who called
you out of darkness into HIS marvellous light” 1 Peter 2:9 (R.V.).

Leonard Morgan.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST (2)

This article will cover a single glimpse of Jesus at the age of twelve years old and the baptism of Jesus just before He began His ministry.

The law required that adult males should appear before the Lord three times every year. These three annual feasts were the Passover, Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles.

At the age of twelve a Jewish boy first began to incur legal obligations and to have a personal duty to observe the Law

From 1 Samuel, chapter 7, we learn that the attendance of women at these feasts was not forbidden, they were free to attend if they wished. The school of Hillel, however, made it obligatory upon women to attend the Passover.

The Passover was held on the 14th day of the month Nisan, which falls in our month of March. It commemorated the death angel passing over the Israelites in Egypt and sparing the firstborn of the Israelites but destroying the firstborn males of the Egyptians. This was remembered annually and involved the eating of unleavened bread, the paschal lamb and bitter herbs. Those who ate it had to be ceremonially clean.

At the age of twelve a boy was regarded as “a son of the Law” and came under obligation to observe the ordinances of the Law personally. It seems clear that this was the first time Jesus accompanied Joseph and Mary to the Feast of the Passover.

Little did the people who attended that particular Passover realise that the real lamb who was to be offered for the redemption of the world, the antitype of the lamb slain at the paschal feast, was actually in their midst.

The Passover required only one day, but the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which immediately followed the Passover, continued for seven days. Since the Passover was the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the names have been used interchangeably.

After the feast, Mary, Joseph and their kinspeople began their journey home unaware that Jesus had stayed behind. They had either committed Jesus to a friend or relative or thought He was old enough to take care of Himself as they journeyed along. It was not until they arrived at the place they would spend the night that they realised Jesus was not with them.

On the following morning Mary and Joseph turned back to Jerusalem and looked for Jesus the whole road back. They eventually found him in the temple in one of the apartments of the main building where the Jewish doctors of the Law held their schools. He was sitting in the midst of the teachers, not only listening to them but also asking questions.

It was the custom of students to sit on the floor at the feet of their teachers who sat on raised benches in a semi-circular form. Jesus was not disputing with them but He sat in their presence and asked questions and answered their questions.

Obviously Jesus, at the age of 12, was humble and respectful, His questions were not of a pert and spoilt child, but of a youthful mind, modestly searching after truth and seeking from the lips of age and wisdom a solution to difficulties which He had already met in meditating upon the Law of God.

It was the custom in the Jewish schools for the scholars to ask questions of their teachers and much of the books of the rabbis consisted of their answers to such questions. All the doctors and others who were present were "amazed at His understanding and His answers." Jesus obviously showed more intelligence in asking questions and in answering their questions than the ordinary scholar. His degree of intelligence was such that all were astonished at His understanding of the Law.

When Mary and Joseph saw Jesus engaged in this study with the rabbis they were astonished. The original Greek word used here is a very strong verb which means to strike out or drive away from. The meaning here then means to drive out of one's senses.

Mary should have, perhaps, paused before she spoke to Him in the manner of reproof that she used. She should not have been so "astonished" when she remembered all the supernatural events connected with His conception, birth and divine protection.

She said, "Son, why did you do this to us? Behold your father and I have sought you sorrowfully." There is a rebuke in Mary's language. Jesus replied, "How is it that ye sought me? Knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?"

These are the first recorded words of Jesus and they were spoken to His mother Mary.

The words of Jesus do not imply a rebuke as some have tried to make out. Jesus was concerned about His parents' anxiety and mental distress. Jesus said, "Knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?"

The word "must" here means "it is necessary." Jesus often used this word concerning His own appointed work and it expresses the inevitable fulfilment of the divine work and the absolute constraint of the main duty laid upon Himself.

Mary's question was not *what* have you been doing, but *where* have you been? Jesus answers by asking, "Where is the child to be found but in his Father's house?"

It may seem strange to us that after the revelations that had been made to Mary and Joseph they should be at a loss to understand the reply of Jesus, but the years of His infancy and childhood passing away without any striking incident may have caused them to lose sight, in part, of the circumstances surrounding His birth. Time has a way of mellowing the past.

