

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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JUSTIFICATION

God's plan for saving the souls of lost men is the central theme of the entire Bible. The scheme for human redemption begins to unfold in the early part of the Genesis; and like a great river ever widening in its course, continues through to Revelation. All other issues are purely incidental to God's main thrust — to rescue perishing souls. Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost and is the central personality of the Bible — His gospel is the focal point of its doctrine. The O.T. pointed forward to His coming and the New Testament presents Him as the world's Redeemer and reveals in detail His scheme of redemption.

The small congregation at Haddington has in its mid-week Bible study, been going through Paul's epistle to the Romans and has been confronted with Paul's teaching on 'Justification'; that pearl amongst all the many graces of God to man, and the one which Luther considered the most important doctrine in the Bible. 'Justification' is not now a matter much written upon but if one should pursue any background reading in the subject one will find that it was something around which controversy raged at the Reformation. Alexander Campbell agreed with Luther's sentiments and said of the great Reformer "Emerging from the smoke of the great city of mystical Babylon, he saw as clearly and as far into these matters as any person could in such a hazy atmosphere." Luther's view, based on New Testament scripture, that we are justified by faith, conflicted with the teaching of the Roman Catholic church and even now Roman Catholic theologians believe that justification involves an infusion, and not an imputation, of righteousness — a moral and not a legal change, a change of character and not of condition.

THE MEANING

The meaning of 'Justification' is best ascertained from the original use made of the word in the scriptures. Here it would seem to be a direct opposite to 'condemnation' and used in the context of a judge pronouncing that the person arraigned before him is innocent (Deut. 25:1 Is 5:22). The function of the judge is to confirm the innocence of the guiltless, and condemn the guilty, and, as such, he has not need to dispense mercy. The innocent have therefore no need of pardon — only the guilty. Thus the element of *Pardon* looms large in any definition of 'Justification.' Paul in the early chapters of Romans highlights *the guilt* of both Jews and Gentiles. The Jews had the Mosaic Law but the law merely defined sins and could not pardon them. The law condemned and therefore could not at the same time justify those under it. The Gentiles, although not having the law, were sinners never-the-less,

because they did not always do *by nature* the things contained in law or in keeping with their conscience (Rom. 2 & 3), and therefore Paul could truly say "All (Jew and Gentile) have sinned and come short of the glory of God" Because "by the deeds of the law no flesh could be justified" God had to step in and justify us *by His grace*. Our justification means therefore that God not only declares us innocent of having contravened His law but actually regards us as if we had always actually kept it. 'Justification' is thus the happy state of being admitted into the favour of God, as *pardoned sinners*, God choosing to ignore the fact that we were ever dead in trespasses and sins. In Paul's discourse to those Jews in Antioch (Acts 13:39) he declared: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believes are *justified* from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."

THE MEANS

The means of mans' justification had of necessity to come from a source completely external to man himself. Man has not the capacity to direct his own steps, let alone pull himself up 'by the bootstraps' from the abyss of sin. It is true however that man is quick to try to *justify himself*, not only to his fellowman, but to God Himself. Job was accused of this numerous times, by Bildad. The certain young lawyer *willing to justify himself* asked Jesus "Who is my neighbour?" Adam blamed his transgression on 'the woman thou gavest to be with me' and Eve, when challenged, explained 'the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.' When Moses challenged Aaron on the presence of the golden calf, Aaron said, "Thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief." Similarly Saul, when questioned by Sāmuel about the bleating sheep, blamed the people — "But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen ..." Clearly some of the best people were quick to try and justify themselves, and when accused we ourselves are no strangers to the device of *self-justification*. There are, however, none righteous, no, not one, and whether our actions on a certain occasion may or may not be excusable, the broad truth is that all have sinned and come sadly short of God's glory (and sin separates man from his Maker). But. BUT. "BUT God commandeth His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from Wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

Thus God graciously intervened and rescued us from our hopeless plight. While man struggled in the morass of sin Christ died for him, and 'Justified' mankind 'By His blood.' Small wonder then that God commandeth His own standard of love to us and assures us of His promise which contains that double indemnity, i.e. That if God would save His enemies by the *death* of His Son, how much more will He save *His Church* by the *life* of His Son. From Paul's various other statements in Romans on the subject, we can summarise and say that "It is God that justifieth" (Rom. 8:33) and that we are justified "Freely by His Grace" (Rom. 3:24) and that we are "justified by His blood" (Rom. 5:9) and that we are justified by our own faith (Rom. 5:1).

THE MANNER

Even the most casual reader will at once realise that if man is justified by his faith in Christ, then the justification which God extends has not universal application. Indeed Paul stressed to the Corinthians that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God and adds: "And such were some of you: but ye are washed; but ye are sanctified, but ye are *justified* in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. 6:11). Again, in (Rom. 8:23), Paul advises us that only

those who have responded to God's call will be justified, and those whom God justifies them He also glorifies. To be Justified is, therefore, entirely contingent upon our faith in Christ.

