

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## PEACE IN OUR TIME

In a troubled world the desire for 'peace' is a real one, even although the possibility is a remote one. One only requires to thumb through the history books to know that wars have always been with us, and probably always will be. The weapons of war become increasingly sophisticated but man's tendency to shed blood remains fairly much as it was. It is good, however, to see segments of the population campaigning actively for peace and one can but hope that something might possibly be achieved. In this country we have been seeing, on T.V. News Bulletins, the Peace Women of Greenham Common waging their disrupting protests against the deployment of American missiles in this country. Opinions doubtless vary on the *cause* of the Greenham Common Women, and equally on their *form* of protestation, but any quest for peace must surely be commendable. Personally I think they might achieve much more if they were to protest to the Russian Embassy against the massacre of the poor and unfortunate Afghanistan villagers, but of course I might well be wrong. It is, in any event, difficult nowadays to distinguish the genuine seekers after peace from infiltrating political pressure groups, seeking to undermine the rule of law and the overthrow of democratic government. As millions were being slaughtered in the trenches during the First World War those at home were asked to be patient for "this war would end all wars", and would make a brave new world fit for the returning heroes. Only twenty-five years later we were being given much the same message as millions died in the Second World War. Today, fifty years farther on, there are wars, large and small, being waged all over the world - horrific wars involving more and more, civilian populations. "Peace in our time" is as forlorn a hope now as ever it was, and ever will be. Despite the machinations of scheming politicians it must surely be true to say that 'the man in the street' of every land is yearning for an end to hostility and bloodshed. One thing we can be sure about, however, is that the concern of the Greenham Common women that the world will destroy itself in a nuclear holocaust is quite unfounded. *Man will not destroy his own world* with missiles, but God will melt the earth, and all it contains, in His own good time.

Quite apart from the question of wars amongst nations, man is finding that social upheaval is just as vexing as political turmoil and he seeks peace and tranquility in a world of domestic worry and anxiety. Doctors tell us that their surgeries are filled with patients suffering from the stress of modern living, rather than from physical ailments. Indeed, the medical profession are accused of

the over-prescription of tranquilising pills over the last twenty years or so. It is certainly not easy to achieve an inner peace of mind in these times. What burdens men and women carry today. Peace of mind does not easily come to the three million unemployed, or to their wives and families trying desperately to make ends meet. Parents too, have great cause for alarm as they ponder their childrens' future and the rising tide of drug addiction and promiscuity. Competition in the workplace and job responsibilities, result in stress and strain, and heart-attacks are fairly commonplace. Form filling, making written application for this and that, queuing for operations in hospitals (some with 2 years waiting list) are all part of a modern bureaucracy leading to great frustration and frayed nerves.

Many, in trying "To keep up with the Jones's" get into debt and despair. Thus the complexities of modern living lead us into all kinds of frustration, strain, guilt, irritability, depression, disappointment, disgust, insecurity, worry, fear, exasperation and acute anxiety. Can we be surprised that some have 'nervous breakdowns', some become 'drop-outs' and some migrate to the Hebrides to 'get out of the rat race'. Much of the world lies in sin, and the lives that men lead are often in total disharmony with God - this, too, leads to an unhappy frame of mind and the melancholy of a guilt complex. Add to all this the constant lurking fear of serious illhealth, and the fear of death itself, and we have a rather dreary picture.

#### MY PEACE - I leave with you

A dismal picture, Yes; but gloom can be dispelled. Rejoice! All is not lost. We can have peace of mind - *the Peace of Christ*, His last and greatest gift. Not only can we rejoice - we can relax. It depends on us. Did not Jesus say, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." (Matt 11:28). The poor folks to whom Jesus spoke had *their* problems too - problems not so much associated with prosperity and plenty, but with hunger and poverty. They had *their* fears and anxieties too. Jesus offered to such "Come unto Him" - to exchange yokes with Him; to swop burdens with Him, and they would find rest and peace to their souls. Let Jesus take the strain. Jesus, after all, is *The Prince of Peace*. God is *the God of peace*. (Rom. 15:33). The Kingdom of God is *joy and peace*. (Rom. 14:7). The gospel is *the gospel of peace* (Rom. 10:15). Perhaps we find it difficult to relax; perhaps we worry about tomorrow; perhaps we fail to conquer impatience and irritability. This is clearly because we have not embraced the peace of Christ. Many of us do not enjoy that serenity of the soul that we see in Jesus, and we excuse ourselves. We usually blame our natural temperament, but surely even the most highly-strung of us can be calmed by the influence of Jesus.

Before parting from His disciples Jesus bestowed a rich legacy upon them when He said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14:27). Jesus was not promising the disciples a sinecure, or a bed of roses; far from it. Indeed did He not warn them that they would be in a hostile world; they would not receive peace but a sword; they would be brought before governors and magistrates; they would be persecuted from one city to another; they would be imprisoned and they would be hated of all men for His sake. Yet He left them "Peace". "My peace I leave unto you", therefore let not your heart be troubled; neither let it be afraid. Jesus did not have any personal possessions to leave behind to the disciples - He had no home and Roman soldiers scrambled for His only garment at His death - and so He left behind His peace. Could He have left a more precious or priceless gift? "Let not your heart be troubled; neither let it be