They may never have understood fully the depth of meaning, which we, in light

of the New Testament, find no difficulty in attaching to these declarations. We know, with hindsight, the teaching of Jesus, His humiliation, suffering and death for us. Mary and Joseph had no idea what lay before Him.

It is certain that this consciousness of Jesus as to His divine nature threw Joseph and Mary into the profoundest reflection as to the full meaning of His answer.

Jesus went with Mary and Joseph from Jerusalem to Nazareth and we are informed that He was subject unto them. In the original Greek the word means He was in habitual continuous subjection.

We do not hear any more of Jesus until the time of His baptism. There is approximately an 18-year silence spent in Nazareth in which we are only informed that Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature. During this time His mental powers were constantly enlarging and strengthening. He grew also in favour with God and man. Every step of His development was pleasing to God.

Graeme Pearson,
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GOD'S APOSTATE PEOPLE

The people of God are often ungrateful and forgetful; they fail to walk in the light (1 John 1:6-10); they cease to work in the high and holy vocation to which they have been called (Eph. 40:1-3); they do not honour and serve God as he saved them to do; they love the material things of this world more than the spiritual things of the world to come (2 Tim. 4:10). In short, they forsake God — they turn back to the world rather than press on to perfection (Heb. 6:1-6).

It was this kind of apostasy that brought the following stinging indictment from God (through Isaiah) to his ancient covenant people: **“Hear, O Heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider”** (Isa. 1:2, 3). Three vital components should be noted from these verses:

God had nourished and brought up children. They were his. He loved them as a father loves his children. He was concerned with their welfare. He provided for them. Their love should have been reciprocal. John stated a divine principle when he said, **“We love him, because he first loved us”** (1 John 4:19).

What was true then is still true today. God so loved the world that he sent his only Son to provide for its redemption. Christ in turn died for the sins of the world — died that all might be able to become the sons of God (Gal. 3:26, 27; 4:4-6). The salvation of the human soul from sin is no light matter. Each one should try to see, to the extent it is possible, the problem in God saving sinful men, what it cost God to redeem man from sin. The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). And since all have sinned (Rom. 3:9,23), all are doomed to eternal death. There was no means within man’s reach whereby he could escape this sentence. But then Christ stepped in and died in man’s stead. He paid the full penalty of sin — death. And so it is by the grace, mercy, and plan of God the means whereby all can be saved is provided. All who will accept the death of Christ as a substitute for their own death can be saved. God’s love has purchased us (John 3:16), redeemed us (Eph. 1:7), and justified us (1 Cor. 6:11).

Just as it was in ancient times, God has today nourished and brought up children, brought them up at a terrible price, the cruel ignominious death of his only begotten Son upon the cross. Salvation did not come cheap.

God’s children had rebelled against him. They had turned their back on the living God and had turned to dumb idols. The remainder of Isaiah 1 describes the condition of departed Israel. They had become a **“sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a**

seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters"; they had forsaken the Lord and had provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger; they had gone backward instead of forward.

With many of God's people, it is not different today. His own precious people, his purchased possession, turn from him. They forget that he saved them, purchased them, provides for them, and continues to desire their love and fellowship. They also forget that they devoted themselves to him, and all that they were, all that they had, and all that they might become. But forgetting their own vows and all that God has done for them, they turn back to the world, back to sin, back to death. How can anyone be so thoughtless? How can they turn from the very God who made them, saved them, and gave them hope for all eternity? Is it because they are not grateful to God? Or have they forgotten his unspeakable gift?

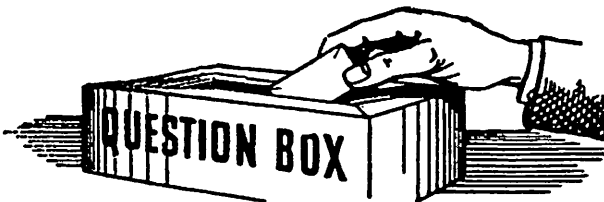
The people of God did not know, they did not consider. The ox knows his owner — he knows who feeds and cares for him. So does the ass. But Israel did not know and seemingly did not care about the providence of her God. They rebelled against him and thus rejected the source of all their blessings.