Bearing in mind that there were Judaizers in the church at Rome, doubtless voicing the merits of circumcision and the works of the law we can perhaps understand why the apostle spends much time in emphasising that justification was conditional upon faith and why he introduces (Chap. 2&3) the case of Abraham and David. In Abraham's case, Paul points out that he was justified by simple but strong faith. Abraham lived *before* the Mosaic Law was given and therefore enjoyed God's justification without the law. Paul infers that Jews and Gentiles in his (Paul's) day could equally enjoy God's justification in the same way and on the same terms. Nor was this all, for Abraham was justified by God by faith about twenty years before he was circumcised — thus circumcision had nothing to do with it, and therefore men could quite easily (in Paul's day) be justified by faith as Abraham was, and circumcision and Moses' Law would have no bearing on the matter. Neither, in Abraham's case, had his justification been based on *his works* for he was justified before being tested by works, and many years before being called upon to sacrifice his son. Justification given *because* of meritorious works would form payment of a debt — but justification is by free grace and is not therefore payment of any debt. Abraham has not earned his justification by works. Paul not only quotes the case of Abraham but also refers to David, who unlike Abraham lived under the law and who spoke while it was still in force.

"Even David," says Paul, "describeth the blessedness of a man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Paul quotes here Psalm 32:1, 2 where David not only expresses the idea of justification without works but also, at the same time, gives us a wonderful definition of 'Justification'. And so Paul shows that his doctrine of justification by faith is not as revolutionary as some of the Jews were claiming, but was as old as Abraham and David.

Readers may be thinking of what James, in his epistle, had to say about the case of Abraham and how, in James' view Abraham was "justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar." (James 2). I believe that any apparent contradiction in the two statements will disappear if we study the matter closely. It seems to me that James is not denying that Abraham was justified by faith but is merely stressing that true faith must manifest itself in good works (or it is not true faith at all). Indeed (in verse 22) James directs our attention to Abraham's faith and how that faith had its fair and full expression in works — "Seest thou how *faith* wrought with his works, and by works was *faith* made perfect." Works, therefore, according to James, are the tangible evidence that faith is present in any individual, and are, in fact, the *only* evidence. Thus 'no works' means 'no faith.'

THE MORAL

And so, at the risk of labouring the point, 'Justification' is, as Luther maintained, the doctrine by which the church would stand or fall. It certainly is the source of the great freedom we enjoy in Christ, and destroys the need for any human intermediary or priestly confessional. Praise be to God for such an unspeakable blessing. 'Justification' is by the grace of God; is for Jew and Gentile alike; and is based on the premise not only that God pardons our sins but regards us as if we have never fallen. It depends not upon any meritorious works on our part and transcends any question of colour, or race, or law, or circumcision (except and in so far that our good works are but evidence and expressions of our faith in Christ). This blessing was brought about by the shedding of Christ's precious blood and is offered to those who

have been called by the gospel, washed and sanctified. The moral? God has been swift to forgive us our iniquities and nobody "twisted His arm." Nobody should have to twist our arms to force us to forgive our fellowmen their trespasses against us. As Paul says, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Eph. 4:32).

— Editor

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

(Matt. 25:31-46)

Introduction:

The majority of the people in the whole world believe that a person can find a way for all the problems of life, I mean, that every kind of problem is not something that is impossible to solve. The only thing that cannot be solved is death, they say, we all have to die some day. But death is not the one thing that we all have in common so far as the future is concerned, for some now living may never die for the Apostle Paul tells us that "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet." 1 Cor. 15:51,52. The one thing we all have in common is the judgment. We all must one day face the judgment of God. There will be no exceptions. In Romans 14:10, Paul wrote, "We all shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ." We will all be there. There will be no exceptions.

No one can doubt the magnitude of this matter of standing before God in judgment if he reads the Bible very often. In Acts 17:30,31, Paul told the Athenians, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent. Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained."

There is no truth more clearly taught in God's word, no fact more firmly established, and no warning more emphatic than the truth of these words spoken by the apostle Paul concerning the great day of judgment.

This day of judgment had been appointed long ago, but through Jesus Christ it has been made known with greater clearness. Nowhere in the Bible is the issue of the last judgment given such powerful emphasis as in the message of Jesus Himself, as contained in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew. After telling the story of the ten virgins, five of whom were wise, making preparation to enter into the marriage feast, and five of whom were foolish, making inadequate preparation, Jesus said, "Afterward came also the other virgins, saying Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not." Then, Jesus made the application to His disciples and to all of us, "Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour" (Matt. 25:11-13).

Immediately, Jesus related the parable of the talents, which contains a section concerning a man who was given his talent from God, but rather than use it as God directed, he buried it in the earth. Jesus concluded that story with the awesome words, "And cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth" (25:30). Actually, Jesus is the only person in the scriptures who used this expression, "the weeping and the gnashing of teeth," and He used it three times to indicate the seriousness of being unprepared to meet God in the judgment.

It was at this point that Jesus gave the most complete account of the judgment scene that we find anywhere in the Bible. Jesus shows to us clearly that judgment will be a time when men carry on a personal dialogue with Him. (read Matt. 25:31-46).

His Appearing

(Verses 31-32a) — There are several facts in this statement which shows beyond

any doubt that the reference is to the end of the dispensation, the time when Jesus shall come to judge the world prior to His delivering the kingdom back to the Father.

1. He shall come in His glory.
2. All the angels shall be with Him.
3. He shall sit on the throne of His glory.
4. All the nations of the earth shall be gathered before Him. This is a majestic picture with which the Lord brings His sermon to a close.

Another passage of scripture which presents the judgment scene in all its complete reality is found in Rev. 20:11-15 (read). Here the apostle John describes the special revelation that the Lord gave to him.