afraid." "MY PEACE" was what Jesus left to the world. No-one familiar with the New Testament can fail to be impressed by the serenity and tranquility of Jesus under the most trying circumstances both in life and in death. The life of Jesus started off very badly, in a stable, and ended up much worse, on a cross of crucifixion. In the latter years between He was under constant scrutiny; was much maligned; was misrepresented; was misunderstood; was subjected to unremitting activity in travelling, preaching, teaching, healing and in disputations with the Jewish powers. He endured temptations, anxieties and many vexing disappointments. Many of His followers turned back and even His closest disciples denied Him, forsook Him and fled. Jesus also carried on His back the burden of the worlds' accumulated sin (from the beginning of time) and carried this massive burden all the way to Calvary. Through it all Jesus exhibited great serenity. He was calm in the face of danger and completely free from any anxiety, especially as to the outcome of future events. Even as He agonised and sweated on the cross He could breathe these words, "Father forgive them; they know not what they do." This was the peace of Jesus - the peace that He enjoyed. This same peace He gave to His disciples and offers to us.

### Aids to Inner Peace

How did such a peace come to Jesus? What was the secret of His placid disposition?

(1) **Confidence in God** Surely great peace must stem from the knowledge that with God nothing is impossible. Abraham, we are told, staggered not at the promises of God but was "Fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform." We can have great confidence in God. Solomon spoke in glowing terms of God's reliability when he said, "Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He hath promised; there hath not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised by the hand of His servant Moses." God is a God of adequate resources, He is all powerful; He is omnipotent. Nothing can confront us that God cannot handle. Truly confidence in such a God brings great reassurance and great peace. When the Israelites reached the Red Sea, with the Egyptians in hot pursuit, they trembled and thought their end had come, but Moses said, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord." It's when man gives up that God takes over.

(2) **Service and Sacrifice** Great peace accrues from doing God's will. The life of Jesus was surely one of service, and one of sacrifice. The peace Jesus promises is not one of ease or inactivity but one of struggle and difficulty. The greater the conflict in the Christian life the greater the satisfaction. Restlessness and unhappiness are the inevitable nemesis of the selfish and purposeless life. Peace comes to the disciplined life. Peace comes to those, who, like the Master, endeavour to spend their time "Going about doing good". Jesus lived a life of self-sacrifice to men, and unfaltering obedience to God. He said, "And he that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please Him." (John 8:29).

(3) **A Clean Heart** It does not really matter how difficult life becomes, as long as the conscience is at rest. No man can enjoy lasting peace who does not earnestly endeavour to learn God's will and then be faithful in his efforts to do it. Then, a man will not only be at peace with God, but will be at peace with himself. The things that wreck inner peace are not the slings and arrows of everyday conflicts in the battle of life, or the disappointments or frustrations brought on by other people, but are the haunting memories of sins unforgiven, and the melancholy brooding over unworthy deeds. Obviously we must have confidence that the blood of Christ can cleanse us from all our sins. "If we say that we have no sin, we

deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9). We should not deny our sins, but confess them and have confidence in Christ's promise to forgive us our sins. Surely the 'good news' is forgiveness of our sins. The eunuch "went on his way rejoicing" after he had been immersed for the remission of sins. We too should *go on our way* with rejoicing, experiencing the deep peace which comes from the knowledge of sins forgiven.

(4) **Fellowship with God** True peace comes also from being in continual touch with God. Peace comes from the strength we can draw from the great reservoir in heaven. Even Jesus, with all His wisdom, knowledge and strength, kept Himself in constant touch with His heavenly Father. How often do we read of Jesus slipping away from the clamorous crowds into the desert places, to meditate and to commune with God in prayer. We all need to "recharge our batteries" in this way and to draw strength in the quiet moments. Paul describes this wonderful fellowship when he says (Romans 5:1) "Therefore being justified by faith, we have *peace with God* through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

### **His peace passeth all understanding**

In a world beset with human weakness we can marvel at the infinite strength of God. Confidence in such a God brings peace to the worried brow. In a world of suspicion and distrust we can commune with the God of Truth. Such communion brings joy and peace. In a world of change and decay we can rely on a God who changes not, but is the same Yesterday, Today and Forever more. Such reliance brings permanent peace. In a world of fear and despair we can have hope as a sheet-anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast. In a world of sickness and death we have confidence and joy in the promise that all tears shall be wiped away and there shall be no more pain.

"MY PEACE I give unto you - peace I leave with you", said Jesus. The gift is still within reach today if we will but avail ourselves of it. We fret needlessly and carry loads we could lay at His feet. Can we learn to "Be still, and see the salvation of the Lord?" Can we be encouraged to cast all our cares upon Him, knowing that He careth for us? Where else today will we find such an offer, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden?" "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee." (Isa. 26:3). "Peace in our time" is really possible, in Christ.

EDITOR

## **DISCREPANCIES? NOT LIKELY!**

(Comments arising from 'Apparent Discrepancies Reconciled' - February, 1984)

1. In the first sentence it is claimed that the verses (Matt. 26:17; Mark 14:12 and Luke 22:7) teach that Jesus and the disciples celebrated the last Passover at the time set by the Law. A few sentences further it is implied that a close examination had been made of these verses, yet attention is not drawn to the words in italics. Had this been followed up by checking the verses in an Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, it could have been seen that the words 'feast of' and 'bread' were absent in the Greek text. The words were added during translation, altering the original meaning of the verses.