The same is true today among those who depart from the living God, who turn back and walk with him no more. **"He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"** (Heb. 10:28,29).

It is no wonder then that Peter could say of those who, in full knowledge of his will, depart from the Lord: **"For if after they have escaped the pollution of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb. The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire"** (2 Peter 2:20-22). This is just another way of saying that they have turned from all the glittering blessings of heaven back to the cesspools of iniquity. What is wrong with such people? The Lord says they do not know, they do not consider.

But God knows . . . and he cares. He longs for his departed children to return home, to come back to his love and care (cf. Luke 15:12-32).

H. Winters.



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

"1 Tim. 2:15 says that women shall be saved in child-bearing. What can this mean, and what about women who don't marry, or physically can't bear children?"

This is a difficult question (as seemingly most are that come my way), and I believe that if we are to make any sense of it then we must look at the context from verse 8.

In vv8-15 Paul gives instructions to Timothy as to what he, Paul, would like to see in the Church. His first mention is of men, as distinct from women. **"I will therefore**

that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." The Apostle is undoubtedly referring to public worship 'in every place,' and it seems that the men who should pray should have 'clean hands,' and that they should be without anger and doubting. People who consider themselves to be not guilty of any dubious practice have a saying, "Well, my hands are clean," so Paul seems to be saying that the men who pray should be morally and spiritually unblemished.

'In like manner,' i.e., with the same moral and spiritual implications, women should pay attention to their dress. Women are to 'arrange' and 'to put in order' their dress, and not to 'adorn' as the scribes and Pharisees did. They even went to the extreme in giving an outward impression of cleanliness by whitening the sepulchres, and they were roundly condemned by Jesus, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness" (Matt. 23:27). Women are to dress modestly and soberly as becoming those who profess godliness; they are to be 'adorned' with good works.

Paul now turns to an instruction which has caused a great deal of confusion, and seems not to be very clear. "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." He then goes on to give his reasons for this instruction, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." Now this argument by Paul, I contend, is crucial to our understanding of the whole passage, so let us explore it in a little more detail. I refer you to Gen. 3.

The first point we notice is that Satan tempted Eve, not Adam. It has to be said that Eve was God's secondary creation, Adam being the primary creation. It can be argued with some logic — and feminists may not like this — that Eve was dependent on Adam for her existence. It is true that God could have taken dust from the ground and formed woman if He had so desired, but He didn't; it is not ours to reason why. Nor can we say with certainty why Satan attacked Eve. Did he see her as the more vulnerable one; did the idea of being 'as gods' appeal to her ego? We do not know. What we do know, and Paul makes it abundantly clear, is that it was Eve who was deceived, and it was Eve who was in the transgression.

It was Eve who listened to Satan; it was she who succumbed to his lies; it was she who partook of the forbidden fruit; and it was she who passed it on to Adam, thereby causing him to fall. There are some — particularly feminists — who will say, "Well, if the male is so dominant, why did not Adam refuse what was offered to him, and also prevent his partner from transgressing?" There are a number of reasons which could be adduced but all of them would be speculative because we are simply not told.

I mentioned earlier that there had been, and still is, a deal of confusion regarding women teaching. It is true that in the Church women do teach, particularly during Women's Meetings and also in Bible School. We in the Church seem to have been exclusively concerned with preserving male dominance in preaching and teaching during worship and public meetings, and I suppose this is in line with Paul's teaching. However, the very fact that women do teach Bible classes, and speak and teach at Women's Meetings, must mean that they have been given permission to do so by the Oversight or Leadership of the local church concerned. That being the case, they have not usurped authority over the men in the assembly, because the verb 'to usurp' means "to wrongfully seize or assume power or right." I will make no further comment except to say that the whole question of the 'usurpation of authority' in the Church ought to be studied quite closely and to some depth, always keeping to the forefront of our minds the record in Gen. 3, and the subsequent teaching of the Lord and the Apostle Paul in the N.T.

