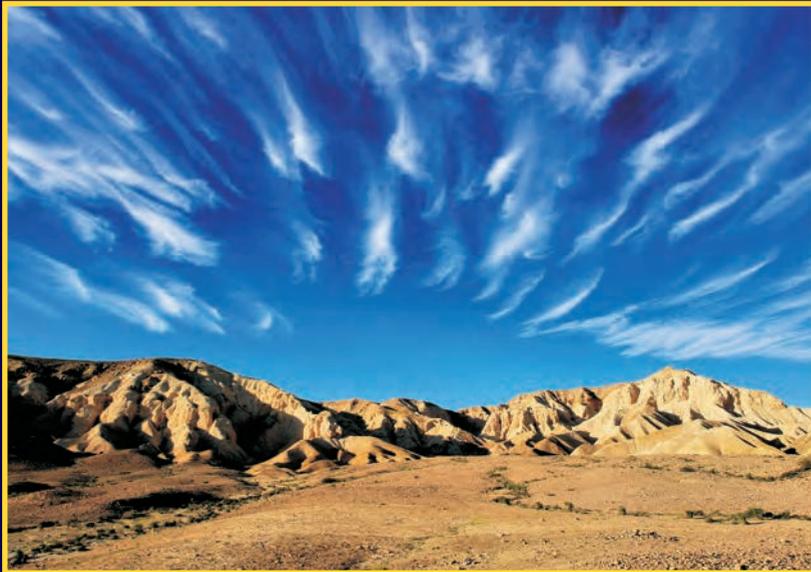


Scripture Truth



Inside:

Vanity Fair
Finding God
WE DO NOT WELL

Speaking in the assembly
The three acts of "creation"
Christ in the midst of the church

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SCRIPTURE TRUTH

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Vanity Fair

'Now, as I said, the way to the Celestial City lies just through this town, where this lusty Fair is kept... The Prince of princes himself, when here, went through this Town to his own country, and that upon a fair-day too. Yea, and I think it was Beelzebub, the chief lord of this Fair, that invited him to buy of his vanities; yea, would have made him lord of the Fair, would he but have done him reverence as he went through the town... Now these pilgrims, as I said, must needs go through this Fair: well, so they did; but behold, even as they entered into the Fair all the people in the Fair were moved... And as they wondered at their apparel so they did likewise at their speech, for... they naturally spoke the language of Canaan'... ¹

As the world's cultural hostility towards God becomes ever more blatant, so the Christian teaching to "love not the world, nor the things that are in the world" (1 John 2:15) gets ever more muffled. The world of 2017 is certainly no more God-like than that which Bunyan described in the above quote; on the other hand, the costs of loving not the world are certainly no greater than they were in the 1670s.

Bunyan didn't mince matters. His vivid description of "Vanity Fair" echoes the apostle John's summary of "all that is in the world" as "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16). Of course there must have been aspects of the world that John exempted from these headings – for example the skills of husbandry or carpentry. But still he wrote "all".

Similarly, Bunyan pictured "the world" as a *fair*, a place to spend money on vanities, and where all that the world gloried in was paraded. In Vanity Fair you really saw what made the world "tick", not just in a few corners of the Fair, but in all of it. Are we teaching each other to recognise "the spirit of the world" (1 Corinthians 2:12), and, where possible, keep clear of its embodiments? Are we alive to the anti-God messages that its institutions and its glamour are used to promote? Does our salt still have the savour that Bunyan's did? And do we remind each other that "greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world"? (1 John 4:4)

THEO BALDERSTON

¹ John Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress* (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1965), p.126.

Genesis 1

The three acts of “creation”: 1:14 – 2:3.

F.B. Hole

The first article¹ on Genesis 1 discussed the relationship between the first two verses of the chapter, emphasised that creation was the work of the word of God (cp. Psalm 33:6); and underlined the divisions or differentiations that were instituted on the first three days of creation. Now to the fourth day...

God’s work on the fourth day lay outside the earth, though in its effects a powerful influence on the earth was exerted. On the first day light had shone upon the earth, and day had been divided from night, but we are not told just how this result had been produced. The light-bearing matter may have been diffused; if so, it was now concentrated into one great light, and the earth was set in relation to it. Also the lesser light was set in relation to the earth. These were now to give light, not in a general way, but specifically on the earth. But more than this was included in God’s purpose as to them. They were to be “for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years.” (KJV). There are illustrations of this in Scripture, such as Joshua 10:12-14; 2 Kings 20:8-11. There is also the Lord’s prediction in Luke 21:25. The beginning of Psalm 19 points in the same direction.

