

# *The* **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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## **BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY**

'Profitability' was a dirty word amongst workers for a while, but now that the 'working classes' are, increasingly, having 'a piece of the action' in business, it is now sensible to want profitability. 'Growth' and 'Increase' are also words which now arrest close attention especially in the context of Shares and Unit Trusts. As long as our gain is not another man's loss, it seems right and proper that there should be **profit, growth, prosperity and increase**. After all, no man can employ workers at a loss — not for long anyway. Jesus, I believe, endorsed these words in His parables and teachings, with the proviso that first things must come first. For instance, it would be very unprofitable even if a man were to acquire the entire world, yet lose his own soul. Jesus, it seems, can take no real pleasure in servants who are 'unprofitable', or in disciples who do not 'grow', or in churches which can show no 'increase'. Indeed at the Great Assize, when the real Profit and Loss Accounts are examined Jesus says (Matt. 25) that **unprofitable servants** will be consigned to outer darkness.

Early in the O.T. we read of husbandry geared to 'make increase', of flocks and harvests, and prosperity was usually a sign of God's approval and blessing. This is hardly surprising when we consider that God gave most things the power of procreation and self-multiplication, and indeed said "Be fruitful and multiply".

(Incredibly, some plants have three million seeds in each pod, and so a strong capacity for 'increase' was in the mind of God). Natural laws obtain in the spiritual world and so, when we come back to the N.T., we see that Jesus expects growth in His kingdom in all ages (by means of the incorruptible seed of the gospel). Christ's Kingdom was made to be self-perpetuating and His labourers in the vineyard (to change the figure) are expected to sow the seed and to water. God will give the increase. We might not fully understand this, but then Jesus suggests as much when He says that "the Kingdom of God is as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how ..."

And so while there may be an element of mystery as to how, and when, God gives the increase, and how a small piece of leaven leaveneth a whole lump, yet never-the-less Jesus looks for growth in His disciples (as individuals) and increase in His church (as congregations).

### **THAT YE MAY GROW THEREBY**

Consider how worried and heart-broken parents are over the stunted growth of a child. If growth stops will it start again: or will the child be a dwarf.? These are perfectly understandable worries and so we can appreciate the glad assurance given

by Luke that Jesus, as a child, "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man". (Similar bulletins were issued in the case of Samuel and John Baptist). Physically, Jesus was a healthy specimen but He also grew in wisdom, and in favour with God and man. These are all subjects of slow, but steady, growth and men do not acquire wisdom overnight, or in the cradle.

I make these references to physical growth (and concern over lack of it) for a purpose: because quite often in the N.T. Christ's disciples are referred to as 'new born babes', and concern expressed about their **spiritual** development.

Obviously Christ has no desire to have children spiritually crippled, any more than normal parents would want their offspring to be physical pygmies. The apostle Peter exhorts that we should strip away all malice, guile, hypocrisies, envies and evil speakings and that, "as new-born babes desire the sincere (un-adulterated) milk of the word that we may grow thereby". (I Peter 2:2). Only those who have closely watched the fascinating business of feeding a hungry baby can appreciate the real strength of this injunction. While the feeding-bottle is being prepared, and cooled, baby becomes more and more fractious and when the bottle is brought within grasping distance is grabbed and almost swallowed whole. They certainly 'desire' their food. Can we say the same for the enthusiasm seen at Bible-studies.? Do we grab all opportunities to be fed with the sincere milk of the word, or have we often to be 'force-fed' and, even then, has the milk got to be laced with something else.?

Paul, like Peter, uses this analogy when he remarks upon the fact that many 'new-born babes' neglect the God-given diet and remain Lilliputian in terms of spiritual growth. He complains (to the Hewbrew Christians) that there are many things he would like to say about Christ (and some hard to be uttered) but he can't because they are 'dull of hearing' (lack perception), "For", he says "when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God: and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For everyone that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exerised to discern both good and evil." And so Paul agrees with Peter, that we should become as 'new-born babes' and desire the sincere milk, but also insists that we should grow away from the 'bottle-fed' stage, and eventually be able to tackle the 'strong meat' of the word. Having been taught we, in turn, should become teachers. We should also become 'skilful' in our handling of the word of righteousness.

Would Paul make the same criticism if he came amongst our churches today.?

Paul thanked God that the faith of the Thessalonians 'grew exceedingly' and their love for each other 'abounded', and so it was not all 'doom and gloom' by any means. Peter exhorts that we "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ." The aim is, it would seem, that by growing in grace and knowledge we shall ever be in pursuit of perfection. "Therefore," says Paul, "leaving behind the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection ..." and, of course, perfection is an on-going quest. We have to work at it for it will not be thrust upon us, and our efforts must continue "Until we all come (in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God) unto a perfect man; unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Eph. 4:15). Christ's own perfection must be our aim.

#### IT GREW AND MULTIPLIED

Individuals must grow, and churches must increase and multiply. The Kingdom has within itself the means of self-perpetuation, but the means must be employed. The mustard seed, as Jesus pointed out, is indeed the smallest of seeds but grows into a surprisingly large plant, outstripping all other herbs so that even birds might find shelter in its branches. Likewise the K. of G. sprang from a humble beginning (a babe

in a manger) but very soon acquired a prodigious size throughout the entire world. We, living 2,000 years later, can see how relevant the analogy of the mustard seed has been. Truly as Zechariah suggests, we must never despise the day of small things (or small beginnings); great oaks from small acorns grow. Accordingly in Acts 16:5 we read that, only a few years after Pentecost, "So were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily."