To understand them correctly it is helpful to consult a Greek dictionary. The word for 'unleavened' is 'azumon' (genitive case plural). It relates to the day (i.e. It was the day of unleavenings). When this day came, or arrived, (at sunset) Peter and John were sent to prepare for the Passover: the day is clearly identified by the term "when the passover must be killed" (Luke 22:7-8). The passover lambs were to be killed "at the going down of the sun" (Deut 16:6). Later on this same day, at the going down of the sun, Christ was crucified. "The passover lamb, sacrificed the first day, was fulfilled by the crucifixion of Christ at the very hours the lambs were slain". (Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians, p.76, by James Burton Coffman, Firm Foundation Publishing House). "He was crucified that very day and time when the paschal lamb was slain" (Monser, Types and Metaphors of the Bible. This is quoted in the Teacher's Annual Lesson Commentary, 1966, p.230; The Gospel Advocate Company).

From the same page of this commentary I quote, "Those who study may never reach unanimity on this subject, but there are some fundamental facts which should have some weight, regarding it, namely, (1) Jesus and the disciples ate the passover supper on the night before his condemnation and execution, according to John, chapter 13 ff. (2) The Jews had not eaten the supper at that time, John 18:28. (3) The day of the Lord's condemnation and crucifixion is called 'the Preparation of the passover', John 19:14, 32".

From the foregoing it may be clearly seen that when Christ instituted this supper, the paschal lambs had not been slain. Therefore it was not at the Jews' Passover feast that the Lord's supper was instituted. Furthermore, the crucifixion day is called the preparation by all four gospel writers (Matt. 27:62; Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:14, 31, 42).

To understand the verses in the way proposed here is to remain in harmony with all other Scriptures and to avoid the position where such verses are seen to be involved in uncertainty or discrepancy. The verses (Matt. 26:17; Mark 14:12; Luke 22:7) do not teach that the Lord's supper was instituted at a Jews' Passover feast.

2. Approximately halfway through the article are the words:- "Respecting Mark's words, 'the Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, we learn from Leviticus 23 that besides the weekly Sabbath the day following the Passover (abib 15) was a Sabbath, and the 21st as well...". This statement reinforces the erroneous claim of the first sentence (i.e. the last Passover held at the time set by the Law took place before the crucifixion).

The additional Sabbaths were held on the 15th day and the 21st, the beginning and the ending of the seven days of unleavened bread (Exod. 12:15-16; Levit. 23:5-7), "No manner of work shall be done in them". This would prohibit 'a melancholy service of love as the preparing of the spices'.

Both feasts, Passover and Unleavened Bread, commenced on the 15th. "In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's passover" (Levit. 23:5). Similar wording is given in Exodus 12:18 — "In the first month in the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day". Both feasts were to begin 'at even', the sunset marking the end of the 14th day, they thereby took place on the 15th day. As the Passover feast fell on the 15th, the falsity of the words 'the day following the Passover (Abib 15) was a Sabbath' is evident.

As the Passover feast followed the day of preparation, and the preparation was 'the day before the Sabbath', in that year these two rest days coincided, therefore "that sabbath day was an high day" (John 19:31).

### 3. Three Days and Three Nights

"In the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12:40). These words are not to be understood literally for the Lord's tomb was situated far from the middle of the earth. The Greek word for 'heart' is 'kardia', it means "the middle or central or inmost part of any thing, even though inanimate" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon).

"He rose again the third day" (1 Corinth. 15:4). According to the Jewish division of days (sunset to sunset) He arose approximately midway through the third day, so for half of the third day the tomb was empty. In view of this it is difficult to see how anyone could arrive at a total of three days and nights.

When Matthew and Mark record the same words of Christ, one uses the expression 'the third day' while the other has 'after three days' (Matt. 16:21 and Mark 8:31). This mode of expression appears to have been understood without confusion among the Jews. It is significant that the legalistic Pharisees offered no criticism of Christ's words 'three days and three nights'. They asked that the tomb be guarded "until the third day" (Matt. 27:64).

It should be emphasized that there are factors not revealed to us in Scripture. Are we to follow the Jewish practice of reckoning part of a day as a whole? If so, then the brief period when the body was in the tomb before sunset would represent one day. Was He placed in an underground prison at any time during the trials of the preceding night? When He arose was it very late in the night or very early in the morning? Because we are not told, any conclusion drawn from such questionable sources are merely opinions. Better to leave the matter rest with God than to seem justified by our opinions.

4. Lastly, a brief comment on the following:—"From all the data we seem justified in putting the matter thus - using our day names for greater clearness - the Passover (when the lamb was eaten) fell that year on Wednesday evening; Jesus was arrested, tried, condemned, and crucified during the night and the course of Thursday (Preparation Day); He was buried on Thursday evening; the Paschal Sabbath began Thursday evening and lasted till Friday evening; the usual Sabbath began Friday evening and closed on Saturday; Christ rose from the tomb early Sunday morning".

**Comment:— Weaknesses are apparent in the above explanation:-**

- a) As already shown (para 1) the paschal lambs were to be slain at a time coinciding with the crucifixion. Hence the Jews' Passover feast was scheduled for the day after the crucifixion. The above has that feast taking place before the crucifixion.
- b) The above mentions two Sabbaths falling on consecutive days; the Bible tells of one Sabbath in the same period (John 19:31).
- c) The above places the arrest and crucifixion during the night and the course of Thursday, with the resurrection on Sunday; a sequence of events embracing four days. The Bible tells us that from the arrest and crucifixion to the resurrection there was a period of three days, "today is the third day since these things were done" (Luke 24:18-21).

Brethren, we can be thankful for our scholars, but we ought not accept their words without verification. May we be like the Bereans who "received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily" (Acts 17:11).

