

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## THE GODE-SPEL

Most people know that the 'gospel', referred to so many times in the New Testament, means 'Good news' but many must wonder how events of 2,000 years ago can now rightly be regarded as news, rather than history. It may be that 'good news' is not the best translation of the meaning God intended to convey although, personally, I have no difficulty in believing that the gospel account is 'news' to each generation hearing it for the first time. Students of history on hearing of some historical event for the first time doubtless regard it as very interesting news. The gospel however is more than interesting news — it is better described as 'glad tidings.' Indeed the word 'news' appears only once in the entire Bible, in the O.T. (at Proverbs 25:25) and comes from a word which elsewhere in the Bible is always translated 'tidings.' Patrick Fairbairn in his marvellous Bible Dictionary explains how and why the word 'gospel' is used throughout the New Testament with reference to the glad tidings from God. The Greek word, for which 'gospel' has been used as an equivalent, signified (in earlier Greek) *a present* given to anyone for bringing good tidings: or *a sacrifice* offered in thanksgiving for such tidings having come — the gods, in the latter case, being regarded as the senders of them. But in later Greek it was used for the *good tidings themselves* and in the Septuagint it is commonly rendered 'a joyful message.'

Thus the word 'GOSPEL' in the New Testament denotes primarily the glad tidings regarding Messiah and His Kingdom (from the Saxon *Gode Spell* i.e. good teaching or tidings) and is applied to the scheme of grace and truth embodied in the message. God's angel assured the shepherds watching in the field to "Fear not for behold I bring you *good tidings of great joy*, which shall be to all people." When the details began to unfold in the years to follow, this 'good news' would doubtless be welcomed as a wonderful contrast to the predictions of doom from John the Baptist, for John came to warn that the axe was laid at the very root of the Jewish nation — a sentiment not likely to have been hailed as 'good news.'

### Source

The gospel was not the product of human genius, nor did it merely evolve from man's religious instinct. Nor was it invented by the Faith Mission or devised by the Church of England or Salvation Army. Indeed the gospel is regarded as foolishness by men generally and is the last thing in the world to be regarded as the solution to all of man's problems. The apostle Paul discovered that the preaching of the cross to

them that perish is foolishness. The gospel originated in fact in the councils of heaven. The *creation* of man was of sufficient importance to warrant the holding of a divine concilium at which it was decided by all present, "Let us make man in our own image."

Now if man's *creation* received such careful attention from Father, Son and Holy Spirit, consider, if you will, how much attention would be paid to his *redemption*? And so Mark (1:1) refers to the 'gospel of Christ' and Paul in Romans 15:16 describes it as 'the gospel of God.' It is the gospel of God in the sense that *God sent it.*

God so loved the world that He sent his only beloved Son. God was so motivated by His love for men that He sent the gospel into the world. The gospel is described as the 'Gospel of Christ' because Jesus *brought it.* God sent it and Jesus brought it. The gospel was not an afterthought of God's but was preached long before to Abraham (Gal. 3:8) and is in fact much older than man, and involved the utterance of things kept secret from the foundation of the world (Matt. 13:35).

### Purpose

Time would fail us to fully consider the purpose of the Gospel, but two broad generalisations may be made. **FIRSTLY:** the gospel was sent to *reconcile man with man*, to unite a man with his neighbour; to unite men of differing nations, of differing races, of differing colour and of differing class (masters and slaves). The gospel was for *all men*: no longer were the gentiles nations to be without Christ, or to be aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, or to be strangers from the covenants of promise, or to be without hope or to be without God in the world. Paul explains that "gentiles were to be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ *by the gospel.*" (Eph. 3:6). Jesus slew the enmity between Jew and Gentile for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace. The fact that enmity still exists between the nations; the races; the colours; the classes does not mean that the gospel has been proved deficient and a failure — it just means that the gospel has not been implemented. Wherever the teachings of Christ are genuinely observed peace amongst men reigns.

**SECONDLY:** the gospel was sent to *reconcile man to God.* The glad tidings are indeed the gospel of reconciliation. Paul explains the function of the 'word of reconciliation' thus — "And all things are of God who hath reconciled us unto Himself by Jesus Christ and hath given unto us the ministry of reconciliation. To wit that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself not imputing their trespasses unto them: and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (II Cor. 5:18-21). Thus God patiently and lovingly endeavours to reconcile a hostile world unto Himself by Jesus Christ through the 'word of reconciliation' (the gospel).