Then again, they were to *rule* the day and the night respectively. From the outset the earth was placed under the rule and control of heaven, even as regards the action of inanimate matter, so that in this these heavenly bodies become a sign that “the heavens do rule” (Daniel 4:26), and a faint prophecy of “the kingdom of heaven,” of which we read in the Gospel of Matthew. The sad fact confronts us that fallen man soon perverted all this, and began to worship these lights as though they were creator and not creature, thereby changing God’s truth into a lie. Romans 1:25 refers to this, we believe.

At the end of Genesis 1:16 we have three words – “the stars also”; and with this brief mention they are dismissed. The ancients were acquainted only with stars visible to the unaided eye, but those they did see they misused in the attempt to foretell the future; and astrology aided many heathen practices. Here we are simply told that they are the creatures of God’s hand.

It is worthy of note that here the two “lights” are not named. The word “sun” does not occur until chapter 15:12 and the first mention of “moon” is in chapter 37:9 where sun, moon, and stars appear together; and their symbolic

¹ See *Scripture Truth*, July 2017, pp. 170-5.

meanings are fixed in connection with the family – the original and most primitive unit of government in the earth. Sun, moon, and stars symbolize authority, supreme, secondary, and subordinate – and this right through Scripture.

Again we have the words, “and God saw that it was good” (v.18). That creation should be under authority and control was good. We find, alas! that man, when created as the head of things, soon repudiated the Divine authority and plunged into lawlessness, which is sin. That emphatically is *not* good, but it should make every believer keenly realize how important it is to be subject in all things to the authority of the word of God.

The rule of heaven being thus established, God proceeded – on the fifth day – to bring into being an order of life much higher than the vegetable kingdom of the third day (verses 20-23).

Moving creatures that have life now appear, to fill the seas and the air immediately above the earth. The word translated “whales” simply means monsters that inhabit the waters, whether seas or rivers. All these too, like the herb and tree previously, are made after their kind, and are bidden to reproduce themselves and multiply. But in verse 21 we get the word “created” for the second time. It appeared in verse 1 regarding the original creation of the heaven and the earth. The intervening verses have told us what God “made” out of His original creation.

Why does the word “create” occur again here? We believe, because here the waters were commanded to bring forth “every living thing that moves”. In the vegetable kingdom we see nutrition, growth, and reproduction. Here we see another order of things altogether, namely, creatures with powers of sensation and of voluntary motion. Indeed the word translated “creature” in verses 20 and 21 is really “soul”. On this fifth day, then, a higher form of life, involving *soul*, was introduced, so this was distinctly and properly a “creation”.

As the result, then, of God’s work on the fifth day, both the waters and the air were furnished with living souls that would “be fruitful and multiply” (v.22) until both were filled.

In Genesis 1 we get three acts of creation. First, the original creation of matter. Second, the creation of “soul”. Third, the creation of “spirit”.

In verse 26 it is “Our image”; in verse 27 it is “His image”. There is no incongruity, for it is the eternal “Three-in-One” who speaks.

In the early part of the *sixth* day God similarly furnished the earth with living souls, both beast and cattle and also creeping things. We notice that God “made” them: it does not say that He “created” them. Though so different externally from the denizens of the waters and the air, the land creatures were still merely “living souls”; and hence the word “created” is only used when first soul” was created as distinct from matter.²

Man was to be the climax of all this work of God, and before the sixth day closed he appeared. Verses 26-28 are of the deepest importance, and for the third time in this chapter we get the word “created”. This is because once more a totally fresh element was introduced though we do not find it mentioned until verse 7 of chapter 2. Man possesses “spirit” by the in-breathing of God.

We may say therefore that in Genesis 1 we get three acts of creation. First, the original creation of matter. Second, the creation of “soul”. Third, the creation of “spirit”, which is man’s prerogative as far as this world is concerned (since the creation of angels is outside the range of this chapter). All three acts bear upon man, for he possesses spirit; he is a living soul; and his body is composed of terrestrial matter.³

Verse 26 shows us that from the outset man was the subject of Divine consultation, or counsel. That God should say, “Let us” is worthy of note. *Elohim* is, as we have said,⁴ a plural Name. In the Old Testament the three Persons in the Godhead are not revealed, but now that They are revealed we can see that, inspired of God, the language of our chapter is quite consistent therewith. There was present to the Divine mind all that man would turn out to be, and he was only brought into existence after this consultation within the Godhead Himself. In verse 26 it is “Our image”; in verse 27 it is “His image”. There is no incongruity, for it is the eternal “Three-in-One” who speaks.

² Hole evidently here subsumes vegetation under “matter”; but presumably he agreed that vegetation too, has life, albeit on a lower plane than that of the animal kingdom. [Ed.]

³ Cp. 1 Thessalonians 5:23. [Ed.]