Having established the context, we must now turn our attention to the crux of the question in v15. Having seemingly placed woman in a somewhat invidious position, the Apostle turns his attention to a function which is peculiarly and gloriously feminine, i.e., the function of childbearing. The scripture at this point reads, **“Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.”** (A.V.). It is here that we must take note of a few translations.

TACKLING THE EXPLANATION

The word for ‘child-bearing’ is **TEKNOGONIA**, this from **TEKNON** and root **GENO**, ‘to beget’, and denotes bearing children and implies motherhood (W. E. Vine). Consequent upon this, The R.S.V. reads, **“Yet women will be saved through bearing children”** (marginal ref. ‘by the birth of the child’). The N.E.B. reads, **“Yet she will be saved through motherhood”** (margin, or, saved through the ‘Birth of the Child,’ implying the birth of Jesus). As I have indicated, both these translations would make it appear that the birth of the Saviour is referred to; this could further imply the glorifying of womanhood and motherhood.

It should be pointed out that spiritual and eternal salvation is **not** meant here. The verb ‘to save’, **SOZO**, is used of ‘material and temporal deliverance from danger, suffering, etc.’ An example of the use of this word is found in John 12:27, recording the words of Jesus, **“Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.”** It seems fairly obvious that Jesus is thinking about **physical suffering**, that which He was to endure on the cross, and it is this type of physical suffering which is envisaged in 1 Tim. 2:15 relative to ‘child-bearing.’ But why should this be linked with **“if they continue in faith, love, holiness, and sobriety?”** Well, viewing child-bearing from the purely physical standpoint (as we must do in this case), isn’t feasible to think that a life lived in accordance with those spiritual directives would reduce quite considerably the complications which might be associated with child-birth? I am well aware that **other** complications could arise, but so far as the mother’s general health is concerned I consider it to be a valid point. After all, living a wholesome Christian life must mean non-abuse of the physical body. The reverse is also true, as we shall see if we read Paul’s words in Rom. 1:24-27.

It would seem that Paul has also another thought in mind. He realises, as he has said, that the ultimate separation from God in the Garden was caused by the woman’s perfidy. He also knows that God chose the woman as the vehicle whereby his Lord and Master came into the world. Therefore, he seems to be telling Timothy to instruct the women in the Church that they have a glorious function in bearing and bringing up children in the joys of motherhood. Tell them, he seems to say, that they should not be hankering after the work of public speaking, and trying to seize power in this respect, but to work out their ultimate salvation **through** their function – not **by** it – in faith, love, holiness, and sobriety. Leave the men to **their** function.

We must realise, I think, that Paul has in mind **Christian** women. You will no doubt recall that the whole objective of Paul writing to Timothy is stated in 1 Tim. 3:15, **“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”** It is quite obvious that Paul is not writing to Timothy as just an **individual** Christian, but as one who is instructing and directing **other** Christians, in the absence of Paul himself. The point I am making is that the teaching given to women in this letter would refer to Christian women, those who would have already achieved their eternal salvation by faith, repentance, confession, and immersion in water for the remission of sins. The only consolation for non-Christian women (and indeed for any non-Christian) is that Christ has been born into the world, and their eternal salvation depends on their acceptance of Him through the Gospel, the terms of which I have just referred to.

As regards women who don't marry, and those who cannot bear children, then the points regarding pain and risk during child-birth would not apply. I cannot emphasise too strongly that Paul's instructions to Timothy, and consequently my comments, are intended for women in the Church.

As I have often said, I believe that no one can give definitive answers to many questions. I am always conscious of the words of our brother Peter when he said, **"Even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction"** (2 Peter 3:15,16). I pray that I haven't erred in that respect.

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

LAW & LIBERTY IN CHRIST

Sometimes Biblical truth is suspended between what appear at first to be contradictory statements. Galatians 3:24-25 says, **"The law is our custodian, and now that faith is come we are no longer under a custodian."** Therefore, we are no longer under Law. Galatians 5:18 says, **"If you are led by the spirit, you are not under law"** (RSV) (see also Rom. 6:14; Gal. 2:16).