Having begun in Jerusalem the church might have co-existed, with all and sundry, quite comfortably (keeping shop) for long enough but great persecution came. Acts 8 describes how Saul (later Paul) led a persecution so fierce that all the members of the church (except the apostles) were obliged to flee from the city and were scattered throughout all Judea and Samaria. Thus Saul, quite unwittingly, accomplished a purpose quite the very opposite of what he intended, and set in motion the rapid expansion of Christ's kingdom throughout the then known world. Saul, instead of dousing the flames had kicked the burning embers in all directions. However, we read that those who were scattered abroad "WENT EVERYWHERE PREACHING THE WORD". Surely this was the secret of success in respect of the early church. Had the members kept silent, in case of further persecution, nothing would have happened, but they went every-where **preaching the word**. Persecution, I suppose, firms up the resolve of the truly faithful and puts to flight the frivolous. Later, (Acts 9:31) the churches "had rest" and were edified and "were multiplied". Just as Israel "grew and multiplied" in Egypt, so also in Christ's Kingdom "the word of God grew and multiplied" and this phrase occurs several times in the Acts. Indeed it was at just such a time that we read that "as the disciples multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian (Christians) against the Hebrew (Christians)". History shows, I think, that as the church grows so does trouble within the church: and error grows just as fast as truth. Was this what Paul meant when he warned the church, at Colosse, not to be beguiled by those who intruded into questions beyond their ken, but that they should, (with proper nourishment) thrive and increase, and "be increased with the increase of God".? Does this presuppose that some 'increase' is **not the increase of God**, and that we should closely scrutinise our claims of progress.?

Certainly the church at Laodicea grew but not on the proper level. It grew in quantity not in quality: it increased 'in goods' and regarded itself as successful, prosperous, and very well to do. Jesus described that church as "wretched, and poor, and blind, and naked" and made the (very 'unChristian') comment that He would spue it out of His mouth. (Rev. 3).

It seems almost impossible for men to take God at His word. Under the old covenant The Jews had to adulterate the words of Jehovah, and by adding the 'traditions of the elders' frustrated God's will. Men are no better under the new covenant and many appendages have attached themselves to the word, **and to the church**, and we worship in vain if we teach, as doctrine, the commandments of men. Any 'increase' must be the 'increase of God'.

### CONCLUSION

It has been said that if we do not travel forward, we actually move backwards – there is no standing still. This may, or may not, be true, but it is true that our one consuming passion should be the prosperity and true progress of Christ's eternal kingdom. We certainly expend much time and energy on our own personal material increase: and on our own creature comforts.

In this week's issue of the "Christian Standard" (Ohio, USA) James D. Craig explains 'the 75% rule', i.e. that church growth will rarely exceed 75% of the realistic seating capacity of the meeting house. Critics of the 'rule' claim that the rule "cultivates comfortable spectators instead of disciples" and is "Me-centred". Is it possible that

after we are all comfortably settled in our ways, in nice meeting-houses, we are loathe to be disturbed.?

If so; perhaps we should ponder again what Jesus said about **profitability**, with reference to His servants, and I suppose He was directing His remarks to those of us who hope to do just enough to 'scrape through' into heaven. Jesus referring to the wide gulf between master and servant, pointed out that no master is very likely to actually thank his servants for their services. "So likewise ye, when ye have done all those things commanded you, say; We are unprofitable servants; for we have done only that which it was our duty to do." (Luke 17:10). Jesus does not really need us but we need Him. He owes us nothing and it is only by His Grace that He tolerates us, and will save us. If we claim to be His servants we should reflect upon the kind of service we give Him. Do we give the minimum service or hope to get away with nothing much at all.? What would we do if we had a servant who was lazy, arrogant, indifferent, unreliable, surly, unpunctual, disinterested, slovenly, disobedient, and always complaining.? What would we do with such a one.? What then does Jesus think of us as servants, and what should He do with us.?

Let us then, while opportunity lasts, seek **growth** and **increase** as individuals and churches: and strive to be really **profitable** servants in the service of the Master. We must try to **add** to our early faith.

"And besides this, giving all diligence, **ADD** to your faith **virtue**; and to virtue **knowledge**; and to knowledge **temperance**; and to temperance **patience**; and to patience **Godliness**; and to Godliness **brotherly kindness**; and to brotherly kindness **love**. For if these things be in you, and **abound**, they make that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:5).

EDITOR.

## GLEANINGS

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

### LOVING ALLEGIANCE

'Master!'

John xx 16

I think this is the very epitome of love. Love understands love; it needs no talk. Sunlight needs no paraphernalia of pipes, and wicks, and burners; it just shines out, direct and immediate. And the dewdrop flashes it back in the same way. The sparkle may be tiny, but it is true and immediate; it needs no vehicle.

'I have called thee by thy name.' That was quite enough. The Powerful sunshine of His love was focussed into that white beam of sevenfold light, and the whole soul was concentrated into the responsive love-flash, 'Master!'

When that word has truly gone up from the soul to Christ, then we have felt what we can never put into any other words. It is the single diamond of soul-expression, and we have cast it at His feet for ever.

He accepts it; for how wonderfully sweetly falls His direct answer, 'Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.' Think of this seal of approval being set upon the name we so love to give Him. 'Ye say *well*.'

He reserves it to Himself, for He says, 'One is your Master, even Christ.' It is sacred to Him in all its depth of meaning. He has put His hand upon our offering, claiming it as only His own; and now it can never be another's.

It includes the whole attitude of soul towards our beloved Lord.

1. *Love* – There is a great hush; we have not any words at all. We cannot even tell Him we love Him, because we are dazzled with a glimpse of His love, and overwhelmed with our unworthiness of it. Our eyes fill, and our bosom heaves. The

tide has risen too high for verbal prayer or praise; we have to be 'silent in love' — the very silence being an echo of the eternal depth of calmness of the exceeding great love in which He rests. There is only one word which does not jar with the still music of such a moment, — 'Master!'

2. *Adoration* — For the breathing of the name is all we can do to express the unexplainable recognition of His glory. Already He is 'admired in all them that believe' with the admiration of astonishment. 'We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory.' And yet we only uttered the one word, 'Master!'