### Substance and Nature

Many fine distinctions are often drawn but I would suggest that basically the gospel consists of (1) *Facts to be believed*, and (2) *Commandments to be obeyed.* Some in the religious world would agree with (1) but not with (2) and would thus seem to betray perhaps an imperfect grasp of the subject. The apostle Paul mentions some of the facts to be believed in 1st Cor. 15, i.e. the salient truths concerning Christ's birth, death and resurrection. The 'gospel of truth' (Gal. 2:5) deals with certainties and is thus opposed to error or idle speculation. Not only truth however, but grace, God's grace and also God's mercy. The coming of Messiah, the coming of the Kingdom of heaven, remission of sins, immortality, eternal life. The good news

consists of these wonderful things and many others. Thus the gospel consisted of facts to enlighten us but also facts to convict us and to show us that we are all sinners in need of a Saviour. In Acts 2 we read of Peter preaching to the Jews and accusing them of the murder of God's Son. He succeeds in convicting them so completely that they earnestly cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Remission of sins was contingent upon them repenting and being immersed. And so the gospel contains terms from God which must be complied with if we are to be reconciled to Him. The gospel is not some kind of spiritual blank cheque. Acts 8:35 tells us how Philip taught the eunuch and "preached unto him Jesus" and how that the first question the eunuch asked was "what doth hinder me to be baptised."

Similarly, Paul states (in Rom. 10; 13-17) that just as Isaiah could say, "Who hath believed our report" he could say "But they have not all obeyed the gospel." And so he concludes that "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God." The apostle Peter says, with reference to the Judgement Day, "Judgement must begin at the house of God, and if it first begin at us what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God." (1 Peter 4:7). Thus it would certainly seem that the gospel does consist of facts to be believed and instructions to be obeyed.

### Response

The response we make to God's glad tidings is of paramount and vital importance to us for it will determine our eternal destiny. God has extended His grace to mankind. What is our response? Are we prepared to spurn God's gifts? There have always been men who would try to frustrate the purposes of God by burning Bibles and killing preachers but really there are much simpler ways of doing it — all we need to do is to turn our backs upon the message. Those who heard the gospel from Peter were cut to the heart and asked, "What shall we do?". Those who heard the preaching of Stephen (Acts 7) were also cut to the heart but they gnashed on him with their teeth, stopped their ears, and savagely stoned him to death. We cannot avoid the making of some response, whether we want to or not, and even if we just quietly walk away we have, in fact, given God our answer.

They will is good and just

Shall I Thy will withstand

If Jesus bid me lick the dust

I bow to His command.

Editor.

## STUDY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AS HISTORY

### 6. SERVITUDE

The epochs of this period of Old Testament History are five in number, and link time from Daniel until Christ.

1. *Chaldean Yoke.* For fifty years, God's chosen people were under the rule of the Chaldeans. This began with the Babylonian captivity and lasted until Babylon was overthrown by Cyrus:

2. *Persian Yoke.* This lasted two hundred and six years. It was broken by the destruction of the Persian empire by Alexander the Great. It was, however, during the Persian rule that the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, King of Persia so that he allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem, where they enjoyed a certain amount of home rule under the oversight of Persian rulers.

3. *Greek Yoke.* The power of the empire builder, Alexander the Great, touched the Jews in important ways. Many Jews were encouraged to go and settle in Alexandria. In this famous seat of learning, the Old Testament Scriptures were translated to the Greek language. This is the translation known as the Septuagint Version and represented by the Roman number LXX.

4. *Maccabean Freedom.* When Alexander died, his empire started to decay rapidly. Jerusalem had a short time of quiet under the rule of Egypt until Syria once more became supreme and once more oppressed the Jews. An attempt to introduce idolatry caused the Jews to revolt, under the leadership of Judas Maccabeus. This revolt was to some extent successful in that it brought the Jews some form of political freedom under the Maccabean princes. This lasted about 125 years.

5. *Roman Yoke.* Herod the Great was given the dignity of King over the Jews by the Romans. The Romans had annexed the Jewish provinces to their empire. It was under the Roman yoke that Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

Scriptures to read: 2 Chron. 36:20; Ezra 1:1ff; 2 Chron. 36:22-23; Jer. 25:12; 29:10, and Matt. 2:1-18.

*From "The Young Christian"*

## GLEANINGS

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

### The ransom paid

"There are things which can be bought with money, but there are also things which money cannot purchase. With money a man may build a house, and adorn and furnish it, but money will not buy home happiness and the sweetness, comfort and refinement which make true home life. With money he can purchase bread and raiment, coal for the fire, and luxuries for physical enjoyment, but money will not acquire fine character, moral beauty, a gentle spirit, peace in the heart, or any of the elements which make up a noble personality. Money ransomed many a slave from captivity in ancient times, but human redemption was not obtained at any money price. THE SON OF GOD GAVE HIS LIFE A RANSOM FOR SOULS."

### The depth of love

"It is a sweet thought that Jesus Christ did not come forth without His Father's permission, authority, consent and assistance. He was sent of the Father that He might be the Saviour of men . . . Didst thou ever consider the depth of love in the heart of Jehovah when God the Father equipped His Son for the great enterprise of mercy? Be this thy day's meditation. The Father sent Him! Contemplate that subject. Think how Jesus works what the Father wills. In the wounds of the dying Saviour see the love of the great I AM. Let every thought of Jesus be also connected with the eternal, ever — blessed God." — C. H. Spurgeon.