On the other hand, Gal. 6:2 says we are to **"fulfill the law of Christ"** (see also 1 Cor. 9:21). Is this a contradiction? How can there be a *"a law of Christ"* and yet we are *not under law*?

Does law here specifically refer to the law of Moses? Likely not, as in over half of its uses in the book of Galatians there is no definite article. The Greek speaks of **"law,"** not **"the law."** This passage is not saying that we once were under an **"Old Testament code,"** but now we are under a **"New Testament code."** Its aim is to refute the doctrine of justification by any code of meritorious works.

Actually, this passage (and others) indicates that Paul is talking about two different kinds of law.

The Old Testament law is a code of regulations. It did not save. Rather, it guided behaviour and defined sin.

In the New Testament **"the law of Christ"** is the principle of life issuing from the will and nature of a person. It is the will and nature of Jesus Christ our Lord.

I once followed my father's commands because I was afraid not to. He loved me, though. And even then, I did not obey him in order to earn sonship. Now that I am an adult my love for him has matured. He would not punish me for disobedience to his will, and has no authority over me by way of force. But I try with all that's in me to do his will. Why? Is it his legal code that motivates me? Do I see detailed obedience to his regulations as a means of gaining or keeping his love? No! It is not his commands but his nature with which I try to live in harmony. And this is not to get his acceptance, but because I already enjoy his acceptance.

In the New Testament, it is the person of Jesus we are anxious to obey, not a code of law. And we see his will revealed not only in his commands. They are really very few. But it is his nature which is amply revealed by numerous narratives of his relationships with people and with his Father.

The Jews tried to be justified by keeping the old code. In the New Testament we are not justified by keeping any code. We are justified by faith in and obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ. After that, we do not do the will of Jesus in order to stay saved or get saved. We want to do his will **because we are saved.** Our hearts are changed. We love him **"The love of Christ constrains us."**

A core message of the Galatian letter is “there is no saving effect in law-keeping.” This is true whether it is the Old Testament law or any other code of meritorious behaviour. Justification comes not by works but through obedient faith in Jesus Christ.

Now, once we are Christians we are “**under the law of Christ.**” This is no legal code, but a principle of behaviour. It issues from knowing the person Jesus Christ and thus loving his will. (Eph. 5:17). Christian good deeds are not done in order to obtain justification, but to express love toward the one who has already justified us.

So it is true that if we “**walk by the spirit, we are not under law.**” On the other hand it does not mean that we are without chart and compass for life. Jesus Christ becomes our Lord. His will becomes our norm. (Gal. 5:13).

“For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another” (RSV).

Most of Jesus’ will is expressed in his *person*. Thus, the more we come to know his nature, the more we come to know how he wants us to live. But some is also definitely expressed in his direct commands in the New Testament. Through such a response to the Lord Jesus, we “fulfill the law of Christ.”

L. Anderson.

LET US PRAY

“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you” (John 15:7).

Every Christian should live a life of prayer. All prayer should be **from the heart**; if it is to mean anything at all.

Effectual prayer only exists if we pray aright; from the heart; believing, expecting, anticipating, knowing the truth of the gospel and promise of God. We need them to pray from the heart and not the head.

We need to be in tune with God, Christ and the Holy Spirit, in order for our prayers to be effectual and to produce the desired results. If out of tune we are at variance with the Heavenly Father. It is important to find scriptural support to cover what we are desiring of God, for only in this, can we be assured of the promise.

“Ask what you will and it shall be done unto you” (John 15:7).

It’s a promise of God!

John 5:14,15 states, **“And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything ACCORDING to his will, He heareth us. And if we know that He hears us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have petitions that we desired of Him”**.

This dear reader, is a promise of God, to you, to me, to the church. Use it, believe it. Of course there is more to receiving answers to prayer, than just praying and asking our petitions. We have to pray believing, expecting and **waiting upon God**.

“When you pray believe” (Mark 11:24). But do we really believe? We must believe in the promise of God. It certainly makes a lot of difference as to what we believe. What we believe at times is the difference between success and failure in our praying!