3. *Allegiance* — The true utterance of it is the very oath of allegiance. We cannot, must not, dare not, will not, henceforth serve 'two masters,' nor the still more subtle 'many masters.' The word has been breathed into His heart, and He will treasure it there, and keep it for us. It *has been said*, and the sound-waves can never be recalled; they will vibrate through the universe for ever. God grant that no traitorous whisper may ever cross them!

4. *Confidence* — We have found One whom we can trust implicitly, and rest upon entirely. We have put our lives into His hand. We have burned the bridge behind us, because we are quite sure He is the Captain of our salvation. We have entered His service *for ever*. We have given our allegiance unreservedly, because we confide in Him unreservedly. There is no question about it. 'I know whom I have believed,' and therefore I say, 'Master!'

5. *Obedience* — All a mockery without this! Not only our lips, but our lives must say 'Master!' And by His own grace they shall say it; the name shall be emblazoned on every page of our lives. For Jesus Himself 'will make it plain' upon our tablets, so 'that he may run that readeth it.' This is the test, the fruit, the manifestation of love. But oh, how sweet that we may fearlessly say the word which pledges us to it, knowing that the Master Himself will enable us to fill it up with the practical obedience which, above all things, we want so intensely to yield to Him! It is like throwing our alpenstock up to a higher ledge of rock, and then giving ourselves up to the strong arm of the guide to draw us up after it.

Never shall we have to say, like the 'Amalekite's servant, 'My master left me!' He is our *good* Master, our '*own* Master,' and he will reveal to His weak servants all that He means in His own faithful endorsement of the name which His Spirit has taught us to call Him.

'O Master, at Thy feet  
I bow in rapture sweet!  
Before me, as in darkling glass,  
Some glorious outlines pass  
Of love, and truth, and holiness, and power;  
I own them Thine O Christ, and bless Thee for this hour.  
Frances Ridley Havergal.  
Selected by Leonard Morgan.

## HISTORY OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN MALAWI (Final Part — 1930 — Present)

On August 4th, 1931, Masangano, Khonde and Kaundo and their followers separated from Bro. Gray. (One account says Masangano had left Gray's work even earlier over disagreements with his fellow leaders). There are probably elements of truth in both accounts. In any case, Bro. George Masangano and his followers formed the "Church of God" and Frederick Khonde and Ronald Kaundo and their followers formed the "African Church of Christ." The government required them to take diffe-

rent names to avoid confusion with the British Churches of Christ. (The British work continues till the present, centered at Gowa Mission). Government records show that the Church of God in 1932 had congregations registered in Zomba, Mulanje and Thyolo Districts. In 1940 Bro. Masangano was put out of the church for marrying another wife in Mulanje after his first wife became mentally ill. After a time he repented and was restored. In 1962, he led his congregations into unity with the missionaries at Namikango Mission near Zomba. This mission had been established by brethren in the Church of Christ in America in 1961. The churches again took the name Church of Christ or "Mpingo wa Kristu" in the Chichewa language. Brother Masangano died in May 1964. Soon after, one of the leaders who had been in Bro. Masangano's work, Bro. R. B. J. K. Tambalah, separated from Namikango Mission and resurrected the Church of God in George Masangano's old home village at Muima near Jali in Zomba District. But most of the local churches that came with Bro. Masangano to Namikango continued to work with the mission.

The group led by Bro. Frederick Khonde and Bro. Ronald Kaundo began using the name "African Church of Christ" in 1933. At the time of Bro. Khonde's death in 1935, the group had 2,000 members in the districts of Zomba, Mulanje, Ntcheu, Chiradzulu and Lilongwe, according to reports made to the government. Bro. Kaundo succeeded to the leadership of the church on Bro. Khonde's death, followed by Bro. Tabbu Chisiyano. Since Bro. Chisiyano's death the work has been led by Brethren Peaches Jana and Benson Tulisha. Their work is centered at Namiwawa in Zomba District, not far from the Namiwawa Mission station of the British Churches of Christ. In 1950 a missionary Bro. Phillips, from a branch of the Church of Christ in the U.S.A. came and worked with these brethren until 1951. In 1979 the African Church of Christ began to work in unity with the churches associated with Namikango Mission.

In 1935 or 1940 Bro. John Malembo, a leader in George Masangano's Church of God, seceded from it and formed the "Sons of God" which still exist. Their teaching is reportedly still the same as that in the Church of Christ. Some say Malembo left Masangano because of Masangano's unlawful marriage.

Bro. Paul Nichols, a missionary from another branch of the Church of Christ in America, came to Malawi in 1952 to visit the African Church of Christ. He failed to agree with them and encouraged one of their school teachers, Bro. E. C. Severe, to leave them and begin another mission. Brother Nichols only stayed in Nyasaland about six months on this first trip, but the mission was founded at Wendewende in Mulanje District. Bro. Nichols came again along with Bro. Gayland Osborne about 1957 and stayed till 1959. Bro. Severe continued to lead the work there after the departure of the missionaries. In 1964 Brethren Jerry Cutter and James Orten (of the same church group in America as Bro. Nichols) came to Malawi for six months and later that year Bro. Cutter came again to live in Malawi. But he was unable to work with Bro. Severe and separated from him, afterward working from the address of Box 573, Blantyre. (Bro. Severe continued to lead the work at Wendewende. Formerly his church was called the Faithful Church of Christ, but this was changed in 1958 to Church of Christ, Wendewende Mission). In Blantyre Bro. Bennie Lee Cryer came in 1965 to aid Bro. Cutter. Bro. Roy Lee Criswell replaced Bro. Cutter in 1967, working until 1969. Bro. David Macey replaced Bro. Cryer in 1968 and worked in Malawi until 1969. Bro. Bill H. Davies came into the work in 1973 and remains in it. Bro. Dennis Smith has worked with Bro. Davies from 1978 till now. These brethren work apart from other missionaries of the Church of Christ in Malawi because of disagreement about the cup in the Lord's Supper. They work with more than 400 local congregations.