### God's love

"When the physician says: "Go out of doors; live in the sunshine," we know what he means. We have not to create the sunshine, we have only to step out into it; it is already here with its beauty and warmth, and we have only to let it do its life-giving work. But when the Great Physician bids us live in His love, we somehow feel that the love is some flame that we are to kindle in our own hearts and keep burning, and we are filled with anxious watchfulness. It is His love — the great warming, comforting sunlight — in which we are to live without doubt or fear. It is not of our making, it is beyond our measuring or quenching. It is here now, flooding the world around us, and we have only to open our hearts and lives to its joy instead of turning our steps into the shadows."

### Duty of obedience

"Implicit obedience is man's first duty to God, and one for which no-thing else will compensate. If a lad at school is bidden to exercise himself in arithmetic and he chooses to write a copy instead of doing sums, the goodness of the writing will not save him from censure. We must obey, whether we see the reason or not, for God knows best. Nothing can be love to God which does not shape itself into obedience. The farmer must obey God's natural laws of the seasons if he would win a harvest, and we must all obey God's spiritual laws if we would reap happiness here and hereafter."

### The highest aim

"That Christ shall be magnified." Fettered or free, hated or loved, by life or by death, Paul's supreme aim was to make Christ glorious. It was not a vague desire, a wistful longing with him, but his "earnest expectation and hope." He determined that his life should tell for Christ, and expected that it would. And so it did. As some men plan to make money, or take a degree, or push themselves in politics, Paul planned to glorify God. If we do or do not, it is not an accident; it will be as we will it."

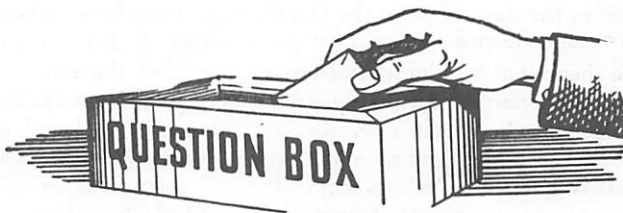
### Not many wise are called

"The following is an abstract from a letter written to Dr. Franklin, the American philosopher, by the celebrated preacher, Mr. Whitefield (dated August 17th, 1752):—

"I find you grow more and more famous in the learned world. As you have made a pretty considerable progress in the mysteries of electricity, I would now humbly recommend to your diligent, unprejudiced pursuit and study the mystery of the NEW BIRTH. It is a most important, interesting study, and when mastered will richly answer and repay you for all your pains. One, at whose bar we are shortly to appear, hath solemnly declared, without it we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. You must excuse this freedom. I must have something of Christ in all my letters."

Selected by Leonard Morgan.

BETHESDA 1907. 1908.




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Conducted by  
Alf Marsden

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"Can a person be saved today and lost tomorrow? Can you please explain the discrepancy between the statement of Jesus as recorded by John (John 10:28, 29), and the statement of Paul as recorded in 1 Cor: 9:27?"

The first thing we ought to do is to interpret the question and state it precisely so that we know the basis for our answer.

I understand the questioner to be asking, "Is it possible for a person to be saved and then at some future time to be lost"? To further this question, he cites two statements from the N.T. which seem to be in conflict. The first of these statements is by John, who records the Lord as saying, "And I give unto them eternal life; and they

shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:28, 29). In contrast to this, we have the apostle Paul writing to Corinth, and saying, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor:9:27). So is Paul teaching something different from his Lord, or is there some other explanation? We shall need to examine the statements quite critically in order to decide, and I feel sure that the first part of the question will be answered after a consideration of the second part.

### Security with Jesus

The theme of security with Jesus is well illustrated in the tenth chapter of John's gospel record, the part referred to as the parable of the Good Shepherd. Jesus had tried to explain to the Jews that with Him they would be safe. He also intimated that He would be Shepherd to 'sheep' which were not of the Jewish 'fold', for example, to the Gentiles also. Much agitated discussion followed among the people, and they finally said to Him: "How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly". Jesus retorted by telling them that they were not of His sheep, and went on to say, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:26-28).

Even though Jesus had come to the lost sheep of the House of Israel, it was quite evident that some of those 'sheep' were not securely held in His hand (V26). The conditions for security in the hands of Jesus were clearly stated by Him:

- (i) His sheep heard His voice.
- (ii) He knew them.
- (iii) They followed Him.

Clearly, if these conditions obtained then no power on earth would be able to remove the 'sheep' from the secure hands of Jesus.

Conversely, it is equally clear that if the 'sheep' stopped listening to the Lord's voice and wandered from His presence, then they would place themselves in acute danger. The verb 'to pluck' conveys the idea of force suddenly applied. On one occasion Jesus said: "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." (Matt. 11:12). The same idea must be true of the sheep that wander away from the shepherd; the marauding animal pounces violently and snatches away by force. This is precisely what Peter means when he says, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith" (1 Pet. 5:8, 9). What is the exhortation of Peter? Resist, stedfast in the faith. In other words, stay close to the object of your faith, the Lord Christ Himself.