The coming of Christ will be in glory, because of the full manifestation of His power and majesty; and His throne is called the throne of His glory, because from it shall come decisions of wisdom and righteousness. (Cf. Acts 17:30,31). The awfulness of the scene is described by the apostle Paul when he says, (read 2 Thess. 1:7-10).

The angels in the Scriptures are frequently associated with Jesus in descriptions of the judgment. In the parable of the tares, they are called "the reapers," and we are told that "the Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth." (Matt. 13:36-43).

(Verses 32b-45) — The Division of the People

In the expression "he shall separate them," the pronoun "them," in the original, is masculine, while its antecedent "nations" is neuter (neither masculine nor feminine). This clearly shows that the separation has reference, not to the nations, as such; but to the individuals who make up the nations. This separation will be made with unerring penetration, and with infinite equity. The vast multitudes will move to the right or to the left under the influence of the Lord's power. The metaphor is taken from the practice of shepherds of ancient times in keeping the sheep and the goats in separate flocks. In the matter of judgement, the right hand is always represented as the place of honor and preferment, while the left is the place of the less favoured or despised. The separation which is here made is not the result of caprice or arbitrary power, but according to a settled principle in the government of God. "He will judge the world in righteousness." This principle we shall discuss it further on.

(Verse 34). — "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." This is the first and only time in which Jesus plainly calls Himself the "King." Those on His right hand are the blessed of the Father, that is, their character demonstrated that they have lived according to the will of God, and under His benediction.

In saying that the kingdom was prepared for the righteous from the foundation of the world, the meaning is that it was and is the eternal purpose of God that none but the righteous could inherit His eternal kingdom, or live with Him eternally.

(Verse 35) — After describing the glory and majesty of the judgement scene, the Lord next gives the reason for the public acknowledgment of the righteous. The acts which are mentioned here are all deeds of mercy, and they fall in the category of good works.

(Verses 37-40) — The manner in which Christ replies to the righteous, as if they had ministered unto Him personally, excites their astonishment, and emphasizes the unconsciousness of merit which characterises the noblest deeds, when their performance is motivated by faith in and love for God and man.

(Verses 41-45) — Even the vilest sinner, while here upon the earth, is in a certain sense always before the Lord, but there will come a time when every unprepared person will be forever banished from His presence. The “cursed” are those who are devoted to destruction. This state is the very opposite of the “blessed.” It implies the negation of all the blessings which are promised the faithful, and a positive infliction of eternal suffering.

The “eternal fire” denotes both the nature and duration of the nature and duration of the punishment which will be inflicted. It was prepared for the devil and his angels, but it will also be the lot of all men who partake of the ways of the evil one. For one to suffer the same kind of punishment which was originally meant for the devil shows something of the enormity of sin. We see here, plainly, why sinners are destroyed, not because there was no salvation for them, but because they neglected to receive good, and do good. They are cursed, because they refused to be blessed; and they are damned, because they refused to be saved.

It should be observed that in the three examples which Christ gave to illustrate the second coming, the virgins, the talents, and the judgment, not a single one of those who were condemned was charged with any sin but that of neglect. (Heb. 2:3) Neglect alone is sufficient to condemn the soul. Some people pretend not to know of the distress of others, because they have no desire to relieve them; but, as this lesson plainly teaches, such ignorance will not be of any benefit at the judgment day. “Then shall he answer them saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me.” The only difference between this answer and the one given to the righteous is the word not. Their failure in this respect was the ground for their condemnation. No other sins or acts of disobedience are taken into consideration. Simple neglect is sufficient to cause eternal condemnation.

The Final Reward

(Verse 46) — The Final Reward — “And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life.”

Efforts have been made to show that the punishment of the wicked is not eternal, but one has only to read this text to see that the punishment of the wicked is coextensive with the life of the righteous. The same Greek word measures both; they are both eternal.

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GLEANINGS

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

BEGIN THE DAY WITH GOD

“In his autobiography George Muller says, “I saw more clearly than ever that the first great and primary matter to which I ought to attend every day was to have my soul happy in the Lord. For I might seek to benefit believers, I might seek to relieve the distressed, I might seek in other ways to behave myself as becomes a child of God in this world; and yet, not being happy in the Lord, and not being nourished and strengthened in the inner man day by day, all this might not be attended to in the right spirit’.”

C.G.

THAT I MAY OPEN MY MOUTH BOLDLY *Ephesians 6:19*

“I have not been like a shepherd after lost sheep, nor like a physician among dying men, nor like a servant bidding you to the marriage, nor like one plucking

brands from the burning! How often have I gone to your houses to try and win souls, and you have put me off with a little worldly talk. I dared not tell you that you were perishing. How often have I sat at some of your tables, and my heart yearned for your souls, yet a false shame kept me silent! How often I have gone home crying bitterly, 'Free me from blood guiltiness, O God!'"

— Robert Murray McCheyne

THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD

"The spirit of the world is forever altering, forever eluding, in fresh forms, your attempts to seize it. In the days of Noah it was violence. In Elijah's day it was idolatry. In the day of Christ it was power. In ours, perhaps, it is love of possessions and pleasure. It enters in different proportions in different bosoms. This is the spirit of the world, a thing to be struggled against, not so much in the case of others as the silent battle within our own souls."