In 1957 there came three missionaries of the Church of Christ in America who built Lubagha Mission at Rumphu in the Northern Region. They were Brethren Andrew Connally, James D. Judd and Doyle D. Gilliam. Bro. Connally left in 1960 and later

worked in Tanzania. Others who have worked at Lubagha include Bro. Fred Liggin (1960-63), Bro. Leon Clymore 1961-62). Bro. Doug Baur (about the same time), and Bro. John Thiesen (1969-79). Through the work of these men and their Malawian co-workers the Church of Christ has been established in almost every district of the Northern Region. There is no missionary in the North at present (1979).

Although there were already a few local churches established by the African Church of Christ in the Central Region, many of today's churches were established by American missionaries and their Malawian fellow workers. The first missionary from America to work in the Central Region was Bro. Doyle D. Gilliam, who came from the Northern Region and worked in Lilongwe from 1958 to 1966. Bro. F. P. Higginbotham arrived from America in 1962 and helped Bro. Gilliam until 1966. Now all the preachers in the Central Region are Malawians and the Church of Christ is found in every district. A church building was built in Lilongwe town in about 1960. A Bible school was opened in about 1967 at Mponela and is operated by the Malawian brethren.

From 1930 to 1960 many more smaller divisions appeared in the Churches of Christ in the Southern Region. Some brethren in the Southern Region who had separated from Masangano's Church of God began writing to American brethren about 1955 pleading for missionaries to come. Bro. C. B. Head was sent and stayed in Salisbury, Rhodesia 9 months during 1958 and 1959, visiting Malawi periodically. He reported back to America on the need and the American brethren sent Brethren Roland Hayes and G. B. Shelburne, III to open up Namikango Mission at Thondwe near Zomba in 1961. Bro. Hayes worked at Namikango from 1961 through 1964, Bro. Lendal Wilks from 1964 through 1972 and again from 1977 to the present, and Bro. Jack Hutton from 1972 through 1977. The main work at Namikango is the four year Bible school opened in 1961. The mission operated Ntonda Primary School at Jali and a maternity clinic at Namikango. In 1974 a church building was completed in Zomba Town. Many Malawian brethren in fragmented divisions of the Church of Christ have found unity again through association with the mission.

In Blantyre Bro. James D. Judd worked from 1963 through 1968. Doyle D. Gilliam (1967-71). Others working as missionaries in Blantyre have been Bro. Leon Clymore (1963-66 and 1971-72); Bro. Frank Alexander (1963-67); Bro. F. P. Higginbotham (1967-73); Bro. Robert Compton (1967-69); and Bro. Jerry Smith (1967-68). The church building near the Red Cross building on Mahatma Ghandi Road was built in 1965. The church that meets there sent Bro. Daisi Banda Feliciano to Mozambique as a missionary.

Beginning in about 1962 some began to translate the English name "Church of Christ" into the Chichewa "Mpingo was Kristu." Both names are used interchangeably. The church is still growing and Malawian brethren have planted congregations even in Mozambique, Zambia, Rhodesia and South Africa. Though the church has its weaknesses, there are good signs for the future. Only a few missionaries remain and the church does not depend on missionaries as before. Little by little the congregations are beginning to support their leaders financially in a small way, and to arrange their own Bible studies and judge their own church cases. In 1979, the congregations began for the first time to provide all the food for the Bible schools without help from the mission. For several years Malawian teachers have been teaching along with the missionaries in the Namikango Bible School courses, and now do more than half the teaching. Unity among brethren is still growing though it is lacking in some quarters. Especially the churches need to learn to find unity because of the same Spirit, same faith, and same Lord, not just because of association with the same mission. May God grant this.

P. O. Box 104,

G. B. Shelburne, Zomba, Malawi.

## THE UNION OF CHRISTIANS

In order to certain knowledge on the subject of the Union of Christians, we are dependent on the New Testament. Before Christ there could not be any Christians, and consequently no union among Christians; therefore the Old Testament cannot help us except by showing the harmony God desired among His ancient people, and prophesying of the harmony that would exist in the kingdom then future. Anything outside the Word of God, not having the stamp of Divine authority, is unsafe.

That there is disunion among the professed followers of Christ is a fact so self-evident that none, I presume, would contradict it. Such a state of things need not be wondered at; it was predicted in the inspired Word. (I Tim. iv. 1-5; II Tim. iii. 1-9.)

The phrase which the Apostle John uses of Diotrephes — “who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them” — indicates a spirit which has been the source of much of the disunion that exists. (See Matt xx. 20-28; Gal. v. 25-26.)

1. Disunion is clearly shown to be contrary to the Divine will. In the memorable teaching on the mount, Jesus not only showed that peace among Christians was approved by Him, and pointed out the happiness of the peacemaker and his sonship with God, but He also declared that reconciliation should be *sought* by those at variance. (Matt. v. 23, 24; xviii. 15-17.)

Before leaving His Apostles, in order to return to the Father, Jesus prayed that the Apostles might be *one* in the same way as He and the Father were one. But His prayer went further, and included the oneness of all those who should afterwards believe through the Apostles' word. The purpose of this oneness-union is that the world may believe that Christ was sent by the Father. (John xvii.) In view of such a prayer from the Christ Himself, there should be no talk of rivalry of religious sects as a source of strength, or a stimulation to action; it hinders the object of the Lord — the conversion of the world.

Again, the church is figuratively spoken of as a *body*, of which individual Christians are members or parts, and Christ is the Head. (Rom. xii. 5; I Cor. xii. 12-31.) Nothing could more clearly prove the unity that is designed in a church; as the members of the body must work in harmony, or weakness will be the result, so it is in the church.

But although peace is so desirable among Christians, and should be so earnestly sought by them, yet there are circumstances in which separation is the will of God. (Rom. xvi. 17-20; I Cor. v. 9-13; II Cor. vi. 14-18.) Care must be taken that the separation be not made on insufficient grounds, that is, where there is no difference which affects a vital principle of Christianity. (Rom. xiv.) And the arms of love should ever be open to forgive, and to receive again into fellowship, a brother when he repents. (II Cor. ii. 5-11.)