On consideration, then, of the passage in John's gospel, I am led to believe, (a) as long as we continue to hear, and do, the things which Jesus teaches, and as long as we are content to follow in His footsteps, then no power will be able to snatch us from His hand. But (b) if we wander away from Him and cease to hear Him, then we must surely be in grave danger of being lost.

### Could I be a 'Castaway'?

Paul evidently thought so. The Greek word rendered 'castaway' means, 'not being able to stand the test'; 'rejected'. So let us look again at the Corinthian passage and put in our new word. "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected" (1 Cor. 9:27).

We shall, perhaps, be able to understand this passage better if we put it into its context. From V24 Paul begins to contrast living the Christian life with competing in a race. The striving in the race is to win the prize, so we run that we may obtain it. The athlete competes to win a corruptible crown (the laurel wreath); the Christian runs the race of life to receive an incorruptible crown (eternal salvation).

Paul obviously envisages the possibility of rejection. Not rejection to *enter* the race, but rejection for the *prize*. Paul recognised his own imperfections as *he* ran the race. He wrote to the Philippians, concerning the resurrection of the dead, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12). It is the realisation that he may miss the prize which spurs Paul to press on. He buffets his body, literally makes it black and blue, to bring it into subjection. At the end of it all he is able to exclaim with serene confidence, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing" (2 Tim. 4:7, 8). Surely, it is a humbling thought for us all, to see this great apostle with such a wholesome fear instead of the smug complacency which we sometimes see in some Christians.

### Conclusion

I think it is fairly obvious that the doctrine of 'once saved always saved' is not a tenable one. I feel confident in saying that as long as the Christian walks hand in hand with the Master then no power, satanic or otherwise, will be able to snatch him from the Master's hand. I also believe that if the Christian chooses to ignore the Master's leading, and leaves His side, then that Christian renders himself liable to rejection. The Bible does *not* contradict itself. The contradictions that people think they see are more imagined than real.

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

## PICTURES OF LIFE'S OTHER SIDE

### INTRODUCTION:

1. That there is another side of life is evident from the Scriptures (John 14:1-3; 2 Cor. 5:1; Phil. 1:21-24; 3:20-21; Matt. 7:21-23).
2. Pictures of interesting places enables us to decide where we want to go.
3. The Bible is God's great picture book. By studying these we can decide where we wish to spend eternity.

(i) A picture of the resurrection (John 5:28-29; 1 Cor. 15:22-52; 1 Thess. 4:13-18).

(ii) A picture of the judgment (Heb. 9:27; Rom. 14:10-12); 2 Cor. 5:10; Acts 17:30-31; Matt. 25:31-46).

(iii) A picture of Hell:

1. A place of outer darkness (Matt. 25:30).
2. A lake of fire and brimstone (Matt. 13:42; Rev. 21:8).
3. A place of eternal damnation (Mark 3:29).
4. A place of torment forever (Rev. 20:10).
5. A place of everlasting punishment (Matt. 25:41-46); Mark 9:43-48; 2 Thess. 1:7-9).

## (iv) A picture of Heaven:

1. The righteous shall shine as the sun (Matt. 13:43).
2. A city of gold (Rev. 21:9-21).
3. A place free from sorrow and pain (Rev. 21:4).
4. A place of eternal joy (Rev. 21:1-5).
5. A place of everlasting life (John 3:16; 5:24; 6:47; Matt. 19:29; 25:46; Rev. 22:14).

—Outline by H. A. Whitefield

## THE UNIQUENESS OF THE CHURCH

The church of Christ is unique in that there is only one church, sometimes called the body of Christ.

Eph. 4:4-6: "There is one body, (church; chap. 1:22-23) and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

From this word may we conclude that the division of so-called Christendom into sects and denominations is a denial of that word?

The word translated 'church' in the New Testament never refers to a building of lime and stone, or to anything inanimate; but in figure to 'living stones' as the context in which it is used clearly shows, to cite a few:

Matt. 18:17: "... tell it to the church. . ."

Acts 2:47: "... the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

Acts 5:11: "And great fear came upon all the church."

Rom. 16:5: "Likewise greet the church that is in their house. . ."

Eph. 5:25: "... even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;"

1 Peter 2:5: "Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house. . ."

The above signifies that the CHURCH OF CHRIST is composed of people (living stones), a people drawn out from the world, who have accepted Christ and become obedient to Him as their Saviour.

### The institution of the CHURCH foretold by CHRIST.

This is related for us in the Gospel by Matthew chap. 16 when, we are told, Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, and the following conversation took place between Jesus and his disciples:

v.13: Jesus: "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?"

v.14: Disciples: "Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets."

v.15: Jesus: "But whom say ye that I am?"

v.16: Peter: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

v.18: Jesus: "... Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

We gather from this that the CHURCH would be built on the rock which is CHRIST, and not on Peter as some erroneously teach, but the Messiahship of Christ — the great and eternal truth that JESUS IS THE CHRIST THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD — this great truth which Jesus said was revealed to Peter by God:

v.17: "... for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

Notice in this portion of scripture (Matthew 16) that Christ says, **I will build my church**, speaking in the future tense, signifying that the church was not yet in existence — was not an Old Testament institution — the building of it was still future from that time. Therefore we must continue our search, we must read on if we



would discover when this church that Christ said he would build, actually began to be built.