Faith in the word of God is the key to every successful prayer and can remove mountains. We must learn how God works, and work with Him. Forget self and submit to the will of God.

In this we may then experience the love, blessing and peace of God. May it be then, that we look at our prayer-life, and recognise our failings. Brethren, prayer is not “old-fashioned”, “out of date”, or “out of line” in this modern age. It is essential more than ever before. The problem today is that we, the church and the individual, fail in the use of fervent prayer, in the manner sought of us. The Devil delights in this, and sad to say he is having his way. Brethren, let us change all this, and live a full life in Christ, in prayer, worship and fellowship . . . **“The effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”** (James 5:16). How strongly do we believe this?

Andrew Sharpe, Newtongrange.

COURAGE BORN OF COMMITMENT

The Christian life must be marked by conviction (Heb. 11:6). Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James, came to the tomb of Jesus on the first day of the week. They had to be fully persuaded that Jesus was no longer there before they embarked on the commission to "go quickly and to tell" the good news of his resurrection. Conviction prepares us for the temptations of Satan and the trials of the world. It takes conviction to strap on any kind of armour. Taking up the shield of faith is courage born of commitment.

True commitment comes only after real conviction. Without genuine conviction we are like the plant that grew from the seed on stony ground. There is no depth of soil. The plant will soon wither and die under the heat of tribulation. The roots were never developed.

Christ calls for complete commitment of all who follow him. Anything less than full commitment will not provide the courage necessary for putting on the whole armour of God. Consequently, we will not be able to say, "I have fought the good fight, finished the course, and kept the faith."

Jesus is our example of commitment. He was able to suffer and die because of the commitment to him that judges righteously. Because of Jesus our plight has been turned into light (1 Peter 2: 21-25).

Where is your conviction? "With all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all saints, and on my behalf, that utterance may be given unto me in opening my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (Eph. 6 18-20). That is courage born of commitment.

J.L. Roberts.

A THIEF OF TIME AND SOULS

A sober-minded person will not befriend a thief knowingly. We all want friends whom we can trust in every situation and at all times. He who is a thief of material values is looked upon with scorn and dis-favour. We avoid such and warn others about them. A thief is an outcast of society. Sooner or later if he does not repent he is imprisoned. Society refuses to tolerate or deal kindly with a thief.

Unfortunately there is a thief who dwells among brethren who not only is tolerated, but dealt kindly with. This thief is far worse than he who steals material values. He is a thief whom the law cannot touch. Not once has he been arrested, and I am certain that he never will. He has befriended good moral people. His thievery goes unnoticed by most because of those with whom he associates. He exerts a tremendous influence for evil, but still remains free to plague every believer in Christ. He is the devil's number one man. He is held in the highest esteem by the adversary of this world. He is a thief of time and souls! Children of God love him for providing them with excuses for not doing the Lord's will, but later hate him because he leaves them with a guilty conscience and a fruitless life.

At times this thief is a guest in every Christian's home. He is a frequent travelling companion of the saints. Whether we are at work or play, he is with us. Who is he? His name is "procrastination!" He has prevented more personal evangelism, Bible study and worship, and transformity of life than all other ministers of Satan combined. He who befriends him will be cast into outer darkness! (Heb. 3:12,13; John 9:4).

Selected.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Oct. 6	Job 1:5-22	Luke 22:54-71
Oct. 13	Isaiah: 50	Luke 23:1-25
Oct. 20	Psalms 22:1-21	Luke 23:26-43
Oct. 27	Job 19:7-29	Luke 23:44-24:12

PETER

We read; **“And Jesus, walking by the sea of Gallilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. And He said unto them, Follow me and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets and followed Him”** (Matthew 4: 18-20). From that day, Peter was an outstanding apostle of the Master and a particularly close one along with James and John (Matthew 17:1; 26:37; Mark 5:37; 9-2 14:33; Luke 8:51; 9:28).

Someone once said: “The best of men are men at the best”. Peter, like every one else, had his human frailties, but in the end became a faithful and courageous servant of Jesus. (An analysis of his two epistles is a richly rewarding experience.)