2. How can a safe, scriptural union be promoted?

(a) It will be necessary to have a scriptural definition of what a Christian is. There can be no step taken towards union among Christians till the distinguishing marks of a Christian according to the Scriptures are known. Merely claiming the name of Christ, or working in His name, will not suffice to gain the Lord's approval as one of His followers, but submission to His will is the test. (Matt. vii. 21-23; xii. 49-50.) A willingness to sacrifice all, if need be, is necessary to discipleship. (Luke. xiv. 26-33.) Christians are scripturally defined as those who have believed, repented, and been baptized *into* the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. xxviii. 19-20; Mark xvi. 16; Acts ii. 37-47; xi. 26.) Such formed the Church of Christ.

(b) The authority and work of the Apostles must be recognised. They were sent forth by Christ, even as the Father sent Him, and full authority and power was given to them, under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit, to give the conditions of pardon, to teach the duties of individual Christians, and legislate for churches.



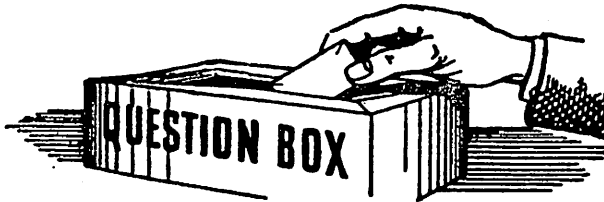
(Matt. xviii. 18; John xx. 21-23; II Thess. iii. 6.) Their authority is the same as the inspired Word, and a recognition of that authority will lead to unity.

(c) The causes of disunion – party names, human ordinances, leaders, etc., must be put away, and only that which is stamped with Divine authority – given by Christ Jesus and His Apostles, must be taught and practised. (See I Cor. i. 10-17.)

(d) The meaning and New Testament usage of the word church must be recognised. The word *eklesia* means a called-out assembly; that is, an assembly gathered in one place, and not a number of assemblies regarded as one, and governed by a synod or General Assembly. When it is understood that such is the meaning of the word, and that it is only so used in the New Testament, then will each assembly of believers, as a Church of Christ, be independent of every other assembly, and govern itself under the guidance of the Word of God. As one body of which individual Christians are members, and Christ the Head, and as a building in which individual Christians are living stones, there will be harmony in the working.

(e) Lastly, Paul has given a seven-fold basis of union in Eph. iv. 1-7. Let all professed followers of Christ be united in the one body, be guided by the one Spirit, rest in the one hope, submit to the one Lord, practise and contend for the one faith, obey in the one baptism, acknowledge the one God and Father of all, and then will they be united on a sound scriptural basis, and with one heart and one mind will strive together for the faith of the Gospel.

Albert Brown (1893).




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Conducted by  
Alf Marsden

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I have received via the Editor a number of questions/comments relating to my answers in the March and June issues 1987. I consider these to be of sufficient importance for me to clarify further what I said on those occasions.

I would like to point out once again, as I have in the past, that my comments are personal but based always on the Scriptures insofar as I understand them. My views may not be the personal views of the Editor or the readers, but he graciously allows them to be printed, and you kindly read them and pass comments on them, and for that I am extremely grateful. You can always be assured of my open-mindedness and willingness to learn. So let us deal with the comments relating to the March issue.

**“In the March issue Bro. Marsden seemed to be saying it was ‘extremely improbable, if not impossible’ for precisely similar teaching and practice in all Churches. Peter exhorts “be ye of one mind” (I Peter 3:8). These exhortations are repeated several times. Were the apostles expecting the impossible?.”**

Since I believe in the literal inspiration of the Scriptures it would be quite wrong for me to say that the Apostles were expecting the impossible when they said ‘be ye of one mind’. That being so, we must take the phrase to be either a specific Apostolic instruction for every Christian at all times and in all circumstances to think, say, and do precisely the same things, or, the context will indicate to us those things which call for being ‘of the same mind’. In either case, the **determining mind must be the mind of God as revealed in His Word.** As a concomitant to the above, we must also conclude that every time a Christian opens the Bible and interprets therefrom, that his interpretation of the text must not only be right, but that it must also coincide with the

interpretations of thousands of Christians throughout the world who study the same text. It must be either that, or we must have some prescribed Church of Christ Doctrine laid down by some central body and believed and practised by every Church of Christ in the world, and it doesn't need me to tell you that such a thing is anathema to Churches of Christ. My own personal view is that the context will indicate to us the things to which we can give 'one mind'.

#### LOOKING AT THE CONTEXT

The passage referred to reads, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing" (1 Peter 3:8,9). Peter then goes on to speak about the Christian 'eschewing evil; doing good, seeking peace, and suffering for righteousness sake'. There is not a thought in the context which would indicate to me any issue which could be described as contentious. Every Christian could be, and ought to be, of 'one mind' on those Christian virtues which Peter mentions.

We can also look at Paul's teaching in his Philippian letter. In 1:27 we read, "Only let your conversation (manner of life) be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the Gospel". What is Paul saying here? The Word 'conversation' in the A.V. literally means in the Greek 'citizen'. We must appreciate that as a Roman colony, Philippi enjoyed Roman citizenship. There is no doubt that Paul valued his Roman citizenship and he used it whenever the occasion demanded, but when he was converted he found a greater citizenship in a greater Kingdom. It is only natural, then, that he should exhort his fellow-Christians to conduct their lives in such a way as befitted their citizenship of this greater Kingdom, especially in the Gospel.