### The Beginning of the Church of Christ

Regarding the beginning of this church the following questions may be asked:

1. Where did this church begin to be built?
2. When did this church begin to be built?
3. How did this church begin to be built?

The answer to all these questions will be found by carefully reading the book called 'The Acts of the Apostles' (at chapter 2). Here we discover that:

1. The place was Jerusalem.
2. The time was the first Pentecost after the resurrection and ascension of Christ.
3. People heard the gospel, believed the gospel, repented and were baptized for the remission of sins, and continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers. (See Acts 2:37-42)

Verse 47 of that same chapter tells us that "THE LORD ADDED TO THE CHURCH DAILY SUCH AS SHOULD BE SAVED" or as the Revised version puts it "SUCH AS WERE BEING SAVED."

The saved ones were added to the church by the Lord, and so the building of HIS CHURCH was started.

### The Meeting Place of the Church

The popular desire today is for grand buildings of magnificent architecture, with stained-glass windows, crosses, altars, and great organs to lead the praise. We do not find such places mentioned in the New Testament, and so they would appear to be man-made additions; but we do read in 1 Cor. 16:19: "The churches of Asia salute you, Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house."

So the meeting place of the church may be in a humble home, a hall or other suitable buildings, or even in the open air; in fact, wherever the church gathers to worship God, this is the meeting place of the church.

### The Name of the Church

We do not find in the word of God such names as 'Church of Scotland'; Roman Catholic Church'; Lutheran Church'; 'Wesleyan Church'; or any other man-made name; these came into existence in post-New Testament days; but we do read in God's words: Acts 20:28: where the Apostle Paul says to the elders from the church at Ephesus: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

Also in

Rom.16:16: "... the churches of Christ salute you." "CHURCH OF CHRIST" — "CHURCH OF GOD" — It has pleased God to reveal these names by his Spirit-inspired word. Let us call Bible things by Bible names.

### The Head of the Church

We may ask the question, is it a Pope, Bishop, Archbishop or such like? Let us to the word of God again.

Eph.1:22: "And (God) hath put all things under his (Christ's) feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church."

Eph.5:23: "For the husband is head of the wife, even as Christ is head of the church..."

Under Christ as head there is no room for the un-scriptural terms of 'clergy' and 'laity.' In His church all are ministers, servants, workers. No doubt the reader is aware that there is only one place in the Bible where the word 'reverend' is used, and there it is applied to God. (See Psalms 111:9).

### Behaviour

The apostle Paul, in his first letter to Timothy, said he had written these things to him "that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." (1 Tim.3:15).

Rom.6:4: "Therefore we are buried with him (Christ) by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

'Newness of life' or as the New English Bible puts it: "So also we might set our feet upon the new path of life." New creatures — a new creation — members must lead a new life — a complete change — a turn about. No longer following after worldly wisdom, but the wisdom which is from above. This new life or manner of living is called foolishness by the world, but it is grand to be a fool for Christ's sake.

There is much more to be studied in connection with the church, e.g. its government, worship, fellowship, final triumph, but in all the aspects noted in this brief outline, the church of Christ is unique. It is entirely different from any other organisation, or anything devised by man. Man could not have thought out or produced such a complete and perfect system.

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## ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S "SYNOPSIS OF RESTORATION"

1. The restoration of a pure speech, or the calling of Bible things by Bible names.
2. The Bible must be proposed as a book of facts, not of doctined, nor opinions; it must be understood and regarded as arranged upon the principle of cause and effect, or that action is to produce corresponding action.
3. The Bible alone, instead of any human creed, as the only rational and solid foundation of Christian union and communion.
4. The reading and expounding of the sacred scriptures in public assemblies instead of text preaching, sermonising and philosophising.
5. The right of private opinion in all matters not revealed in contradistinction from the common faith, without the forfeiture of Christian character or Christian privilege.
6. The church of Jesus Christ is constitutionally composed of those who have confessed their faith in the celestial proposition — that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Son of God, and the only Saviour of the world, and have put him on by a baptism into his death.
7. The administration of the internal and external affairs of the Church is placed in the hands of bishops, deacons and messengers extraordinary.
8. The sanctification of the Lord's day by meeting in honour of the resurrection of the Saviour, and especially with a reference to the celebration of the Lord's supper, is essential to the edification, to the spirituality, holiness, usefulness, and happiness of the Christian community.

9. The church not being of this world, cannot levy any contribution on those without for any religious or political purpose, neither ought she to go a-begging to the world for aid to support or extend Christianity.