— F. W. Robertson

HE KNOWS

"Tempted Christian, entangled in the net of your own mistakes, there stands your Deliverer. Your Lord is a living Person of infinite skill and tenderest love. He knows all about your difficulties and He is able to deal with them. Look Him in the face with the unreserved readiness that He should deal with the net and with you in regard to it, And He will surprise you by the manifestation of His power."

H. C. G. Moule

TO GUARD MY DEPOSIT

"Preaching is the proclamation of the Word, the truth as the truth has been revealed. Our deposit is the sum totality of the truth. We are holding a bigger thing than we know. If we should live and preach for half a century or a century, we should never be able to exhaust the thing that is ours as a deposit. Paul wrote: "I know Whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to guard that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

"I am not so sure that this is correct translation. It is an attempt to interpret. It is literally translated, 'to guard my deposit.' Our translators have always made it mean something Paul had deposited with Him. I think it means rather that which He had deposited with Paul, the thing for which he was responsible; this whole truth, this Word of God, focused, crystallised in a Person, and interpreted by a literature.

"That is our business as preachers. 'Oh, but the preacher must catch the spirit of the age.' God forgive him if he does. Our business is never to catch, but by eternal truth to correct the spirit of the age. This is not narrow. Nothing can happen today to which the truth of God has not something to say. Our preaching will touch life at every point. We do not go to discuss a situation, but to deliver a message."

— Campbell Morgan

TALENTS

"Anything whereby we may glorify God is a talent. Our gifts, influence, money, knowledge, health, strength, time, senses, reason, intellect, memory, affection, advantages as possessors of the Bible, all, all are talents."

— J. C. Ryle

BEARERS OF THE WORD

"The shafts that bear the grain aloft Are very slender;
The roots that hold them to the soil Are very tender;
Yet all the grain is lifted high, To ripen under summer sky,
And tell the millions bye and bye Of God the Sender.
The men who bear the Word aloft Are often lowly;

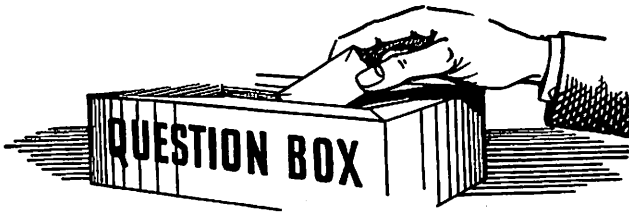
The ties that bind them to the work All strengthen slowly;
And yet the Word is carried wide, To every land on every tide,
The peoples manifold to guide, To God the Holy."

— H. J. Horn

WE QUOTE — HAROLD MURRAY

"The great preacher, Dr. Dale, of Birmingham, was very kind to Dr. Morgan in many ways. Once when the latter spoke rather dolefully of himself as 'an untrained man,' Dr. Dale said a word he never forgot: 'Don't say you are untrained. *Always remember God has many ways of training men.*'" How true it is that 'the beauty of Jesus' is quite independent of the Theological College classroom."

— Selected by Leonard Morgan



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

"In our Bible study we could not agree on the reasons behind "speaking in tongues" and would appreciate your comments. Tongues were apparently a 'sign to unbelievers' but what kind of a sign? In Acts 2 the tongues apparently referred to known languages but in 1 Cor. seem to refer to ecstatic outbursts. In Ch.14 v.1 we are told that he that speaks in tongues edifies only himself and speaks not to men but to God — what was the point? Also it appears that he who spoke in tongues could also interpret (v.5,13). What was the point and purpose of all this? Why should they not speak in known languages or in words that all could understand?"

This question is, in reality, five questions. It is concerned with a topic which has engendered a certain amount of confusion down the ages, and one which is still debated and discussed among Christians without, seemingly, any concrete resolution. It is a topic which, because of its so-called complexity, many writers and preachers choose to ignore. However, I believe there are some guidelines which can be explored with profit, and these we shall look at in some detail.

The Promised Advent of the Holy Spirit

Luke records that the resurrected Lord, after He had opened the eyes and understanding of the disciples about the Scriptures concerning Himself, said unto them, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:44-49). In Acts of Apostles, Luke records that Jesus reminds the disciples again of His promise, while they stand together on the mount called Olivet. He says, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts 1:5-8).

What was the purpose of the promise, and what effect did the realisation of it have? Luke 24 makes it clear that the purpose was 'that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in the name of Jesus', and that the disciples 'should witness to Him'. This should commence in Jerusalem. In short, the Gospel of Salvation in

Christ should be proclaimed to the people, and as the Christ had been witnessed to by the Law and the Prophets in the Old Dispensation (Rom. 3:21), so He should be witnessed to in the new Dispensation by His Apostles. Furthermore, we must not be unmindful of the Divine arrangement. Luke records in Acts 4 the prayer of the company of Christians, "The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou has annointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4:26-28). So the stage was set, and the Apostles, endued with the power of the Holy Spirit, were upon it. The announcement of Grace was to be made to the world. This, I believe, was the paramount purpose of all that was to ensue.