To continue with his teaching in Phil. 2:2 we read, "Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind". The literal meaning here is that Paul will be overjoyed if they keep united in the spirit of Christ and act in unison to preserve their unity in Christ. He goes on to say, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (2: 1-5). In what have the Philippian Christians to be of 'one accord, one mind'? In the mind of Christ. How was the mind of Christ expressed? In love, humility, and service to all people. Why does he want them all to be united in the mind of Christ? So that when the storms of doubt were raised, as we know they were, they would stand fast in Christ and in the Gospel.

The student of Paul's letters will know that he was very much concerned with the effect on new converts of the teaching of the Gnostics concerning the Person of Christ. In chapters 2 and 3 of his Philippian letter he sets forth the greatness and the superiority of Jesus; the saints at Philippi must have been thrilled with this picture of the Christ of God, even as we are today. This must have been the prelude to his discourse in the Colossian and Ephesian letters about the effects of Gnosticism. This is why he wants the saints to be of 'one accord and one mind' so that they could withstand the onslaught on their faith.

#### WE ARE ALL DIFFERENT

In the defence and confirmation of the Gospel, Churches of Christ stand second to none. In matters of fact, and following Divine and Apostolic instructions regarding the fundamentals of our faith, I believe there is a remarkable degree of unanimity; the terms of man's salvation are clear and unambiguous. When we enter the realms

of opinion it is a different matter. Do we seek out only the ones to have fellowship with who happen to agree with our point of view at any particular time? (I am speaking about our brethren in Christ, of course). We know that some are weak, some strong; some are students of the Word, others aren't; some are easily led by strong personalities, others are more discerning. In matters where opinions are expressed, it seems to me that all these characteristics will be brought into play; it is inevitable under such circumstances that errors of judgment on the Scriptures will be compounded. That is why I said, and still say, that it is highly improbable that we shall all agree on all things all the time. The Apostles were not asking for the impossible, they were teaching us the art of the possible, and in so doing I believe they were leading us down the road to greater unity in Christ. Let us keep on striving to achieve this unity in Him which He, and the Apostles, and we so urgently need.

(All questions, please to:

Alf Marsden, 20 Costessy Way, Winstanley, Wigan, Lanc. WN3 6ES).

## “OUR MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST”

The Holy Spirit, through Paul says of the church, “I am jealous over you with Godly Jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband” (the reason?) “that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ”. (II Cor, 11:2).

We understand marriage in the social, physical, intellectual and emotional realm. We see some happy marriages, some unhappy, some broken, some a tragic battleground. Yet even in this we know the ideal marriage ... **LOVING, STEADY, SUPPORTIVE, PERMANENT, DYNAMIC AND GROWING.**

In the opening paragraph we read a Christian has a relationship to Christ that is like marriage: close, pure, loving, lasting, exciting, stimulating and maturing. Yet, even as Satan beguiled Eve, we can be corrupted and lose the purity of our relationship to Christ. We have this one superior relationship that we can unintentionally or deliberately lose. The “oneness” is like that spoken about in Ephesians 4: 1-4.

In Romans 7: 3-4 the Holy Spirit confirms this marriage to Christ is so that we may bring fruit to God. In human marriage it is imperative that the wife gives pre-eminence to her husband. Similarly, we Christians **MUST** give pre-eminence at all times, under all circumstances, to Christ our Lord (Col. 1:16). We give to Him the honour due to Him by worshipping, in giving (I Cor. 16: 1-2, II Cor. 9: 6-7) in singing His praise (Col. 3: 16,17) in observing the Lord's supper (I Cor. 11:23, Luke 22:19) and by contending for the faith, (Jude 3).

In human marriage respect is shown by treating one another with love and concern, in functioning in proper roles and in submission. In Ephesians 5: 22-32 God commands man to love his wife and the wife to submit to the husband. If we can show respect to our **earthly companions**, how much more is due to our Heavenly companion? The marriage-supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7) is for those who are ready, pure, clean, prepared and willing. The Church is made up of those who come to Christ on His terms – and love, cherish, respect and honour Him (John 14:15).

These are the invited participants to the marriage-supper. As Christians we must not compromise in our relationship (Gal. 1:6-9) so that we can be found ready (Matthew 25: 1-13). WE can show disrespect to our heavenly companion by staying away from gatherings (Hebrews 10 24-25), by an unforgiving attitude (Eph. 4:32, Matt. 6:12) by being lazy (I Cor. 3:9, Eph. 4:3, II Thess. 3:12) and by refusing to teach others (Matt. 28: 18-20). Departing from our marriage companion and relationship, (whether our

earthly marriage or our heavenly one) is adultery. We DO not have the right to leave Him. A Spiritual divorce from Christ will lead to condemnation. We entered a life-time contract at our immersion into Christ, and being espoused to Him we must remain faithful unto death. And may our marriage to Him be a happy one.

Written by T. W. Hartle, (Evangelist)  
11 Killarney Mansions, Gorge Road,  
Oranjezicht, Cape Town 8001 R.S.A.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

Oct. 4	Psalm 46	John 11: 19-44
Oct. 11	Psalm 37:1-17	John 11: 45-57
Oct. 18	Zech. 9:9-17	John 12 1-19
Oct. 25	Psalm 110	John 12 20-36

### The raising of Lazarus

Martha, Mary and Lazarus were a close-knit family. They lived in Bethany, which was not far from Jerusalem. Jesus knew them and loved them (11:5). The death of Lazarus must have been a great blow to the sisters.

Jesus arrived on the scene four days after the burial. I understand the Jews believed that decomposition of the body began on the fourth day, thus Martha's comment: "Lord, by this time he stinketh" (11:39). The delay in Jesus' coming, however, gave Him a great opportunity to show He was the true Son of God (11: 15, 42).

Let us recall Martha's dialogue with Jesus. "'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha answered, 'I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day'. Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' 'Yes, Lord,' she told Him, 'I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world'" (11: 21-27, N.I.V.). The words of Paul immediately come to mind here: "Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immor-

tality to light through the Gospel" (II Tim. 1:10). Dear reader, go back and meditate upon the words of this paragraph. They are, surely, beautiful words, wonderful words, wonderful words of life.