10. The gospel is the proclamation in the name of God for remission of sins, and eternal life through the sacrifice and mediation of Jesus Christ to everyone who obeys him in the instituted way. The gospel is not preaching about faith, repentance, baptism, regeneration, or any other word or phrase or thing in the Bible. It is rather the authoritative statement of pardon and eternal life from the philanthropy of God through the interposition of Jesus.

11. Three things are essential to a Christian — a peculiar disposition, state, and character. These must be changed from a preternatural or fleshly state to that which is spiritual or heavenly.

12. The resurrection of the just, the coming of the Lord Jesus in his own proper glorified person, and eternal life, constitute the grand objects of the Christian's hope.

13. No theory of spiritual influence in conversion is the influence of the Spirit. Therefore, to deny any theory, is not to deny the influence of the Spirit.

14. As personal intelligence, purity, and happiness is the end of all public and private, theoretical or practical reformation, the present standard of personal knowledge, faith, piety and morality being too low, must be greatly elevated.

15. Family education and domestic religion must be greatly advanced.

(“THE TRUTH”)

## A MIND TO WORK

Derek Daniell, Tunbridge Wells, Kent

If we “have a mind to work” then the seemingly impossible can be achieved. This was true of Nehemiah and the exiles of Israel who returned to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah prayed a penitent prayer to God asking to be allowed to return to the city where God's name dwelt (Neh. 1:4-11). Obtaining the permission of King Artaxerxes, but with a definite time to return to the king, he set off to complete the task (Neh. 2:1-8). Though enemies arose within the land of Israel to oppose them and stop the work, they were not deterred (Neh. 2:17-20). Nehemiah 3 details the people and the tasks they undertook. Sanballat and Tobiah became very angry and conspired with others to fight against them and destroy the work (Neh. 4:1-3, 7-8, 11). With God's help a plan was devised to enable the wall to be rebuilt and defended at the same time (Neh. 4:4-6, 9-23). In Nehemiah 4:17-18 we read that they built the walls with swords in one hand and tools in the other. Though further plots were made by their enemies (Chap. 6), the “seemingly impossible” task was completed in fifty-two days. The reason why this was achieved was that “the people had a mind to work.” As for their enemies, “*they lost their confidence for they recognised that this work had been accomplished with the help of God*” (6:16)

This presents a great lesson for us today. God's word assures us that what is impossible with men IS possible with God (cf. Matt. 17:20; 19:26; Mark 10:27). Today the Christian's task is to build up the Lord's church in every place; this can only be carried out through the preaching of the gospel. See Mark 16:15; Romans 1:16; Eph. 4:11-16.

Many, as they take account of the opposition from every side, conclude that the task is impossible. If we rely on ourselves it is impossible. If we rely on the power of God in the gospel, then through the foolishness of the "message preached" the souls of men will be reached (1 Cor. 1:18-25). May each one imitate Israel of old and take the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, in our hand to fight against sin and Satan (Eph. 6:10-18). Then work with the greatest urgency to save "those that believe."

Brethren, if we have the same enthusiasm, then we will "have a mind to work." We are assured that God is with us; what then will prevent our preaching the power of God? We close with the warning of the Spirit of the fate awaiting those who do not obey the gospel. "These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (2 Thess. 1:8-9). May we love our fellow man so much that we will "have a mind to work" to save them from this kind of eternity.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

August 3: Psalm 33; Phil. 3, 17 to 4,7.

August 10: Psalm 1; Phil. 4, 8-23.

August 17: Psalm 98; Col. 1, 1-23.

August 24: Isaiah 42, 1-17; Col. 1, 24 to 2, 7.

August 31: Lev. 23, 1-14; Col. 2, 8-23.

### Tears and joys

In many ways we regard the church at Philippi as giving special cause for joy to Paul in his restricted life. This is certainly justified, but there were as in all communities those who did not live up to their light. The heart of the apostle ached for those who did not follow his example in pure and unselfish behaviour. Notice is to be taken of such as do follow Paul with a view to being like them (3, 17), but some are causing grief by their failure to be heavenly minded. They are set upon worldly advantage even greed for food, and regarding godliness as a way of material gains. Here the A.V. is incorrect, the correct word being "citizenship" not "conversation" (meaning "behaviour"). The thought is probably connected with the fact that Philippi was a Roman colony as the church so to speak is a

colony of heaven, involving responsibility of course as to behaviour. Another cause of grief is the failure of two prominent sisters who had served in spreading the gospel to agree together. The messengers of the love of God must show love to one another. Differences within the church can stultify her witness and work. Yet there is abundant reason for joy. Two insurances for it are proposed. First "casting care upon the Lord" as the R.V. puts it — "in *nothing* be anxious, but in *everything*" make your requests TO GOD. Secondly, "whatsoever things are pure . . . think on these things." In both cases the result is "the peace of God", happiness!