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## GLEANINGS

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

WE QUOTE - ALEXANDER MACLAREN

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" - John 1:29

"And I beheld, and, lo, ...a Lamb as it had been slain." - Revelation 5:6

"One of the disciples of the Baptist who heard his proclamation of the Lamb of God was John, afterwards the apostle and writer of the Apocalypse. Long years had passed since that hour. The Baptist slept in a bloody grave. The young fisherman had learned to know Jesus with a larger knowledge, and to love Him with a love more than life. He had found in Jesus depths which he had little dreamed of, on that day by the fords of Jordan; and now, in his rocky Patmos, with the waves dashing round him, in a scene so unlike the earlier one, and himself most changed of all, the heavens were opened, and the vision of his Lord granted to him again. Is it not beautiful and significant that the words in which he tells of what he saw through the door opened in heaven, read like an echo of those spoken so long ago, and never to be forgotten? - "Behold the Lamb!" "And I beheld, and, lo, ...a Lamb!" The word for *lamb* is, indeed, different, and in the difference lies a pathetic and lovely lesson; for that employed to describe the heavenly state of the exalted Christ is humbler than that used by the Baptist, being a diminutive form, which we might represent by *lambkin*. But the whole ring of the sentence is like that of the original proclamation in the Gospel. If we further notice that the fourth Gospel alone has preserved this testimony of the forerunner, and that John alone of New Testament writers uses this name for Christ, and that it occurs in the Apocalypse some twenty-five times, we see how deeply his first teacher's words had sunk into his heart, and how constantly, as years advanced and his experience widened, he had found them assuming new meaning. Happy is it for us if life but reveals to us the fulness which lies in our earliest glimpses of Christ, if our old age can repeat the creed of youth with deepened significance, and if we can hope that heaven itself will but give us a clearer vision of the same Christ, in the same character as we had dimly seen Him amid the confusions and sorrows of earth!"

### The Land of the Dying

"The Word of God is living", we are to understand thereby that it lives with a spiritual, an inexhaustible, and inextinguishable life - in a word, a *Divine* life. If the Word of God be indeed living in this sense, then we have here a fact of the most tremendous significance. In the world around us the beings and things which we call "living" may just as appropriately be spoken of as "dying". What we call "the land of the living" might better be described as the land of the dying."

Philip Mauro

### Some Things You Can't Buy

"It is simply not true that everything has its money value. You can buy a house but you cannot buy a home. You can buy a piano but you cannot buy a musical taste. You can walk into a bookshop and for a few shillings buy a book. But you haven't bought the soul of the writer. You can buy the smile of a child, but all the money in the world could never purchase its love. Love gives itself. It cannot be bought. Love is the most priceless thing in the world; and the bravest."

Gardner Miller

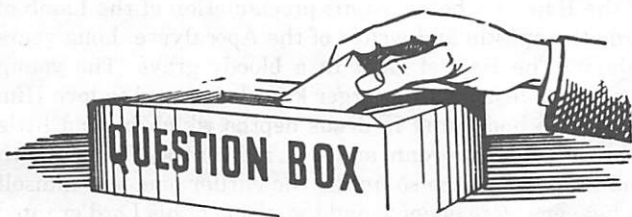
### My Favourite Text

"Some one asked the late Robert Burdette for his favourite text. He replied: "When I think of a favourite text half a dozen dear ones leap to my lips. Stormy,

days I want a cloak; cold days I want the sunny side of the wall; hot days I want a shady path; now I want a shower of manna; now I want a drink of cool living water; now I want an arbour to rest in; now I want a pilgrim staff; now I want a sword, a right Jerusalem blade. I might as well try to tell which is my favourite eye. The one I might lose is the one I might want."

T.W.T.

Selected by Leonard Morgan




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 Conducted by  
 Alf Marsden
 

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**"Are Churches of Christ, in Britain today, languishing? If so, what is to be done about it?"**

The questioner is asking a question which I know has been troubling the minds of others of late. I believe it is true to say that the hierarchical, institutionalised churches based on Canterbury and Rome have been languishing for some time. It may very well be that the sort of authoritarianism which has its roots in hierarchical systems is tending to stifle the freedom and liberty which should be the very life-blood of Christian communities. After all, we in the Church of Christ have always taught that the Church is the people who comprise it, but where there is a rigid system then 'the system' *becomes* the church, and the people tend to be forgotten.

The verb 'to languish' means, 'to lose or lack vitality'; 'lose intensity'. I don't think I am being unfair when I say that the spark in many communities of Christians has burned very dim indeed; it is made to glow a *little* brighter by the occasional fanning of what we call 'special meetings', but then it subsides again into its almost indiscernable glimmer, awaiting the next puff of air which will hopefully endow it with a little more energy. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world", but how can *that* Light shine brightly through 25-watt Christians? As to what we can do, it is my belief that we could go on at length to enumerate methods and systems but I consider these to be useless unless and until Christians display three fundamental aspects of their Christian lives. I would like to study these in a little more detail.

### Conviction

Conviction, in its simplest definition, means 'being convinced', a 'firm belief'. The New Testament teaches that when we became Christians we were utterly and irrevocably convinced that we were sinners. But as I see it, conviction cannot be referred exclusively to one point in time; the same facts which convinced me at my conversion must continue to convince me throughout my life, indeed, as I progress to maturity in the Christian life, so that life should strengthen the conviction that I have forsaken that which was unprofitable and clung to that which builds me up. John records Jesus as saying, "And when he (the Holy Spirit) is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8). Well, the Comforter *has* come, so what influence does He have in our lives?