John tells us: "When Jesus therefore saw her (Mary) weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled" (11:33). Also: "Jesus therefore again groaning in Himself cometh to the grave" (11:38). Francis Schaeffer in his book **The God Who Is There** has something interesting to say about these passages: "As Jesus stood there, He not only wept but He was angry. The Exegesis of the Greek of the passages is clear. Jesus, standing in front of the tomb of Lazarus, was angry at death and at the abnormality of the world; the destruction and distress caused by sin."

"Lazarus, come forth!" was the cry. He came forth, still bound hand and foot with the grave clothes. A miracle had been performed and witnessed. Not even the Lord's enemies could deny it (11:47). But, in the end, they wanted Jesus dead and Lazarus as well (11:53; 12:10).

### The Prophecy of Caiaphas

Joseph Caiaphas was the son-in-law to Annas. He held the high priesthood for eighteen years (A.D. 18-36). He is best known for the leading part he took in the trial and condemnation of Jesus.

Caiaphas' prophecy of Jesus was true. However, some are puzzled by the instrument God used. Victor Budgen in his book **The Charismatics and the Word of God** wrote: "Just as we took Balaam to illustrate the fact that God could get the message right even though the in-

strument was thoroughly evil, so we find that in the New Testament there is an even more glaring example of this sovereign power of God. Caiaphas was also a thoroughly evil man. As high priest he was a cynical unbeliever, contemptuous towards the hangers-on around him and a determined opponent of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose death he desired above else. Hardly a likely instrument for one of the greatest prophecies in the Bible! God is never frustrated – He can use the most evil instrument and deliver a perfect word.”

### Judas Iscariot

Here was a man near to Jesus and yet so far from Him in Spirit. How tragic to read of this chosen disciple: “He was dishonest, and when he was in charge of the purse he used to help himself from the contents” (12:6, Phillips). He had a love for money and it led, of course, to far greater tragedy – the betrayal of his Master. Paul later wrote: “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs” (I Timothy 6:10, N.I.V.).

Judas’ concern for the poor was not genuine. He only wanted to get his hands on the money. Such dishonesty, selfishness and greed have, sadly, not been unique to Judas in the history of mankind.

### The Triumphal Entry

This was the subject of prophecy. “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass” (Zechariah 9:9). Note, He came upon an ass. With us, the ass is lowly and despised; but in the east it was a noble animal. (See Judges 10:4; II Samuel 17:23, II Samuel 19:26). William Barclay has pointed out “If a king came riding upon a horse then he was bent on war; if he came riding upon an ass then

he was coming in peace. This action of Jesus is a sign that he was not the warrior figure men dreamed of, but the Prince of Peace.”

The people threw branches of palm trees in the path of Jesus. This was the way in which conquerors and princes were often honoured in that day, Albert Barnes has written that “the palm was an emblem of joy and victory. It was used by Roman soldiers, as well as the Jews, as a symbol of peace.”

### Paradoxes

The late brother Tom Nisbet often told me that the Bible was full of paradoxes. What is a paradox? On an index card on this word I have written: “A statement seemingly self contradictory, though possibly well founded or essentially true.” Jesus said: “He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal” (12:25). What a paradox! Jesus also revealed that death produces life and that service leads to greatness. So it was with Jesus Himself.

### Jesus and Satan

Jesus’ arrest, trial and crucifixion were now not far off. These were, therefore, tense times for the Master. It was surely only natural for Him to say: “Father, save me from this hour ...” (12:27). That he foresaw everything must have made it all the more difficult. But the Father spoke to him in His time of need. It is to be noted that the voice of God came to Jesus at all the great moments of His life. It came at His baptism (Mark 1:11) and it came on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mark 9:7). Now it had come to Him when he needed strength to face the ordeal of the cross.

Jesus said: “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out” (12:31). Albert Barnes in considering this passage wrote: “Now is approaching the decisive scene, the eventual period – the crisis – when it shall be determined who shall rule this world. There has been a long conflict between the powers of light and

darkness — between God and the devil. Satan has so effectually ruled that he may be said to be the prince of this world; but my approaching death will destroy his kingdom, will break down his power, and will be the means of setting up the kingdom of God over man." Thanks be to God for the cross of Christ!

Allow me to emphasize that throughout the history of mankind satan did everything to prevent the Messiah entering the world. At times, he came very close to achieving this objective. However, in the fulness of time, the Messiah did come and satan, of course, tried to destroy Him. He thought he had achieved his goal, I am sure, when he put Jesus on that tree on Golgotha. But God had His own plans and purposes. The death of His beloved Son was for the saving of the world.

#### Jesus — The Light

Jesus is the Light of the World. In the last publication of the magazine **Sound in Faith** I wrote: "Jesus is the true light. The Greek word for true is **alethinos**, which means 'real' or 'genuine' as opposed to that which is substitute or counterfeit. Jesus is the real light. As one writer has said: 'Other lights flicker and die, mislead and seduce; He alone is the light which is real and leads to reality'." Our task as Christians is to hold up that light. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). So commanded Jesus. It is our duty to obey.

Ian S. Davidson, Motherwell. (Brother Ian welcomes correspondence from anyone. He resides at 21 Glen Lyon, St. Leonards, East Kilbride, Glasgow G74 2JJ, Scotland)

One cool judgment is worth a thousand hasty councils. The thing to do is to supply light and not heat. *President Woodrow Wilson, at the Peace Conference, 1919.*

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Manchester:** "Brethren please rejoice with us over the baptism into the Christ of Mrs. Patricia Tan and Mr. Howard Mitchell on Monday the 20th of July, 1987. Again we are grateful to the Gospel Hall Stretford for allowing us to use their baptistry.

Sister Tan is the wife of Brother Jimmie Tan. Brother Mitchell came to know of us through the lectures at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology on "Does God Exist". We pray that their growth in Jesus will continue to be blessed to God's glory.