The effect was dramatic. The Apostles began to speak, and very soon the word spread that a supernatural phenomenon was taking place. The multitude came together (Acts 2:5-6) and were astonished to hear, in their several languages, the wonderful works of God. But not all. To those who did not know the tongue, it sounded like the inane babbling of drunken and besotted men. Nevertheless, on that day three thousand souls heard and believed (they understood) the message, and the Church of the Lord began. We cannot but conclude that the events were the fulfilment of the predetermined plan of God, for the Apostles *did not of themselves* speak the tongues, but they spake 'as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance' (Acts 2:14), and John teaches us that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit *agree* in one. Therefore, let those today who claim the ecstasy of the operation of the Holy Spirit ponder this sober and unmistakable fact; the purpose of Pentecost was not to elevate the *speaker*, but to announce the wonderful Grace of God through the Gospel of Christ Jesus.

The Corinthian Experience

There is little doubt that the post-Pentecostal period was one of extreme euphoria so far as Christians were concerned. The Holy Spirit was abroad. He was dispensing a diversity of gifts. Christians confidently expected that the return of the Lord was imminent. It was only to be expected that Apostolic warnings would have to be issued against undesirable excesses of attitude and behaviour. The Corinthian community had its full quota of such problems, and Paul had to deal with them. One of the serious problems which threatened the orderliness of the Church was the problem of the gift of tongues.

The teaching in 1 Corinthians chapter 14 furnishes us with the main thrust of Paul's argument. The first points which we have to acknowledge are the recorded *facts*. Paul says, "Follow after love, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophecy" (14:1). Love is *first*, and is a *grace* which is far superior to any *gift* (see Paul's argument in 1 Cor. 13). Love, says the Apostle, will abide; gifts will cease. A person may have a gift, and yet can be unloving and unloved. Such a one *has not* the grace of God. But true exegesis must acknowledge the exhortation of Paul to the Corinthian Christians, "desire spiritual gifts"; having said that, Paul lays down the principle that one gift is preferable to another, "rather that ye may prophecy". So speaking in an unknown tongue was a spiritual gift, but for the edification of the Church it was *not as good a gift* as prophecy. These two spiritual gifts need some explanation in the context of the teaching.

We sometimes teach that tongues used at Pentecost were foreign languages, and that those spoken about in 1 Cor. 14 were 'ecstatic babblings', but I wonder if this was really the case? Paul says, "Yet in the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand *words* in an unknown tongue" (1 Cor. 14:19). Now we know that the voice

causes sounds, but when we *articulate*, the sounds are joined together to form speech and this is accomplished by the tongue and the lips. When Paul speaks about "ten thousand *words* in an unknown tongue", he is surely speaking about *articulated* sounds; my own opinion about the phrase 'unknown tongue' would be that this refers to a language *unknown to the people present at the time*. We must not forget that the situation in the Corinthian Church as regards the knowledge of language would be vastly different to the cosmopolitan nature of the multitude at Pentecost. Therefore, if what I believe is true, then if a Corinthian Christian with the gift of an unknown tongue had to edify the Church, the situation would need another Corinthian Christian to have the gift of interpretation so that all the Church could benefit. If the one with the gift of unknown tongue were to do his own interpreting, then the argument of Paul seems to be that this would be tantamount to the gift of prophecy, so why not prophecy in the first place?

We need to understand what prophecy is in the context. Paul says, "But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort" (14:3). We notice here that there is not a suggestion of *prediction*. Again, "If all prophecy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is 'convinced of all, he is judged of all'" (14:24). So we can conclude, I believe rightly that prophecy in this context was the power to expound the Word of God; to know the truth, and to be able to impart it to others.

I believe the Apostle sums up these two gifts in 14:11, "therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me". We must understand that Paul is writing to Greeks, and to the Greek the non-Greek was a barbarian. In the context of this letter this could only have been meaningful when applied to the speech uttered.

The 'Signs'

"Wherefore, tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not" (14:22). Throughout his ministry, Jesus was asked to give signs; Matthew records, "Then certain of the scribes and Pharisees answered saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee" (Matt. 12:38). What they were asking for, of course was, an indication of Divine authority and power. There were many signs evident of Divine power and love but these were not the signs the Jews sought; they wanted signs of a Messianic Kingdom, with temporal power, and with they themselves as the chosen ones. Such cravings evoked Jesus to describe them as "a wicked and an adulterous generation," and He referred them to the sign of the prophet Jonas.

There is evidence that the Apostles met the same demands. Paul says, "For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and folly to Gentiles" (1 Cor.1:22, 23 R.S.V.). With such requirements, the Gospel of Christ was indeed a stumbling block to the Jews.

There is an interesting prophecy in Isaiah chapter 28. After recounting the degraded position of the priests and teachers of Israel he says, "For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to his people" (Isa. 28:11). This prophecy is freely quoted by Paul in 1 Cor.14:21 and its import is unmistakeable. What God accomplished in Christ, His resurrection and ascension, the dispensing of gifts by the Holy Spirit, the supernatural acts of the Apostolic ministry, the operation of the gifts of tongues and prophesyings, all these were confirmatory signs of what he had done in Christ and what He was doing through the operation of the Holy Spirit, but the tragedy was, and is, that the Jews would not accept this. Incidentally, there is no scriptural record of speaking in tongues and prophesyings after the circumstances recorded in Acts 19:1-20 (The reader will understand, of course, that the time span of events as recorded in Acts of Apostles would embrace the periods of time when the

operation of the Holy Spirit was evident in the Churches, such as the Corinthian Church, for example).