Are you, dear brother or sister, as convinced of the horrific nature of sin as you were when you were converted, or is it the case that you were never really



convinced about sin but had taken at face value what Paul said, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23), and accepted, because you thought you had to, the universal remedy without diagnosing the disease? If that is the case, then you have never really been convinced, and consequently when sin meets you again, disguised in its 20th Century wrapping, you may think that its not so bad after all, and that you can 'give it a whirl' without harming yourself or the Church.

What about conviction regarding righteousness? Do you really understand the God-kind of righteousness? Paul says, "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all them that believe" (Rom. 3:21,22). Paul is here saying that the intermediate agency is faith, and that the objective genitive is "*in* Christ Jesus" and not the subjective "*of* Christ Jesus" as the A.V. has it. In simple terms this means that the God-like righteousness is all of grace, and that its manifestation to the world is in Christ Jesus. He *is* the righteousness of God, therefore Paul can say, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). The realisation of this great truth banishes the nebulous idea that some have that the righteousness of God is refraining from doing some bad things, and *doing* some good things. Paul was not content with the lesser things, he wanted to climb the highest pinnacle of understanding, and he arrived there when he said, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). When *we* arrive there, we are convinced.

### Commitment

The verb 'to commit' means, 'to entrust; to give in charge; to perform.' In the Christian sense *we* commit something to God, and He commits something to us. If the committer, from either source, was found to be unreliable then there could be no mutual trust, and consequently there would be no meaningful action towards the objectives that each had set. The Bible teaches us that God will always honour the pledges He has made; but what about ourselves?

When we commit our lives to God we give them over completely into His charge; we entrust our soul's salvation to Him through Christ. The assurance from His Word is that, "He will never leave us, nor forsake us", and this gives us the confidence that we need so that we can place ourselves unreservedly in His hands. We say, and rightly so, that it is good to have such confidence in God, and that is why we exhort others to commit themselves to Him. But what about the reverse side of the coin? God stakes *all* on our fidelity and commitment to Him. He entrusts into our care and keeping the 'good deposit'. (See 1 Tim. 6:20 and 2 Tim. 1:14). What is meant here is that God has entrusted the treasures of Heaven (the Gospel, etc.) into the unlikely, and many times unreliable, hands of frail humanity; the treasure, as Paul says, is contained in earthen vessels. Therefore, Christians should strive to be as reliable to God as He is to them, and this commitment should apply to all aspects of the Christian experience, particularly to the Christian community of which we are a part.

How do we guard the purity of the Gospel? by people who are committed to guarding it. How do we spread the Gospel? by people who are committed to spreading it. How do we maintain the community of Christians in any given locality? by each individual Christian being committed to the welfare and work of the community. That is why I assert that in the Church of Christ there should be no 'peripheral Christians'; if the deposit has to be guarded, and if the community

is to flourish, then *every* Christian in the community should be deeply involved. What the world needs is a truly 'nuclear Church'; explosive in its impact on the world, and so closely integrated that nothing can prise it apart. We sing a hymn sometimes, the first line of which goes, "O Jesus, I have promised to serve thee to the end", and so we *have* promised. We are bound to Him, not as unwilling prisoners, but as those who in full, free, and glad surrender have committed their lives to His cause. Such a commitment is His right; it is also our necessity.

### Continuance

The verb 'to continue' means, 'to prolong or extend in duration; to go on with; to persist in; to persevere.' The Christian, having demonstrated conviction and commitment, should continue to travel the road on which he has embarked. There are several things in the N.T., the permanency of which is well attested to, e.g., the permanency of the truth of the Gospel with the Churches (Gal. 2:5); the permanency of the course of things (2 Pet. 3:4); the eternal permanency of Christ Himself (Heb. 1:11).

How many times have we pulled ourselves up with a jolt and begun to consider what we are achieving in our Christian lives? Then, with belated zeal, we have started some new venture in great hope, but alas, the zeal has waned, the first flush of enthusiasm has passed, and we are back again on the old familiar treadmill. Why *do* these ventures fail? because we do not continue to persevere in them. Why *do* we become despondent at our lack of achievement? because we do not continue in those things we have learned. Why is it that the work of the community is left to the few? because others have not continued in the things they have promised; and so we could go on. But it is pointless to parade a catalogue of failures when the remedy is in our own hands. The Lord knew, when He instituted the Feast, that as long as the saints were able to discern His body in the Breaking of the Bread that they would have a better chance of continuing in the things which He wanted them to. If we showed the same continuance in His work as we do to the achievement of our own aims, then we might make more progress than we do. It is always better to extol progress rather than bemoan failure; the latter only makes us bitter and twisted; the former confirms what God has been telling us all along, that as long as we continue in His way then nothing will be impossible to us.

Yes, I believe the Church *is* languishing, and my answer lies in the threefold formula I have tried to set out. Christian, be convinced of your calling; be committed to God's cause; and continue in that grace wherein you stand. The harvest will follow.

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

## OUR FATHER

"Our Father who art in heaven." How beautiful to call Almighty Jehovah "Our Father". A father gives us a feeling of security; we are happy, not upset nor frustrated with a loving father.