In John’s gospel we read these words of Jesus to Peter: **“Verily, Verily, I say unto you, When you were young, you girded your self and walked where you wanted: but when you are old, you shall stretch forth your hands and, carry where you would not. This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said unto him, Follow me”** (21:18-19). Tradition has it that Peter died by being crucified upside down – a victim of the persecutions of the early Christians. E.M. Zerr has written: “I do not believe it requires me to pay any special attention to the tradition that Peter was crucified with his head downward, nor even that he was crucified at all, though that is probable. The point is that he was to die by violence because of his devotion to God.”

Yes, Peter denied his Lord three times in a period of great weakness when

the flesh overcame the spirit. The fear of crucifixion overwhelmed him at that time.

Pontius Pilatus

The crucifixion of Jesus was reluctantly authorised by Pilate, the Roman governor. The Jewish leaders had brought Jesus to him because he had the power of life and death. F.F. Bruce has written: “Pilate governed Judea from A.D. 26 to 36 and an inscription from his term of office discovered at Caesarea in 1961 shows that his technical title was “prefect” rather than ‘procurator’. He quickly acquired a reputation for ruthlessness and obstinacy”.

Jesus did not receive a fair trial before Pilate, but one day Pilate will receive a fair trial before Jesus. He will be judged in righteousness, as indeed all will on that last day. Then there will be no condemnation of the righteous and no acquittal of the wicked.

Pilate in the end succumbed to the pressures of the Jewish leaders. He abandoned Jesus to the mob because he had not the courage to do the right thing. Before Jesus Pilate asked **“What is truth?”** and did not wait for an answer. The tragic thing for him was that The Truth had been standing right in front of him. Jesus had said during his ministry: **“I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no man comes unto the Father but by me”** (John 14:6).

The Crucifixion

The apostle Paul wrote: **“For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified”** (1 Corinthians 2:2). The crucifixion has inspired many outstanding hymns.

The crucifixion has also inspired some of the greatest paintings in the world and some of the most outstanding music. But that is only a small part of it. The suffering and death of Jesus have influenced countless millions of lives. Jesus has motivated men and woman everywhere to deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Him. Jesus sacrificed Himself for them, so they in turn have been and are willing to **“present**

their bodies as living sacrifices, holy, acceptable unto God ..." (Romans 12:1).

Study in depth of Roman crucifixion can be a harrowing experience. It is no wonder that Paul wrote: "**... and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"** (Philippians 2:8). Commenting on the last clause, Albert Barnes wrote: "It was not such a death as a servant might incur by crossing a stream, or by falling among robbers, or by being worn out by toil; it was not such as the soldier meets when he is suddenly cut down, covered with glory as he falls; it was the long lingering, painful, humiliating death of the cross.

Many a one might be willing to obey if the death that was suffered was regarded as glorious; but when it is ignominious, and of the most degrading character, and the most torturing that human ingenuity can invent, then the whole character of the obedience is changed. Yet this was the obedience the Lord Jesus evinced; and it was in this way that His remarkable readiness to suffer was shown".

The Resurrection

Jesus Himself had prophesied that He would rise from the dead. For example: "**Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up"** (John 2:19). "**From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and be raised again the third day"** (Matthew 16:21). "**But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee"** (Matthew 26:32). Is it any wonder then that the two in the tomb said: "**Why seek you the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and the third day rise again"** (Luke 24: 5-7).

It is interesting that women were the first on the scene at the empty tomb. Luke tells us that among others there were Mary Magdalene, Joanna and

Mary the mother of James. Mary Magdalene was so named because it identified her with her place of birth – Magdala, which means "tower" or "castle" and was in the days of Jesus a thriving populous town on the coast of Galilee, about three miles from Capernaum. Jesus had cast seven demons from her (Luke 8:2);. Joanna was the wife of Chuza, the house – steward of Herod the Tetrarch. Mary, the mother of James the Less, one of the apostles, was also the mother of Joses (Matthew 27:56).