Thereafter Paul expresses his special reasons for being happy. The arrival of Epaphroditus with such practical signs of love filled his soul with happiness. He is careful to say it was not just material satisfaction but spiritual satisfaction of an unselfish character that moved him. This soldier of the cross had learned the secret of contentment, taking the rough with the smooth and all with thanksgiving part of the sacrifice of praise and giving (Heb. 13, 15 & 16). "God sendeth sun, He sendeth shower alike they're needful for the flower, and joy and tears alike are sent to give the soul fit nourishment." Some evangelists have more tears than joys — every Christian has a mixture.

### Colossian joys

Here is a letter of quite a different character. Similar however to that to Ephesus in some respects. It begins with joyful thanksgiving because of news received of both faith and love, and hope inspired in the hearts of the brethren by their acceptance of the gospel. It seems most likely that Epaphras had been the preacher who brought them the good news — although in spite of 2, 1 Paul himself may have done so. He had certainly been in that region. Epaphras was the messenger who brought news to Paul, and had become a prisoner (Phile. 23) with him at Rome. The news was good. The brethren had developed that essential Christian quality — LOVE for others. They must have been mainly heathen folk and were bearing this fruit.

### Colossian fears

It is evident that one of the purposes of the letter was to sound a very clear warning against certain teaching. It would seem that there was danger at Philippi of infiltration of Jewish teaching. Teachers had come there and pressed for practice of circumcision (Phil. 3, 2). Paul applies an epithet to them of a very unpleasant kind — deliberately no doubt — dogs in those societies were scavengers and outcasts — and dangerous. These teachers followed up the preachers of the gospel in many if not all regions, and had special enmity for Paul. Satan's method was rather to modify, to add or to pervert than to oppose the gospel. The mystery of iniquity was already at work to divide and weaken the church. Apparently a mixture of Mosaic law and heathen philosophy was being introduced which insisted upon some rigid self-discipline, ceremonial, including circumcision and other Jewish rites. Obedience to some of these ideas was counted as a means of pleasing God and meritorious. We know the Pharisees, had the form of righteousness depending upon observances of rules and regulations about eating, drinking and wash-

ings. A system of this kind might appeal to those who practised heathen superstition previously and found the strictly moral and clean Christian living hard. The philosophy included also angels and other being supposed to intervene or mediate between God and man. So Paul fears lest with persuasiveness of speech and doctrine some may be drawn away from the truth, and take up with this strange mixture of imagination and rules and regulations. There are strange cults today which many follow.

### The one supreme authority

Christianity presents us with truth. The truth is that God loves the world, and has given us His Son as One Who can save to the uttermost all who put their trust in Him. Some of the facts are so plain that they cannot be mistaken but they are so profound that we cannot understand them. We know that Jesus came by miraculous birth. It is beyond our understanding that the Almighty Creator could be limited to a human personality, that He could be all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. We cannot understand that "he that hath seen ME hath seen the FATHER" but we know the revelation God had made to us in His Word is sufficient for time and eternity. The first chapter of this letter from verse 12 onwards present us with a glorious picture of the pre-eminence of our Saviour and the greatness of the salvation He wrought for us. May we take to heart the stupendous truths set out for us and remain "grounded and stedfast."

R. B. Scott.

### THINK HIGH THOUGHTS

"Keep your mind on the great and splendid things you would like to do, and you will find yourself seizing the opportunities for the fulfilment of your desires. Picture in your mind the able, earnest, useful person you desire to be, and the thought is transforming you into that individual."

Wise and true words, but much better stated in Philippians 4:8: "Finally, brethren, whatever is true . . . honourable . . . just . . . pure . . . lovely . . . gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

### MISCELLANEOUS

**"Let your light shine."**

Life's like a shop window, so why not display

Those things that give pleasure to folks by the way?

Christianity is to save us; we are not to save Christianity. God can take care of His own; He does not need that His own should take care of Him. Our business is not to defend the truth but to use it; not to maintain the Gospel but to proclaim it; not to preserve Christianity but to trust ourselves to its preserving power. (Lyman Abbot.)

Nobody seems to know who wrote this poem, but I found it well worth pondering:

Men don't believe in the Devil now

As their fathers used to do;

They reject one creed because it's old,

And another because it's new.

They may say the Devil has never lived;

They may say the Devil has gone;

But simple folk would like to know —

Who carries the business on?

Doubtful amusements are like doubtful eggs — so likely to be bad that it is safer to leave them alone.

Holy life will produce the deepest impression. Lighthouses blow no horns — they simply shine.

### MARKS OF A DYING CHURCH

"And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars, says this: 'I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.'" (Revelation 3:1).

Sound familiar? I think so. I know many churches that fit John's description of the church of Sardis. But why do churches die? What are some of the identifying marks of a dying church? Let me give you several.

**Churches die because of lack of faith!** Churches that always look for reasons why something will not work, will never grow. I've heard statements like, "I don't believe we are ready for it," "It may work somewhere else, but not here," "We tried that once before and it didn't work," "It costs too much" etc. Negative thinking destroys churches. Positive thinking builds churches. It's that simple.

**Churches die because of poor leadership.** A church is only as strong as its leaders. Strong leaders build strong churches.