To have such a relationship we must be in Christ. Galatians 3:37 tells us we put on Christ when we are baptized into Christ. How beautiful that makes baptism ——— "Buried with Christ in baptism, raised to walk in newness of life." Then we can truly say, "Our Father who art in heaven" and know that God always hears our prayer. He may say "no" or "wait" or "yes" but one thing we know: "The peace of God passeth understanding will keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" ——— that passeth understanding.

T. W. PHILLIPS (II), San Gabriel, California.

## CONSIDER

"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these" Matt. 7:28-29.

The creative handiwork of God, which we so often take for granted, calls us to consider, to look at closely, to ponder, to ask "Who made all this?" How anyone can deny the existence of God with so much evidence surrounding us, is beyond comprehension.

The variety of colours in the vegetation, the multiplicity of stars, the order of the tides and the seasons, these all swell the chorus, "God made us all, and God is good,"

We look around us at the achievements of men. Houses, tenements, flats, skyscrapers and buildings of great variety, and we say "Yes, these were built by some firm of builders or other" . We lose sight of the fact that Heb. 3:4 declares, "Every house is builded by some man, BUT HE THAT BUILT ALL THINGS IS GOD".

In these days of plastics many wonderful imitations of plants and flowers are made by men, but that is all they are, imitations. They cannot compare for beauty, elegance and fragrance with those that come from true nature. Solomon was the wisest man that ever lived. Everything that was obtainable, he had. All knowledge was acquired by him, and passed on to others in his writings. None could equal him in raiment or luxury, yet Jesus says that the humble lily of the field is arrayed in greater glory than he. Why? Because its creation, growth and usefulness is wholly dependant upon God.

Men, full of wisdom, become wise in their own conceit; in their own eyes they have everything and are independent of any help outside themselves. The humble believer in Jesus relies upon God, depends upon His every mercy and blessing, and His ability to supply every need through His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." Ecclesiastes 11:13.

TOM KEMP, Hindley

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

JULY 1984

1—Psalm 51	Romans 2:17-21
8—Psalm 57	Romans 3:1-18
15—Psalm 106:1-19	Romans 3:19-31
22—Psalm 32	Romans 4
29—Genesis 3:1-21	Romans 5

### PRIVILEGE AND RESPONSIBILITY

FEW among the gentiles had any real moral standards, but there were some, such as Gallio and the centurions we meet in the New Testament (Acts 18:12; 27:43; Matt. Luke 7:2...), but what a contrast the Jew with God's law, the special priesthood and worship of the true God. Paul has drawn

already a picture of a corrupt human race. The searchlight of truth is now turned upon the Jewish heart which takes pride in exclusiveness. It exposes sinful pride as a show rather than justification. It is proved so by history of a race privileged above all others, and found worse than just wanting. We are in danger, having a great plea, of the same kind of pride. We do well to examine those qualifications mentioned in verses 17 to 20. The teaching and example of Jesus brings an even greater privilege and therefore proportionately greater responsibility. Our works of righteousness cannot save us. A christian is one inwardly in the heart, in the spirit! The deepest humility befits us. It almost appears that the Jew was at a disadvantage,

but was it not a priceless advantage? "MUCH EVERY WAY!" From the merely physical standpoint recent experience and health records prove circumcision to have been beneficial, but how important in keeping the race clean from a moral and religious view - a reminder to every man of a divine interest. The failure to maintain the moral and religious standards only heighten the ideal. God is justified in the eyes of mankind, and His will shown to be best for man. Permissiveness brings disease and disaster to society. We need to be thankful that the Bible was translated into English years ago and had a remarkable influence for good on the nation as a whole. We mourn the spreading unbelief of today. The one and only remedy for society is the gospel in precept and practice.

#### FAITH IN GOD'S GRACE

So nothing man can do can cleanse from sin - ALL HAVE SINNED! Absolute righteousness has been proved impossible through all the ages. The Son of God, God manifest in the flesh alone has lived the perfect holy life, free from sin. So from earliest times man could only please God by believing, trusting, having complete confidence in His GRACE. It must have been thus with Enoch, Elijah and all other saints - and finally the saints now, His people, CHRISTIANS by His standards (not those of an apostate hierarchy!). They are walking with God. AM I? ARE you? Does the thought not bring us to our knees in confession and repentance? Where sin abounds, grace abounds more - otherwise who could hope for forgiveness? "THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST HIS SON CLEANSETH US FROM ALL SIN" (1 John 1:7). Under the law this was prefigured by the sacrifice of animals without blemish, It was a daily and continued sacrifice in a holy place besides sacrifices offered by individuals for their sins according to instructions, but Abram and the patriarchs built

altars and called upon Jehovah God also. By God's choice and Abram's initial and further obedience he became the father of the Jewish race, and was given the ordinance of circumcision but before that Abraham's faith served as justification to receive God's special favour. Thus it was not his action which brought it, but of course had he disobeyed God's instructions he would have forfeited His favour. God is no respecter of persons so Gentiles cannot be denied His favour if they show the same faith as Abraham. It was specially necessary for Paul's service in the church that all should know this truth because some Jewish believers were disputing it.