Conclusion

Let us not delude ourselves. Christianity, and our relationship to God will always evoke deep emotional feelings which are difficult to put into words. Truth and error exist side by side. It is true today that Christians will have deep emotional feelings towards their God and His Christ; it is error to say that this will result in the gift of speaking with tongues as in the early Church. Those gifts have ceased, but the love of God is still shed abroad in the hearts of men through the Gospel. Love will always remain; gifts were only to confirm the Divine Will and power. What more does the Church need than the Gospel, and the gracious in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit in our lives?

(All questions, please to: Alf Marsden, 377 Billinge Road, Highfield, Wigan, Lancs.)

FOR ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST

(Phil. 1:21)

The title above was the objective of Paul the apostle to the gentiles who was once Saul of Tarsus, a persecutor of the Christians. Despite his hard-hearted attitude towards those who "preached Christ and Him crucified", there did come a time in his life, recorded in Acts chapter 9, when he heard the voice of Jesus and was led to make a sincere and positive decision. More than this, he underwent deep personal conviction of sin regarding his wrong actions in hating and rejecting those who preached Christ. This positive realization and counting the cost of discipleship was instrumental in his becoming the famous Paul, apostle to the gentiles.

While his firm decision, to obey and serve Christ, caused him to suffer and to endure much for the cause of Christ, yet he had fully and totally committed his life. Recall his statement: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." He further confirmed his conviction, objective and purpose in these words. "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians — 2:20).

In principle we as Christians must recall that there was a time in our lives when we too saw our deep need to heed to the message of Christ. Do we remember the great day in our lives when we too heard the voice of Jesus, through his word, via some messenger, and then willingly and humbly obeyed, being "buried with Christ in baptism for the remission of our sins, and rising to walk in newness of life?"

Paul realised that *nothing else mattered* to him aside from living for Christ. If we have failed to realise this priority in a practical manner, let us seek the forgiveness from him who loves us. Paul also realised that he was not . . . dealing with mere man, but with Deity.

This recognition of our dealing with Deity will, then, give us a strong motivation to heed the admonition of Paul, "Be ye followers of men, even as I also am of . . . Christ" (1st Cor. 11:1).

Paul's expressed purpose in life was, "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before. I press towards the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil 3:13).

WE CAN THEN CONFIDENTLY SAY, "FOR TO ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST, TO DIE IS GAIN." Do not say, "I am frail, I cannot be like Paul." If Paul could say with confidence, "I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHICH

STRENGTHENETH ME" (Phil. 4:15). SO CAN WE! Consider the things of the world and the little that they offer as we read, **"I COUNT ALL THINGS BUT LOSS FOR THE EXCELLENCY OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST JESUS MY LORD . . . suffered the loss of ALL things . . . (the reason?) THAT I MAY WIN CHRIST"** (Phil. 3:8).

Yes, to be an imitator of Paul is "to contend for the faith which was once delivered to the Saints," to "endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit," and "to live by faith" in God's promises (Jude 3 — Eph. 4).

We must realise that what Paul stood for, or did, was not for any personal credit, but that Christ would be glorified. We too can say without any hesitation, fear or shame, "For to me to live is Christ, but to die is gain."

As a christian what is your purpose, your objectives, your potentials and your ideals? Remember that the life lived for Christ provides dividends that far outweigh anything that the world can offer.

T. W. Hartle.

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SCRIPTURE READINGS

FOR JUNE 1982

6 Nehemiah 6	II Cor. 11, 1-15
13 Psalm 116	II Cor. 11, 16-35
20 Isaiah 6	II Cor. 12
27 II Kings 2	II Cor. 13

SIMPLICITY VERSUS SUBTLETY (11, 3)

The work of Paul with the Corinthian christians had been one of extreme simplicity — the presentation of Christ and Him crucified (I Cor. 2, 2). It was God's power through the word and through miracles (12, 12) which had brought them the blessedness of salvation (I Cor. 2, 3-5). Satan's messengers however had been among them, claiming apostolic authority and eminence, and they belittled Paul. With Pharisaiic impudence they expected great respect and more attention with superior eloquence and arrogant expertise in the Scriptures (11, 13-15 & 20). Paul had come among them as a labouring man (Act 18, 2-5) and had not claimed the rights of support from them to which an apostle was entitled (11, 7-9). Opposition from self-confident and self

appointed Jewish teachers which had followed Paul's "un-jewish" preaching, prejudiced some converts against him (Gal. 2, 4 & 5). It is easy to arouse prejudice, and so it became necessary to be very STRAIGHT in defending himself. He had very literally to present his credentials though it should obviously have been quite unnecessary. The truth about his very ultra-jewish background plus his outstanding sufferings on behalf of the gospel must surely clear any clouded vision in the church.

Biting irony is sometimes needed in putting a case and therefore justified (11, 21). We wonder how these false teachers "got away with it" but must remember that distances and slow communications are involved, enabling some to propagate their views who objected to or even defied the decision of the church, as they were doing also among the Galatians (Act 15, 5 & 23-29: Gal. 1, 6: 3, 1 . . .). However, it seems that loose morals and unchristian behaviour were also involved, being excused or winked at in spite of the first letter (12, 20 & 21).

To be a christian in Corinth certainly needed special effort and courage. Simplicity and godly sincerity describes Paul's teaching and behaviour. This cannot excuse lapses but requires true repentance also (12).