We also thank God for the safe return of our Brother Rahim Ullah from Pakistan where he has been visiting his relatives."

Would you also kindly ask the brethren through the Scripture Standard if any of them could let me have a copy of the late Brother Cummins of Kentish Town's pamphlet entitled something like "Hitherto, or our Journey to Jerusalem". Which told of the start of the Lord's Church in Australia by a small group of believers dissatisfied with the unscriptural teaching of the various denominations, getting together to try to worship according to the New Testament pattern.

Allan Ashurst.

**Baptism in Zambia's Northern Province Kitwe, Zambia:** Since the last report, thirty two more folk in Zambia's Northern Province have put on Christ in baptism. This is mainly the fruit of evangelism in villages around MBALA, close to Lake Tanganyika. Chester Woodhall has been involved in developing gospel preachers and encouraging church planting in Zambia's Northern Province — a new area for Churches of Christ.

In evangelistic outreach along the Zaire/Angola border there were 50 Angolans baptized into Christ — 4 — baptisms at Kandala and 9 baptisms at a

further village. This is good spinoff from the church work in Zaire! At a Bible teaching meeting at TSHIBAMBA in Zaire there were 227 participants.

Angela Woodhall,  
Church of Christ,  
P.O. Box 22297,  
Kitwe, Zambia.

### COMING EVENTS

#### ANNIVERSARY MEETING

The church at **Kentish Town**, London, hope to hold their 116th Anniversary Meeting on 3rd October, 1987, when Bro. Geoffrey Daniell will be the speaker. Brother James Sinclair serving on Lord's Day. Visitors most welcome.

On behalf of the Church of Christ **Peterhead**, we would appreciate it if you could announce our forthcoming **YOUTH WEEKEND** in October. The date is the 2nd-4th October, 1987.

The speakers are Mike Jones from the church at Morley and Mark Hill from the church at Loughborough. The age limit is 13 or young christians. Accommodation is on a first come first served basis, all names and numbers should be submitted by the 20th September. Names should be sent to the address below or telephone (0779) 77496.

Margaret Ann Cowie,  
26 Henderson Park,  
Richmond Gardens,  
Peterhead AB4 6WR.

#### ANNUAL SOCIAL

The church at **Newtongrange**, God willing, hope to hold their **ANNUAL SOCIAL** on Saturday 17th October at their Meeting-house, at 4 p.m. Chairman James Morris. Speakers: Joe Currie (Newtongrange) David Scott (Tranent) - All welcome.

#### THANKS

Lizzie and I would like to say a big 'Thank-you', with all our love to the brotherhood, for the many 'get-well' cards, telephone calls, visits and gifts received during Lizzie's stay in hospital. As the hymn-writer says, "In times like these we need a Saviour, In times like

these we need a friend". We give thanks for our Saviour and for all our friends. Lizzie is now at home and we look forward to her making progress.

William Black,  
Dalmellington.

#### ACCEPTABLE OFFERINGS

"*She hath done what she could.*" Mark  
xiv 8

This was wonderful commendation to come from the lips of the Christ. Mary could not have done better than this if she had been a thousand times as gifted. We get two lessons. One is that all Christ wants is what we have ability and opportunity to do. He asks no impossibilities. The poorest things, the smallest offerings, are acceptable if they are really our best in the circumstances.

A child in a mission school offered her teacher a handful of weeds and grasses, wilted and soiled at that, which she called a bouquet. Did the teacher refuse the gift, and criticise the poor withered weeds? No; she accepted them with as sincere gratitude and as many thanks as if some wealthy friend had offered her an elegant bouquet of flowers. The child did what she could; and the teacher looking behind the gift saw the love in the little heart, and that transfigured her poor gift. So it is that Christ accepts our poorest work or our homeliest offering if it is our best.

But the lesson has another side. "She did *what she could.*" It is this, then, that pleases Christ. Are we doing what we *could* do? Do we always bring to him our very best gifts? Do we never put him off with the faded flowers, keeping the fresh and fragrant ones for ourselves? Do we do for him our very best work? Are we faithful? If we are only doing half what we might, we cannot take the comfort of this commendation. The widow's mites were very acceptable coming from her, because they were all she had; but they would not have elicited any such commendation if one of the rich men had given them. A little child's ministry is very beautiful for a child, but it would not be as fitting in the father

or mother. We must really do the very best we can if we would have this commendation.

From: 'Come Ye Apart' by J. R. Miller.

**"SEEK YE FIRST . . ."**

In order to achieve the real peace passing understanding, we must develop a proper perspective. Difficult though it may be to realise, God's kingdom and God's righteousness are to be given prerogative over everything else. Jesus said that all else would fall in its place when these two things are given first place (Matt. 6:33).

Sometimes our willing spirits have trouble with the willing flesh. Frequently, like Paul, we have to buffet our body to keep it under subjection. Why? Because all in us that is flesh argues vehemently that God's kingdom and God's righteousness are not the most important things. Our very reason seems to say that material things must come first. We cannot see how the more intangible, spiritual things deserve first place; nor can we realise that when they are given first place the secondary things will also be ours.

This is where we have a need for faith. Only by faith can we reach to the spiritual achievement to see how things

must fall into the proper perspective and develop an awareness of the importance of spiritual matters. Remember, God's kingdom and God's righteousness demand first place in our lives. And remember also that the only promise we have of attaining all else comes after we have put God's business in its proper place. To reach this point, we must "walk by faith and not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7).

*Selected.*

**Reconciliation**

"Moreover, if thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone" (Matt. 18:15).

This is a plain teaching rule, and a command of Christ. That it is ignored by many is evident. Almost all the division and discord in the church are the result of ignorance. Nine-tenths of all the shameful reflection on the church would never be if this rule given by Christ were strictly adhered to. And to refuse to observe shows malice in the heart. Many do not want these things settled in Christ's way.

It was love, not the nails, that held Christ fast to the cross.

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