#### Exercise of Divine Grace

We describe GRACE as unmerited favour. Neither word correctly defines God's supreme offer of forgiveness of sin. We look around in our own society of quite highly respectable people and cannot find many who acknowledge God at all. Very few deny his existence or refuse to acknowledge the evidence of a creator. Good and beautiful things are appreciated but there seems to be no respect for the Maker and Provider of them all. The more civilised the society the less thought of God. Yet God so loved that He gave His only begotten Son. That Son Almighty supremely self-existent chose the place of complete individual manhood in order to exercise himself as a humble member of human society - divine life self-submitted to the limitations of our life here below. He exercised divine powers on behalf of those among whom He lived but submitted without resistance to the most appalling and humiliating torments that wicked men chose deliberately to put upon Him, for reasons which considered calmly were criminal. Yet they were those whose position in human terms were the highest, pious and religious. Was not this a measure of the fearful nature of sin in the human heart? Man's inhumanity to man makes countless

thousands mourn, but God's love for man brings complete forgiveness within man's reach and prepares a home in heaven for his eternal welfare. Paul brings all this to us in Romans 5 and perhaps summarises without arguing the case in Philippians 2 ... "Christ Jesus being in the form of God thought it not a prize to be on an equality" with God emptied himself taking the form of a servant (slave), and was made in the "likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming "obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross."

God does exercise judgement from time to time in natural disasters such as earthquakes and man dares to stand in judgement upon God for this, but goes on preparing and inventing means to destroy himself all the time so that at any time a button may be pressed to wreak fearful destruction upon his fellows. There is comparison and contrast between the working out of sin and death with salvation and life - one man sins, all mankind dies - one man dies and all mankind may live! Disobedience to God's word is the initial sin, obedience to that word involving of necessity faith in the Speaker brings the operative forgiveness and salvation.

#### COMMENDATION NOT CONDEMNATION

Humanly we do find it hard to overlook offence caused to us, whether justly or unjustly. Offering favour to the offender is regarded as weakness. Is it the weakness of God then that causes Him to commend Himself to us sinners? The supreme strength of our Saviour was exerted to accept the burden of the cross. It has been suggested that grace could be spelled God's Riches At Christ's Expense, but Jesus said "I and My Father are ONE." The divine condescension is really beyond understanding-GOD IS LOVE. "Blessed be God, Our God, Who gave for us His well beloved Son,

His gift of gifts, all other gifts in one!  
Blessed be God, Our God!"

R.B. SCOTT

### BELIEF : (22)

#### The reason behind Remission of Sins

Although the necessity for our Lord's sacrifice—his precious blood shed for the remission of sins—is not fully revealed in the Scriptures, we are able to understand in some measure the reason behind it from what is revealed of the attributes of God.

#### God a God of Justice

God is a God of mercy and of love, but he is also a God of justice (Psalm 89:14). If he were otherwise how could we put our trust in him? The question answers itself.

God, to be God, must have in himself the attributes of all that is right, perfect and good. Consequently, he must be a God of justice, and as such must punish sin. In other words, if God is to remain supremely just he must condemn sin, and so, if we were all judged, we would inevitably be all condemned.

#### The Wrath of God

This helps us to understand Scripture statements about "the wrath of God" (John 3:36), and our Lord's statement, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24); or Paul's warning to the Athenians about the day of judgment in which all men shall be judged (Acts 17:31). How solemn the warnings of Hebrews 10:29-31; Romans 14:10 and 1 Peter 4:17-18. Read them! These were written to Christians.

#### God a God of Mercy

It is precisely because of the inevitability of punishment for sin that God in his mercy has devised a way whereby we can escape the just penalty of sin, and at the same time satisfy his own supreme justice. He is a God of mercy (Psalm 103:8).

How did God do this? By the interposition of the shed blood of Jesus, his well-beloved Son.

### Its Application

This was a costly and dreadful sacrifice to be sure, but it had to be. It had to be just as costly and dreadful as the penalty for sin, namely, eternal death. This, in the divine purpose and mind, was the true evaluation of his supreme judgment. The remedy for sin had to be at least equal to the penalty for sin, if justice was to prevail. Anything less would not have met the demands of justice. Hence the death of God's dearest and best, his only beloved Son. Surely no one can doubt or question the justice of God, when in one balance of the scales of justice he has placed his sinless Son, and in the other balance the sins of the world.

### Its Effect

God has now brought into being a reason or justification for forgiving sins, by reason of which he can exercise his mercy and at the same time remain supremely just. And so, "he that believeth on the Son hath eternal life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

### Exercises in Belief

Numbers 11:33; 12:9; Deuteronomy 11:13-17, 26-27; Matthew 13:41-42; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 6:12-17.

W. BROWN

*(To be continued)*

## BOOKS AVAILABLE

Brother Scott has 24 copies of A. G. Arnott's book "The Bread At The Lord's Supper" and they are available on 'a first come, first served' basis. Write to R. B. Scott, c/o 34 North Farm Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN2 3XD. Price £1.50 post free (my cost).

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**DENNYLOANHEAD, SCOTLAND:** The church has now completed its

present series of Saturday evening gospel meetings and once again we take this opportunity of thanking all the brethren who helped us in our efforts to preach Jesus. We thank those who came and did the preaching and also all those who came to support the effort. The seed of the kingdom has indeed been sown and we trust and pray that some may perchance have fallen into some good ground, and that it will bring forth much fruit to the honour, praise and glory of God.

Joe Malcolm (Sec.)

**SLAMANNAN DISTRICT:** Another quarterly Mutual Benefit Meeting took place on 12th May last at Haddington, when the subject for discussion was "What strategy should we now adopt to evangelise the world". The chairman was James R. Gardiner and the speakers were John Colgan, Tranent, and John McLuckie, Haddington. A good time of fellowship was enjoyed and much discussion centred upon the subject of the day. The next such meeting, God willing, will be on September 8th at Motherwell when the subject will be "In Acts 20:7 - what does the phrase "To Break Bread" mean?" The Chairman will be John Wilson, Newtongrange and the speakers will be David Chalmers, Dalmellington, and James R. Gardiner, Haddington.