REVELATIONS FROM GOD

Have we realised what a tremendous honour was conferred upon Paul? (Gal. 1, 15 & 16). God indeed greatly honoured "the twelve" in giving them the priceless privilege of living with His Son for the period of His earthly ministry. They must have needed every minute of it, and finally they paid for it with their lives, as did Paul also. But Paul was separately chosen, and by revelations and direct divine communications was given what was necessary for a specific service in the work of spreading the truth that the separation of Jew from Gentile had ceased when the sacrifice, the eternally valid sacrifice for sin, had been made by the Lord Jesus in offering HIMSELF. Paul was truly above any normal human measure by this appointment! How easily could this measure have become a matter of human pride!

However in speaking of it he writes "I knew a man in Christ" as though not himself but just as a human being ushered into Christ by divine appointment to receive a heavenly revelation — caught up into heaven, paradise, the garden of God, to hear thoughts, words, ideas so wonderful as to be unexpressible in human language. The honour and the character of the man can be compared perhaps only with Moses — the meekest man — whose face shone for a brief time with divine radiance. Paul's whole life shone so that he could say "Be ye followers (imitators) of me even as I am of Christ" (I Cor. 11, 1). In Paul it was the complete transformation of a meticulously earnest Pharisee into the humble slave of Jesus, and of those for whom He died (11, 29). Those who feel there is something inferior about Paul's words as against those recorded of Jesus Himself in the gospels must surely bear this in mind, and give up the theory. Inspiration by the Holy Spirit takes the man into God's service as he is, yet does not use him as a machine. The characters of the New Testament writers shine through their individual works but

provide infallible guidance by telling and teaching the truth.

God seems never to take away man's free will, and yet fulfils His purposes through him. The "thorn in the flesh" was Satan's messenger to buffet him but it was God's messenger to avert the danger of self-exaltation, and the ruin of his mission. It remains a model for Christians. May we all be used as imitators of Jesus in this way, and the grace of the Lord Jesus shine through our individual characters. By this attitude of mind we are enabled to be confident and happy in spite of or because of life's limitations or trials (James 1, 2: I Peter 1, 6). Our works cannot save us but grace through love, ours in response to God's, guided by faith and stimulated by hope. Paul could truly say "In nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles," and yet of himself "who am less than the least of all saints" (12, 11: Eph. 3, 8).

BEWARE: I AM ON MY WAY

We have thought that Paul first went to Corinth in 50 A.D., and that his first letter was written from Ephesus about 54 A.D. Of his life meantime we have record in Acts 18, 18-23 and 19, 1. Dates can only be estimated possibilities. He spent 18 months at least in Corinth itself and then completed his second missionary journey via Ephesus, Caesarea and Jerusalem to Antioch in Syria. He had a short visit to Ephesus, apparently kept the feast at Jerusalem, saluting the churches only, stayed some time at Antioch before beginning what we call his third missionary journey.

It may have been three years before he started his main work in Ephesus. So successful was that that all the surrounding region felt the influence of the gospel, and the riot in Ephesus resulted. His two years there ended somewhat abruptly, and his anxiety regarding Corinth became a great burden on his heart. Having sent Timothy (I Cor. 4, 17) and later Titus to strengthen faith and behaviour, he awaited Titus with

news of response to rebuke and instruction. Now he threatens what apostolic correction is necessary with some fear that it will not be a peaceful meeting. It would be a deep grief indeed if such troubles as those mentioned in ch. 12, 20 are experienced. These are blunt warnings but nothing but love and goodwill had been exercised towards them, and these concluding thoughts express the longing heart of a spiritual father for the love of the children but not at any price — you must do what is honourable, repentance is essential (13, 7: 12, 21). "Rejoice, restore yourselves, admonish yourselves" (Marshall, *Literal English*, 13, 11). Grace of Jesus, Love of God, Communion of the Spirit, a threefold kind conclusion.

R. B. Scott.

A MINUTE with George Alder

Time is Money, or Is It?

Where did we get the idea that time is money? Possibly from Benjamin Franklin, but we didn't get it from the Bible. The Bible has a lot to say about the stewardship of money, the danger of the love of money and unfair practices connected with money; false weights, usury, and holding back wages from workers. But the Bible does not say that time is money.

So what's the problem? Just this. When we equate time and money we put a price on time so that we feel obligated to do cost accounting for how we spend or use our time.

I know people who "never take a vacation." Time is too valuable, they say. One cannot waste it on vacations. I wonder, can we waste it on prayer, Bible study, calling on the sick, climbing a mountain to see the sunset, or helping a neighbour kid fix his bike?

If I give dollar values to minutes, hours and days, then I'll apply a standard for evaluating life that pressures me and distorts my vision and my priorities.

When a child asks some time from his father and his father gives him some money to go swimming, or to go to the theatre, or to buy some skates, isn't he giving a stone for bread and a scorpion for the egg (Luke 11:9-13)? Can a pretty gift, flowers, candy, or a new dress compensate a wife and mother for the loneliness she feels when dad is concerned so much for converting time into money that he has no time for her and the family she is left to care for?

Time is not money. And money is not time. No amount of money can buy off death. Time comes in the same package for all of us, twenty-four hours in each day for each one of us; money isn't equal for us all.