⁴ Previous (July) issue, p.171.

Man was created in both the *image* and the *likeness* of God. The former word seems to be used in Scripture for that which represents unseen realities. The images of the heathen world represented their gods without necessarily being like them, for indeed they had never seen the demons they worshipped by means of the images that represented them to their eyes. Man was made, then, to represent God to the lower creation over which he was set. In this sense he was God's "image".

But he was also made after the *likeness* of God. That is, he was really *like* God in certain important respects. Not in all respects of course, for God is infinitely holy and man was merely innocent. Still man was God's "offspring" (Acts 17:28, 29), a spirit-being though clothed in a body of flesh and blood; and hence with intelligence and moral sensibilities which are a reflection of that which subsists on an infinite scale in God Himself.

Here let us pause a moment that we may realize the frightful debasement in both mind and morals which must flow from the degrading theory that man is only an improved ape, or come up from the protozoa that are supposed to have existed in primordial slime millions of years ago.

Evolutionary theories have about them the fatal fascination of enabling their adherents to ignore the fall of man, and the state of sin in which he is found. What the Bible calls "sin", they regard as being merely displeasing traces of animal ancestry manifesting themselves. The past eighty-to-ninety years have witnessed two things: the revival of the theory of evolution under the speculations of Darwin, which enables men to theorize on their "ascent"; and the descent of the more civilized peoples, where the theory has been mainly propagated, to a level of savagery and bestiality far below the level of the heathen. This has been seen more particularly in the past ten years.⁵

Man was created in the image and likeness of God, and his present condition of sin and degradation is the fruit of a great spiritual catastrophe

NO! Man was created in the image and likeness of God, and his present condition of sin and degradation is the fruit of a great spiritual catastrophe that is on record in chapter 3. He is now a fallen sinner; he never was an exalted ape. Another thing about man confronts us in verses 26 and 28: he was created to hold dominion over the lower creation. In this feature he appears to be unique.

⁵ The article was written in 1947.

But God's original thought for man is going to be realized on a vastly larger and grander scale in the Son of Man.

There are rulers in the angelic world – “principality, and power, and might, and dominion” (Ephesians 1:21) – but their rule only extends over beings of their own order. Dealing with angels, Hebrews 1:14 asks, “Are they not all ministering spirits?” Yes, all – even to the archangel himself – were created to serve. As far as Scripture informs us, only man was made to have dominion over others. ⁶

This is deeply interesting for it shows us that the Second Man was before God from the outset. The defection of the first man did not take God by surprise. When God said, “Let us make man,” He knew what was involved. Man was not to be a mere machine, or unintelligent and irresponsible like the brute creation, but a moral agent capable of representing God – but capable also of rebellion against Him. As the fruit of sin man has lost control of himself and misused his dominion. But God’s original thought for man is going to be realized on a vastly larger and grander scale in the Son of Man, who is the last Adam. Psalm 8 envisages this glorious prospect.

Genesis 1 verse 27 states that duality characterizes man. It says that God “created him; male and female created He them.” This fact is elaborated in chapter 2, but the few words here show us how closely male and female are identified. The word, “man” covers both, and jointly they were to have the dominion, though the male from the outset was given the leading place. From the outset too they were blessed by God and bidden to multiply and replenish the earth. Before sin came in, therefore, children were in God’s purpose for them.

The closing verses of the chapter show that the vegetable kingdom was designed to provide food for both man and beast. After the Flood animal food was given to man: see 9:3,4. Before sin came in, and death by sin, no animal was to be slain for man’s food.

With the creation of man – male and female – and his being set in dominion and blessed, the work of the sixth day reached its end. As it concluded, God surveyed all that He had made. Six times already we have been told that God

⁶ Comparison of Daniel 10:13, 20 with Hebrews 2:5 might suggest a different route to Hebrews 2:8. [Ed.]

saw it was “good”! Now on this seventh occasion, when the whole was inspected, we are told that all was “very good”. Let us take note of this for it demolishes at one blow the idea that matter is evil and only spirit is good.⁷ The truth is the exact opposite of this, for when evil entered it came in by way of spirit and not matter.

We have seen how from verse 1 this chapter refutes Unitarianism, for God – Elohim – in the plural occurs no less than 32 times. We have seen how the chapter refutes Evolution, for every species reproduces itself (“after his kind”). We have just seen how the idea that matter is the source of evil is refuted. And now, as we open chapter 2, we meet with a statement that reinforces what has been apparent all through chapter 1; namely, that God is outside and above all that He created and made. Thus, on the seventh day, when creation was what we may call “a going concern,” God is said to have rested. Thus Pantheism – the idea that God is only to be conceived of as immanent in creation, and pervading all nature – is wholly denied. He may indeed act in nature, but He is transcendent, essentially *above* it in Person and Being.