We read: "**And their (the women's) words seemed to them (the apostles) as idle tales, and they believed them not"** (24:11). The Greek word translated "idle tales" was one employed by Greek medical writers to describe the babbling of a fevered and insane mind. (Yet another medical term employed by doctor Luke!) But, of course, what they said was the truth. Jesus had risen – the greatest fact in history!

Ian S. Davidson,
Motherwell.

OBITUARY

MOTHERWELL: The church at Motherwell regrets to announce the death of brother John McCallum at the age of 75 on the 21st July, 1991. Brother John had been ill for some time. He had become a Christian at the early age of thirteen and had remained a faithful member of the Lord's church to the end. For many years he worshipped with the Blackridge congregation, but in his latter years he enjoyed the fellowship with the family at Motherwell. John will be remembered for his deep faith in Jesus and for his work notably on the music front. He was a self-taught musician and a composer of many hymns. At this time we pray for sister May, John's wife for fifty-two years, who lovingly nursed him during long years of illness. She was a real firm supporter in all his labours for the Lord. The funeral took place at Whitburn and was conducted by brother

Ian S. Davidson of Motherwell and brother Joe Currie of Newtongrange. Brother Jack Nisbet of Haddington assisted. John will be greatly missed by many.

William Purcell, Secretary.

COMING EVENTS

NEWTONGRANGE: The church in Newtongrange intends holding its Annual Social on Saturday, 12th October, 1991 at 4 p.m. in the Meeting-place. Speakers: Bro. Ian Davidson, Motherwell, Bro. David Ferguson, Easthouses. Chairman: Bro. Joe Currie. We look forward to a rich time of fellowship with the churches and our Lord.

Joe Currie, Treas./Sec.

120th ANNIVERSARY: The 120th Anniversary Meeting of Hope Street Chapel, London, will take place on Saturday 5th October, 1991. Afternoon Meeting at 3 p.m. Tea, 4.45 p.m. Evening Meeting, 6.30 p.m. Bro. Philip Partington speaking, also on Sunday. All welcome.

SPECIAL MEETINGS: The Church, meeting in Argyle Street, Hindley, Wigan, intend holding (D.V.) two Special Meetings in September: Saturday and Lord's Day 14/15th. Speaker: Ian Davidson, Motherwell. Saturday and Lord's Day 28/29th. Speaker: Bill Mair, Buckie. Both Saturday Meetings at 7.30 p.m.

THANKS

Sister Mary McCallum, Motherwell, would like to thank all those who telephoned and sent letters and cards during her recent bereavement, and those who attended the funeral of her husband John. All these things were greatly appreciated.

GHANA REPORT

In the past month I have received three telephone calls from Ghana from Bill Cook. He is keeping well and the work, especially around the Kumasi District, is going particularly well with sixteen baptisms this year. The money sent out last month has been received and is being used as per allocation.

As you will remember, a few months ago there were requests for money to build meeting places. The money was sent out and has been used for building materials. Each congregation is in various stages of their building programme but some have used up their allocation and have only half-built walls. I would therefore wish to appeal this month for money to complete these buildings.

Anyone wishing to assist in this appeal could you please send your cheques made out to "Graeme Pearson Ghana Appeal" and send to: Graeme Pearson, 13 Fairways, Dunfermline, Fife. KY12 0DU. Tel. (0383) 728624. (P.S. Thank you, IBM for £50 received on 26 July, 1991).

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is published monthly.

PRICE PER YEAR — POST PAID BY SURFACE MAIL

UNITED KINGDOM and COMMONWEALTH £ 6.6
 CANADA & U.S.A. \$10.00

AIR MAIL please add £1.50 or \$3.00 to above surface mail rates

DISTRIBUTION AGENT & TREASURER:

JOHN K. KNELLER, 4 Glassel Park Road, Longniddry, East Lothian, EH32 0NY
 Telephone: Longniddry (0875) 53212 to whom change of address should be sent.

EDITOR: JAMES R. GARDINER, 87 Main Street, Pathhead, Midlothian,
 Scotland EH37 5PT. Telephone: Ford 320 527

"The Scripture Standard" is printed for the publishers by
 Lothian Printers, 109 High Street, Dunbar, East Lothian. Tel: (0368) 63785