If I get hooked on converting time into money, then I can't convert it into other currencies: friendship, quietness, reading, painting, appreciation, or prayer. When we cross borders into other countries we convert our currencies. In the same way, when we cross into areas of life not measured by dollar values, our time is converted into those currencies. We can't travel freely into those lands with just money.

Time can be converted into money. That's true. But it's a very limited view of life that sees money as the only currency conversion for time.

Rich will be the man who bales the grass growing under other people's feet.

Would a lawyer be your friend if he knew about a flaw in a title, but permitted you to buy the property?

Would a gospel preacher be your friend if he knew of an error in your religion and did not bring it to your attention?

He is your friend who warns you concerning bodily ills, poor investments, and faulty titles. He is also your friend who tells you of religious errors, and how to correct them! — Foster L. Ramsey.

'THE WORD WHICH LIVETH AND ABIDETH'

Generation follows generation, nations rise and fall: Yet that Word lives.

Kings, dictators, presidents come and go: Yet it lives.

Hated, despised, cursed, doubted, suspected, criticised, condemned by atheists, scoffed at by scorners, exaggerated by fanatics, misconstrued and mis-stated: ranted and raved about, its inspiration denied: Yet it lives.

That Word lives as a lamp to our feet, a light to our path; as the gate to heaven, as a standard for childhood, guide for youth, as an inspiration for the matured, a comfort for the aged, as water for the thirsty, food for the hungry, light for the heathen, rest for the weary, salvation for the sinner, grace for the Christian.

To know it is to love it: To love it is to accept it; To accept it means life eternal — THE BIBLE.

WE cannot rise triumphant over any trial unless we see the victory beyond. Nothing more commends the glorious Captain of our Salvation to the admiration and imitation of every suffering soldier in life's battle, than the victoriousness of His Spirit. He is the triumphant Christ, and He is leading us on to be more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

If there be a paradise for virtues, there must be a hell for crimes.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Where I am labouring with the Bokmakierie church of Christ, the work is going along fine by the grace of God, attendances remain to be fairly commendable — Lord's day mornings and evenings, (which also includes the Tuesday evening cottage meetings and Bible study on Wednesday evenings). More than this by the sincere interest

exhibited by visitors who attend, as time affords them, to all services (B/Study and C/Meetings) we are prayerfully and hopefully looking forward to witness more precious souls turning to the Lord.

Lord's Day 28th March in the evening, will be presenting a visual-aid film strip lesson "The Day Christ Came Again." It's a very effective lesson which relates what might happen to many, when Christ does come, it will be too late to say "Oh, why didn't I?" We pray that the results shall give cause for great rejoicing by visitors who will attend. May the year of 1982 be a year of worthwhile, in all efforts we may put forth to reach the lost and to upbuild the Christian. And the joys and blessings we have shared during 1981 be ours to enjoy and share during 1982 Lord willing." End of report.

T. W. Hartle,
Cape Town, R.S.A.

Kitwe, Zambia.

EVANGELISTS IN TRAINING — 37 BAPTISMS

During December 1981 and January 1982 nine men did "on-the-job evangelist training" with Chester Woodhall. And a further five men enrolled for preacher training in January 1982 making a total of fourteen men in training. The nine "field-workers" preached on the Copperbelt, in Shaba Province of Zaire and in North-western Province of Zambia. There were 37 baptisms.

NEW CHURCH PLANTING

Eleven new congregations on the Copperbelt have been organised during the Woodhall's present missionary tour, beginning in January 1980. In addition, there are numerous preaching points on the Copperbelt and new congregations elsewhere in Zambia and in Zaire. Also Woodhall's preaching trips take him into Malawi and Zimbabwe. In January 1982 Woodhall spent two weeks preaching almost every day in Zimbabwe.

A. & C. Woodhall, Kitwe.

SOCIAL**BUCKIE, Scotland**

5th June, 3 p.m. Speaker Andrew Gardiner (Edinburgh). We extend a warm welcome.

CORRECTION

Owing to a printing error the title of last month's editorial should have read "Almost or Altogether" and not "Almost And All Together" as shown. — Ed.

THE CROSS IN THE HEART

To hang a cross about your neck
Is merely superstition;
To carve a cross above a Church
Is no proof of its mission.
To see the Cross within the Book
Will move you to contrition;
To raise a Cross within your heart
Will alter your condition.

MIRACLES AND PROPHECY

Miracles may be said to have been the great proofs of revelation to the first ages which saw them performed; prophecies may be said to be the great proofs of revelation to the last ages which saw them fulfilled.

(Bishop Newton)

PROPHETIC NAMES OF CHRIST

How instructive to mark the growing distinctness, the gradual unfolding of predictions. A German writer of the eighteenth century pointed out that the promises were always adapted to the times in which they were delivered; that when the gift of children was the highest possible form of blessing, the Redeemer was promised by God under the name of **Seed** ... that when wickedness had spread over the face of the earth Enoch prophesied of the coming of the Lord as a **Judge** ... that after the sons of Jacob had learned to reverence their father as a prince we have Jacob's prophecy of the **Shiloh** ... that when in the days of Moses the nation had learned something of the power and authority of a **Prophet** that name was appropriate ... that it was not until the splendours and conquests of David's reign that the Messiah was called **King**; and not until the priesthood was in its most flourishing condition that He was spoken of as a **Priest**.

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If God did not exist everything would be permitted. (Dostoevsky).

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The origin of the idea of God may well be God Himself. (Descartes)

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