Chapter 2:1-3 really belongs to chapter 1, and complete the paragraph. The seventh day was a day of rest for God. His work had involved both creating and making, but all was now complete, and evidently He has not set His hand to work of that order from that time until now. However the entrance of sin necessitated His taking up work of another order, and the Lord Jesus alluded to this in saying, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (John 5:17).

The seventh day was specially blessed and set apart, and we may say that a seventh day of rest after six days of work is a thought that dates back to the very beginning of man’s history. The word “sabbath” does not occur until we reach Exodus 16:23, where it designates the seventh day after the manna was given. After that the law was given, and this “sabbath” – this “ceasing” as the word means – became a legal institution for Israel, and a sign between them and the Lord for ever, as stated in Exodus 31:17. Hebrews 4:4-10 also alludes to this, and evidently Israel will yet enjoy her sabbath in the millennial age. God will thus redeem the sign He had given. The sabbath was never given as a sign to the church. In Christ we have not the sign but the things signified.⁸ Nevertheless we are, as Christians, very thankful to be able to observe one day’s rest in seven, as indicated from creation, and to have that day of rest on the first of the week, the day when our Saviour rose from the dead.

⁷ In the original article Hole develops this point with reference to so-called “Christian Science”.

⁸ Hole here adds remarks on Seventh-Day Adventism.

Christ in the midst of the church

Part 2

G.E. Stevens

“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20).

This central text for the meeting-together of Christians can be analysed under the following six bullet-points:

- “Where” – the *place*.
- “two or three” – the *people*.
- “are gathered together” – the *partnership*.
- “in my name” – the *power*.
- “there am I” – the *Person* and the *presence*.
- “in the midst of them” – the *presidency* and the *promise*.

A former article expanded the first three of these points.¹ In this article I turn to considering the last three.

“In my name” – the *power*

The Name in which believers gather is above every name: “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth...” (Philippians 2:9, KJV).

His Name possesses great power. Firstly, He is *Lord* and is therefore supreme in power and authority. He is *Jesus*. This name means “the LORD who saves”. Therefore it also expresses the fact that He is both God and Man. Furthermore, He is the *Christ*, the anointed of God, with the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King.

The Lord’s name has the power to unite Christians in fellowship, judgment, speech, and mind: “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Corinthians 1:10).

His Name has the power to cleanse, sanctify, and justify! “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:11).

¹ See *Scripture Truth*, July 2017, pp. 186 - 90.

*The Lord's name has the power
to unite Christians
in fellowship, judgment, speech, and mind*

In His Name thanks are accepted by the Father: "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ..." (Ephesians 5:20; cp. Colossians 3:17). Prayer is empowered by His Name, and it guarantees a positive answer. In John 16:23 Jesus says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you."

Baptism is by the authority of His Name because He has commanded His disciples, having evangelised, to baptise. "...Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19). In Acts 2:38 Peter preached to the Jews saying, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Healing and other miracles are performed in His Name: "Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6).

Preaching is in His Name: "But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how... he [Paul] had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus" (Acts 9:27). Forgiveness of sins is through His name. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43).

Devils are cast out by His name: "But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. The spirit came out the same hour" (Acts 16:18).

It is in His Name that assembly discipline is implemented: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Corinthians 5:4-5; similarly 2 Thessalonians 3:6).

His name can be relied upon. "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours..." (1 Corinthians 1:2).

*The One in the midst of His gathered people
is very God, the Eternal One, the Creator,
the Source of life, and the Sustainer of all*

Reading these points abundantly shows why His name gives us the power and the authorisation for gathering! What a Name to which we gather!

“There am I” – the Person and the presence

The Name declares the Person who is “there in the midst”. Already in the Old Testament the greatness of His Person was hinted at. For example in Micah 5:2 we read that the coming ruler of Israel would be born in Bethlehem Ephratah; but that His goings forth had been from old, from everlasting. In other words, the Christ would be born into manhood and yet was an eternal Person. Isaiah 7:14 predicted that the virgin would conceive and bear a son and His name would be called Immanuel – which means “God with us”. The Eternal God became man by the virgin birth. This Scripture is confirmed in the New Testament by Matthew 1:22-23.

And, as is well known, the fact of His Deity was guarded by the meaning of the name Mary and Joseph were given to call Him – “Jesus” (Matthew 1:21; Luke 1:31).

Isaiah 9:6-7 names the One who would take the throne of David as, “Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Father of eternity, Prince of Peace” (Darby Trans.). He is not only God, but the Father, or Source, of Eternity itself. This same One is set forth as God in Hebrews 1, “But unto the Son he [God] saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever....” (v.8, KJV). A little further down the same chapter we discover that He is the Creator (Hebrews 1.10-12; cp. Colossians 1:16-17). And Hebrews 1:3 shows us that He also sustains creation as He upholds all things by the word of His power.