**Dying churches misunderstand the Great Commission.** Jesus' last command was "go." Dying churches say to non-members, "you all come," but the Lord said to the believers, "you all go." Dying churches serve themselves, not the world.

**Dying churches spend their time defending the faith instead of extending the faith.** Sound doctrine, by itself is no guarantee of success of any church. Some churches are sound in the faith, but also sound asleep. Dying churches are keepers of orthodoxy, instead of soul-winners.

**Dying churches are inflexible and unwilling to change.** In other words, they are imprisoned behind the bars of the past. Lack of innovation destroys churches. Tradition is a treadmill of dying churches.

**Dying churches have uninspirational worship services.** Worship services in dying churches are more like a funeral than a feast. Celebration builds churches. Formalism will never build large churches.

**Dying churches lack commitment.** Growing churches *demand* something! They preach and practice the "Lordship of Christ." Cheap grace produces weak churches.

**Churches die because believers do not become disciples.** Once a person becomes a Christian, he or she must be equipped to serve. Every member is a minister. Every church should be a "Spiritual Boot Camp." Believers must become disciples. Dying churches practice the "Clergy-laity" concept. Only a few people are ministers.

**Dying churches do not proclaim the Gospel.** Growing churches plant the seed and reap the harvest. Dying churches are reaping what they have sown — *nothing!*

**Dying churches do not depend on God.** They try to build churches by their own strength. Only God can make the church grow. Growing churches are God-Centered; not man-centered.

From: 'Firm Foundation'

### SCRIPTURE READINGS

Sister Ruth B. Coles writes from Lae, Papua, New Guinea, (Box 594):—

"Greetings from your brethren in this remote part of Papua New Guinea.

For some time now I have been intending to write to you to suggest to you the possibility of taking all of the "Scripture Readings" with comments which brother Scott has written for the Scripture Standard and putting them into one or several books. This is truly a valuable work covering thirty to forty years or more and to lose these would be a great pity. This would also be a tribute to a great man and a very fine Christian brother.

I further suggest that special donations could be given for this purpose.

We are living in a time when men and women are defying or denying God and our children, and grand-children are at risk. Our young people need to study the

scriptures and understand them and I believe that brother Scott's writings would be of great assistance in achieving this. I hope you will give my suggestion your careful consideration."

In His Name,

Ruth B. Coles.

(Nee Slater of Portnockie)

*(I can but gladly endorse everything our sister says about brother Scott and his monumental work in the form of "Scripture Readings" for his brethren and the 'Scripture Standard', and I am sure that brethren throughout this country (and in many countries across the seas) will readily re-echo these sentiments expressed. Having just received our sister's letter I have not even had time to find out exactly when brother Scott began these Readings but it certainly was prior to 1944. Several volumes might well be required and printing costs might be very high but the matter is certainly worth looking into. Would any brother like to volunteer to make preliminary investigations or make any suggestions? — Editor).*

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Newtongrange, Scotland:** On Saturday, 14th June past, a number upwards of fifty travelled west to the picturesque village of West Linton on our annual outing. The day was disappointing only in as much as the weather was rather inclement. Although this was a definite drawback it in no way dulled the fellowship. Throughout the day indoor games were devised to mystify the children and amuse the parents — brother A. Sharp being in charge. With no place to hide brethren Wilson, Hunter and Morris were press-ganged into the tea service. It was a pleasure for the church to have the fellowship of brother and sister Jess for the day.

A. Sharp. Sec.

**BREVITIES**

IN the Old Testament it was God for His people. That was wonderful. In the Gospels, it was Emmanuel, God with His people. But in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles it is best of all, God in His people. God the Father for His people; God the Son with His people; and God the Holy Spirit in His people. What an amazing truth!

IT is not by seasons of mystical meditation and rapturous experience that we learn to abide in Christ; it is by feeding upon His written Word, and looking to the Holy Spirit to implant it in our hearts and to make it a living thing within us.

The only difference between stumbling blocks and stepping-stones is the way we use them.

A fault which humbles a man is of more use to him than a good action which puffs him up.

The opportunity of a lifetime must be taken during the lifetime of the opportunity.

It was never loving that emptied the heart, nor giving that emptied the purse.

**HYPOCRITES**

Men often sneeringly besmirch  
The hypocrites who go to church;  
Yet no one has a word to say  
Of hypocrites who stay away.

**EVANGELISTIC COMMITTEE**

"The Evangelist Committee have met to elect a new Treasurer consequent upon the passing of our late Bro. Robert McDonald and ask brethren to please note that Bro. John Partington of 86 Lord Street, Hindley now occupies that position. Anyone wishing to make donations to the fund should in future forward same to him."

Your co-operation will greatly oblige,  
Yours on behalf of the Committee, T.  
Woodhouse (Secretary).

We apologise for the late delivery of the June and July issues of the Scripture Standard. The printers are moving to new premises and a certain amount of delay is to be expected. We hope to have an earlier delivery in August.

J. K. Kneller

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