H. Davidson. Sec.

## OBITUARY

**HINDLEY:** It was with deep concern that we learned that Sister Ellen Escott had been admitted to Salford Hospital for treatment but instead of her condition improving it grew worse, and on April 7th she passed away.

Sister Sutton as she was by her first marriage was added to the church on June 2nd 1955 and has remained a steadfast and loyal member, well respected by all who knew her. Unfortunately for us, when her

husband died and she later married again, she moved away, but still occasionally visited us.

To her sorrowing loved ones we extend our sincere christian sympathy with the prayer that God will abundantly bless them all and uphold them in His everlasting arms.

Tom Kemp

**HINDLEY:** How tragic! that within a few weeks of the death of her beloved husband, on the 17th of April, Sister Jenny Jones should also fall asleep in Jesus, the funeral taking place on the 24th when Bro. L Morgan paid tribute to the life of our sister.

When we consider her dread of losing her other leg; her impaired vision; her utter dependence on continual help from the nursing staff and others; her confinement to the home and the loss of her partner, daily seeing the empty place, it is really a blessing in disguise.

One is amazed at the tremendous strength and patience our dear sister possessed to pass through such a long period of pain and suffering. Her faith never waned, and her example to us who remain is one that will encourage us all to hold fast to the Lord Jesus who will never leave nor forsake us.

To her sorrowing dear ones and all closely related to her, we commend them to a loving heavenly Father who is able to cure each stricken heart and comfort and console all who put their trust in Him.

Tom Kemp

**BURN'S STREET, ILKESTON:** We regret to announce the passing of another of our assembly in the person of Sister Sally Gregory, in hospital on April 27th, 1984, at the age of 79 years. She always attended around the Lord's table when it was possible. Sally was baptised 65 years ago. Bro. T. Woodhouse conducted the service at the Crematorium on May 3rd. We extend our deepest sympathy to her family in their sad loss.

W. Wheatley, Sec.

**SLAMANNAN, SCOTLAND:** It is with much regret that we mourn the passing of our brother Colin Sneddon, (Snr). When our brother was fully fit he never forsook "the assembling of ourselves together". He was not 'a speaker' but his life and example were the very epitomy of what it means to 'walk with the Lord'. I have never known anyone to have a bad word to say about him. Phrases such as "a perfect gentleman" spring to mind. He was always the first to greet us as we entered the meeting-place. During the last couple of years, due to frailty of the mind and body, he has been able only to attend infrequently at meetings but we have sensed that he was with us in spirit. He will be sadly missed by his friends not only in the congregation here, but throughout the land.

At this time our thoughts go out to those who mourn a loved one, his wife and our beloved sister Nellie, his son Ian, grandchildren, brothers and sisters.

The funeral service was presided over by Bro. Hugh Davidson (Motherwell) with help from Bro. Leslie Purcell (Motherwell), David Chalmers and Willie Black (Dalmellington). The heartfelt thanks of all the family go to these brethren, and indeed to all those who paid their respects that day, or sent messages of sympathy. During the service Bro. Colin's favourite passage of scripture (John 14) was quoted (how appropriate) and his favourite hymn sung.

Anywhere with Jesus I can go to sleep  
When the darkling shadows round me  
creep  
Knowing I shall waken never more to  
roam,  
Anywhere with Jesus will be home,  
sweet home.

Would that we were all able to sing these words with the conviction that our late brother did.

John B. Wilson, Sec.

## AN APPRECIATION

The Church at Albert Street, Wigan, suffered a grievous loss in the recent deaths of Bro. William Grundy and Bro. Alan Ashurst (Senior).

Bill, as he was affectionately known, was immersed into Christ (along with the writer) during a Hindley Bible School some 37 years ago. He was a faithful and dedicated Christian, and we knew there was something wrong if he and his dear wife Nellie (who predeceased him) together with their family were missing from the Meetings of the Church. His patience and quiet logic turned many a discussion on Church affairs into more profitable paths than they would otherwise have gone. He was the sort of Christian around which a community of Christians could be built; he was sound in the faith and dependable on all occasions. He will be sorely missed. No commendation can be too high for his daughters Margaret and Ruth who looked after both Nellie and Bill with loving care and devotion. May God bless them in the time which lies ahead.

Alan and his family came to meet with the saints at Albert St. and during the time they have been with us we have come to know and love them, and

to deeply appreciate their fellowship. It came as a great shock to us all when prior to Christmas of last year, Alan fell ill. He then underwent tests and investigation until his sudden death just recently in hospital.

Alan was a dedicated Christian throughout his life. He loved the Church and his Saviour, and just a week or two prior to going into hospital for what proved to be the last time he was to be found meeting with his brethren at Albert St. He was kind, considerate, humble, and very appreciative of all that was done for him. His teaching from the Word was first-class, and it certainly helped me a lot, as I am sure it did others also. If illness had not intervened I am firmly convinced that his work for the Lord here at Albert St. would have resulted in even greater benefit to all. His dear wife Eva, and his sons Alan (junior) and Paul, tended him with great love and affection during his illness, and need our prayers during these difficult days of bereavement.

To know Bill and Alan and their families has been a great blessing to us all. We look for enriched fellowship with those left behind, and with confidence to the grand reunion in heaven with Bill and Alan.

Alf Marsden, Elder

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