From such witnesses we know that the One in the midst of His gathered people is very God, the Eternal One, the Creator, the Source of life, and the Sustainer of all, the One “...who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen” (Romans 9:5). And Jesus confirms in John 8:58 that He is Yahweh, i.e., the I AM THAT I AM of Exodus 3:14.

He similarly affirmed that He is the Son of God. “Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?” (John 10:36) Then, as He stood before the Sanhedrin, we read, “...Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him,

Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am” (Mark 14:61-62). The Father also claims Him as His Beloved Son in whom He is well pleased (Matthew 3:17, etc.).

We also know that the One in the midst is Man as well as God. This is strikingly implied in Matthew 22:42-45, where He challenged the Pharisees with the question, “... What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?”; and then, citing Psalm 110:1, proceeded to ask them, “If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?” These verses reveal that, as a man, the Lord Jesus was the Son of David (i.e. of David’s line), whilst as Lord (*Adon*) He is the Son of God.

He is indeed man. A man has spirit, soul, and body. Jesus Himself spoke of His body, soul, and spirit (Matthew 26:12, 38, Luke 23:46). The One who is God the Son became fully man – sinless man – in order to be the “one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5). He came into the world also so that His experience as a man here could qualify Him for His role as our Great High Priest in glory (Hebrews 2.16-18).

Moreover, He came as a demonstration of God’s love. 1 John 4:10 reads, “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

However the One in the midst is now the risen Man and ascended Man (Mark 16:19; Acts 2:23-24). He is the One “who, being the brightness of [God’s] glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high...” (Hebrews 1:3). Romans 4:25 encourages our hearts as we read the words: “[Christ] who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” Those who fully trust that Jesus is the Son of God who gave His life for them on the cross are made righteous in the sight of God through the resurrection. As a result we can say, “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Romans 8:34). We can say this because, “... this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God...” (Hebrews 10:12).

And so this same Lord Jesus, whose greatness as God and Man blazes forth from the many Scriptures cited, says in Matthew 18:20, “There am I.”

When on earth the Lord Jesus was the centre of every company of people whom He was among.

And so this same Lord Jesus, whose greatness as God and Man blazes forth from the many Scriptures cited, says in Matthew 18:20, "There am I." He is where even only a few are gathered together in His name. He has a great desire to be with His own. This desire is expressed by Him in Luke 22:15, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer..." Here, the word for "desire" speaks of a "passionate longing". He enjoys the company of His own brethren.

"In the midst" – the presidency and the promise

When on earth the Lord Jesus was, or became, the centre of every company of people whom He was among. In the manger, He was the object of the shepherd's visit, and, shortly after, of the magi's worship. As a boy in the temple He was in the midst of the doctors. So it was throughout His earthly life and, at the end of it, He was on the central cross. Then, on the resurrection day, He appeared in the midst of His disciples (Luke 24:36). In this day He has promised to be in the midst of those who are assembled to His name. He would be the central Focus for the gathering on the one hand, and the Leader of it on the other.

As the central Focus, His Person would be at the centre of all thoughts, and hearts would burn in His company. He would be the Object of adoration, worship, and praise. This applies particularly to the Lord's Supper. All ears would be attentive to His voice.

As being "in the midst" of His gathered people, He is their unseen *President*. His presence lends character to the gathering itself. He brings His authority to bear on it. He is therefore the Leader of the assembly and Governor of its conduct. Both content and direction are controlled by Him. All that transpires must reflect His nature. His presence brings with it love and light; therefore

In this day He has promised to be in the midst of those who are assembled to His name. He would be the central Focus for the gathering.

His Person would be at the centre of all thoughts. He would be the Object of adoration, worship, and praise.

grace and holiness should temper the gathering. All are to be dependent upon Him. Citing another writer:

“Let us not forget, also, that the One in the midst is the Lord of all and is the only one who has the right to exercise authority in the Assembly. “God has made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” and “hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church” (Acts 2:36; Eph. 1:22). Christ is the Lord in the Assembly and should be owned as such and given His place as the only rightful leader and authority in the Church. Where He is owned as lord and leader, there will be subjection to Him and behaviour consistent with His lordship; there will be rule and order according to the mind and will of God.”²

The Lord grants His presence and has presidency over the meetings *by the Spirit*. Each believer has the Holy Spirit of God, and He will move the humble saint in accordance with the Lord’s will. He provides each with liberty, but it is a holy and ordered liberty. These meetings are those listed for the church when it comes together, namely, the Lord’s supper, prayer, and the prophetic/teaching meeting, sometimes called the “open meeting” (cp Acts 2:42). As the Leader the Lord would, by the Spirit, be watching over them, ruling their hearts, directing their worship, assisting them, confirming their actions and words, and blessing each one according to their need.

For example He leads our prayer and worship in the prayer meeting. First and foremost, He leads us to worship His Father! “I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee” (Hebrews 2:12, quoting Psalm 22:22). “And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy;

² R.K. Campbell, *The Church of the Living God* (1950; 2nd edn., Believers Bookshelf, 1973) p.91

*As being “in the midst” of His gathered people,
He is the Leader of the assembly
and Governor of its conduct.*

*Not only is He present, and the President;
He is also pre-eminent!*

as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name” (Romans 15:9, quoting Psalm 18:49). He did this at the Passover supper with His disciples (Mark 14:26). He is the true Chenaniah! He is the true Chief Musician! ³

Additionally He is the faithful and true Witness, the Son revealing, yea, declaring the Father to His brethren! “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God” (John 20:17; cp. 17:26).

But not only is He present, and the President; He is also *pre-eminent!* “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him” (John 5:22-23). Colossians 1:18-19 states, “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell...”

“*In all things...*” There are kings, but He is the King of kings; there are priests but He is the Great High Priest. We may be sons of God; but He is *the* Son of God; we may be beloved by God, but He is the Beloved; we are lights of the world but He was the True Light. We have life but He is the Source of life. We are redeemed but He is the Redeemer. There may be shepherds but He is the Chief Shepherd.

This is the One who is “in the midst” of the two or three gathered in His Name! This is His promise in Matthew 18:20.

He is all-sufficient. There is none to compare with Him. He is all and in all! He is altogether lovely!

³ See 1 Chronicles 15:22,27. [Ed.]

*First and foremost,
He leads us to worship His Father!*

Finding God

Henry Wilson

Henry Wilson and his wife were the first missionaries to join the Westcott brothers and their wives in central Congo; by the time this poem was published the Wilsons had been there about thirty years. Various anecdotes recount Henry Wilson's resourceful and effective solutions to pressing practical problems, medical and other, confronting the local population.

CANST thou by searching find
the Almighty God?¹ Can puny man
take in the One who was ere time began,
with his own finite mind?
I use a microscope, and scan
a tiny parasite,
brought to the light
of my research and vision as a man.
Yet is that tiny mite
unable quite
to understand that I not only see
and know it, but control its destiny.
So it would seem that puny finite man
can never scan
or know the mighty God,
who fills eternity.

Some say God can be found
in Nature; and, 'tis true indeed,
we there His wisdom and His might can read,
and see His skill abound.
The tiny animalculae,
more wonderful by far
than man's inventions are,
display His handiwork with certainty.

¹ See Job 11:7.

Each plant that grows
most plainly shows
the imprint of a wise Creator's hand,
on viewing which amazed and awed I stand.
But 'tis His *work*, not God Himself I see,
Nor can it be
that viewing Nature only I shall understand.

Behold the starry sky!
What human mind can comprehend
where the beginning is or where the end
of such immensity?
What do the many names convey?
The "Serpent" shining bright,
The "Cross," emblazed in light,
The "Crown," the "Wounded Conqueror":
what are they?
Again I stand amazed;
the mind is dazed
before the sky's expanse, so great, so wide.
And yet one's longing rests ungratified,
and life's hard problems and its deepest need
remain indeed
unsolved, unmet.
The heart is not thus satisfied.

Turn now and view with me
a group of humble men gathered around
a central One, for in that One are found
a lofty majesty,
surpassing wisdom, gentleness,
a knowledge of men's needs,
a tenderness that heeds
the faintest cry of sorrow or distress.
Then Philip speaks this word,
"Shew us the Father, Lord,"
and thus the Lord replies with voice serene,
"He that hath seen Me, hath the Father seen."

O wondrous, glorious mystery, that God,
the eternal God,
has revealed Himself in this our earthly scene.

Then onward to the Cross,
displaying God's great love to you and me.
Behold the Lord advance unflinchingly,
unmoved by shame or loss.
But, risen now at God's right hand,
upon His glorious face
God's glory we can trace,
and, seeing Him, our hearts can understand.
He knows our every need,
and He can read
even the longing we can scarce express.
And knowing, 'tis His great delight to bless.
The weary heart can find in Him its rest,
and, fully blest,
be filled with heavenly peace and joy and happiness.

While He is still away,
His people here are left to set Him forth,
and shew His glory and His matchless worth,
and God Himself display.
We well may own, with grief and shame,
how much we fail to show
God's nature here below,
and how we do dishonour to His Name.
Yet let us fix our gaze
on Him, whose rays
will brighten, change us, cause us now to be
more like Him, so that all around may see
in us a little of that radiant light,
and glory bright,
which we shall bear throughout a glad eternity.

From *Scripture Truth*, vol. 27 (1935), p.102, giving the poet's location as "Inkongo".

WE DO NOT WELL

Donald Hill

This (abridged and slightly edited) article was received in April of this year, the last of many submitted to Scripture Truth by the writer, who went to be with the Lord in July, aged 93. The article's uncompromising concern with Christ and His gospel epitomises Mr Hill's life. Like Abel, "he, being dead, yet speaks".¹

Hospitals, prisons, and schools are all subject to inspections. Following such an inspection a report is submitted by the inspectors. Sometimes the reports are full of praise and give those inspected a good feeling. Other times the recipients are left with the feeling, "WE DO NOT WELL", because they have been found to be failing in many ways. Let us consider these four words in the light of 2 Kings 6:24 – 7:20.

They concern a siege of Samaria, the city built by Omri to be the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel – the ten tribes – once the kingdom of David and Solomon had divided into two at the commencement of Rehoboam's reign (1 Kings 16:24). Failure, with idolatry at the heart of it, had marked this kingdom from the outset, when Jeroboam had erected the two golden calves at Dan and Bethel (1 Kings 12:28-29); indeed many of the kings of Judah tolerated idolatry too. That which Abraham their father had been called out from, they practised. God did not overlook their failure, and used surrounding nations to punish and ultimately take both into captivity.

One such episode resulted in the city of Samaria being besieged by the armies of the kingdom of Syria that lay directly to the north of it. The aim was to starve Samaria and its king into surrender. With the passage of time the food supply in the city dwindled; circumstances became so bad that families elected to boil and eat their own children! (2 Kings 6:26ff) Blame for this was even placed with God and His servant Elisha, whom the king threatened with his life. It was at this hour of crisis that Elisha made his famous statement, "Hear ye the word of the LORD: Thus saith the LORD, Tomorrow about this time shall a measure of fine flower be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria" (7:1, KJV).

These prices show that by the LORD's word within one day the famine would be over. But how? Elisha's prophecy was derided by an official of the king, and he received from Elisha the solemn reply that with his own eyes he would see the event take place, but not enjoy any of it.

¹ See also the same writer's recent articles in this magazine: "A wake-up call" (April, 2016) and "...if I do not evangelise," (January 2017).

Meanwhile four lepers huddled outside the gate of Samaria (see Numbers 5:2), also starving because they no doubt depended on the starving city-dwellers for food. Conferring together, they decided that if they remained where they were they would die; if they crossed to the Syrian camp they might be put to death, but if their lives were spared there was at least food in the Syrian camp. They elected to cross over to the camp at twilight, when the semi-darkness would hide their approach. As they approached the camp not a sound was to be heard, and they were not aware of any movement. Looking in one tent, they found it empty; likewise a second. But there was food in plenty together with clothing, silver, and gold. So they helped themselves and hid some of their finds.

It was at this point that they said, “WE DO NOT WELL. THIS DAY IS A DAY OF GOOD TIDINGS, AND WE HOLD OUR PEACE” (2 Kings 7:9).

The four lepers returned to the gate of Samaria, hailed the gatekeeper, and made him aware of their discovery. He made arrangements for the king’s household to be informed. It was now the middle of the night, but the king arose. However, suspecting a Syrian ruse to lure them out of the city, he ordered two men to mount two of the remaining healthy horses in the city and view the situation. On their return they reported that the road as far as the Jordan was strewn with abandoned belongings.

Reassured, the king authorised that the gates should be opened. In the stampede that followed the mocker of the previous day was crushed, and perished just as Elisha the prophet had said. There was food in abundance for the starving, together with silver, gold, and clothing.

Why had the Syrians abandoned their camp and possessions? There had been divine intervention! God had acted to cause them to hear the sound of chariots and horses, and they had assumed that the king of Israel had hired great foreign armies to fight for him. So they had fled.

These are the historical facts that are recorded in the word of God for our learning (see Romans 15:4). What do they have to say to us in 2017?

Satan, the enemy of both God and mankind, is a defeated foe. There has been divine intervention! The Lord Jesus has been into death, conquered it, and laid low Satan’s power!

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had

Why had the Syrians abandoned their camp and possessions? There had been divine intervention!

There has been divine intervention! The Lord Jesus has been into death, and laid low Satan's power!

the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14, 15).

"He Satan's power laid low,
made sin, He sin o'erthrew;
bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,
and death by dying slew."²

Just as the citizens of Samaria had no part in the victory over the Syrians because it was achieved by God Himself, we too had no part in the victory which the Lord Jesus accomplished at Calvary. Just as the inhabitants of Samaria enjoyed the spoils of victory, so too are the spoils of the victory won by the Lord Jesus available to "whosoever will".

What are these spoils?

- *Food.* In the discourse which the Lord Jesus delivered following the feeding of the five thousand, He spoke of Himself as the "bread of God" come down from heaven to give life unto the world, adding that "he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever" (John 6:51, 58). This "bread" is available to the whole world!
- *Silver.* "Silver" in Scripture always reminds us of redemption. The boards of the tabernacle stood on two sockets of silver (Exodus 26:19), and this reminds us that the sacrificial death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus are the essential bases of our eternal salvation. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7).

As a boy I used to wait at a bus stop before 8 a.m. to travel the four miles to school. Opposite the stop was a pawnbroker's shop, where some of those who had previously pawned their jewellery had the means to return later and redeem it. We never have had, nor ever will have, the means ourselves to redeem our own souls, let alone the souls of our families (cp. Psalm 49:7-9), but Christ had: He gave *Himself* on the cross to bring us back into the family of God.

- *Gold.* The same boards of the tabernacle as stood on sockets of silver were covered with gold (Exodus 26:29). If "silver" speaks of redemption, "gold" speaks of righteousness. We have no righteousness of our own; on the contrary "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). However the believer in Jesus has a perfect standing before a holy, righteous, and sin-hat-

² After Samuel Whitlock Gandy, 1780-1851.

ing God, and that standing was entirely brought about by the work of the Lord Jesus at Calvary.

“... the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus...” (Romans 3:22-24).

“The perfect righteousness of God
is witnessed in the Saviour’s blood;
‘tis in the cross of Christ we see
how God can save, yet righteous be.”³

- *Clothing.* Clothing figures prominently in Scripture, commencing with the fig leaves which formed unacceptable clothing for Adam and Eve, and the skins with which God clothed them, an early indication that death must take place and blood be shed in the provision of “the garments of salvation” (cp. Isaiah 61:10). Abel early learned the lesson taught by the wrong and right clothing of his parents when he brought “of the firstlings of his flock, and the fat thereof”; Cain obstinately refused to learn it. The death of Christ and the shedding of His precious blood alone answers to the divine covering of Adam and Eve and to Abel’s sacrifice. When the repentant prodigal returned to his father, he was clothed in “the best robe” (Luke 15:22).



The Old-Testament story of the lepers of Samaria has an important lesson to convey to every believer. God in His wondrous grace has enlightened us with the truth of the gospel – whether in its actuality in the New Testament or in figure in the Old – and this includes the events of 2 Kings 6-7.

In the three Synoptic Gospels the Lord Jesus, before His ascension, gave specific instructions to His followers. “Go... and teach all nations” (Matthew 28:19). “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47). The same message is recorded in Acts 1:8, “...witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

First-century believers “went every where, preaching the word” (Acts 8:4). Paul reminded his Corinthian readers that believers are ambassadors for Christ, and, as His witnesses, should beseech men and women to be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:20). “Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel”, is what he wrote concerning himself (1 Corinthians 9:16).

Opportunities are still open to us in the twenty-first century:

³ Albert Midlane, 1825-1909.

*The word is God's, and He has said,
"My word shall not return unto me void."*

- The public preaching. Let us be thankful for those who engage in fishing, and invite others to hear the gospel.
- Personal evangelism – in our lives and witness from day to day.
- Foot-slogging distribution of leaflets, *Alive!* magazines, etc.; also tracting.
- Texts prominently displayed outside church buildings. These are a voice to all who pass by. The word of God is living, powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12).

The word is God's, and He has said. "My word... shall not return unto me void..., but it shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it" (Isaiah 55:11). As believers we are all accountable, and are exhorted to be "redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16). I recall attending a fellowship meeting held in the "Ragged School" in the centre of Chesterfield. In the afternoon there was a Bible reading, and in the evening a gospel meeting with Dr Neil Shepherd as the speaker. Are we balanced in our approach, or are we weighted towards Bible readings and ministry meetings?

For several centuries the western world (i.e., Europe) was under the control of the Romans, and they were good road-builders. Missionaries took advantage of these roads, and the gospel travelled west. It reached our shores, and was embraced by the nation. Church towers and spires bear witness to this fact.⁴ Right now the western world which received the light of the Christian gospel has turned to idols, and consequently awaits the righteous judgment of God.

However, God is long-suffering and not willing that any should perish, but that all should turn to Him and live (cp. 2 Peter 3:9).

This is still the "day of grace"!

Go, labour on; spend, and be spent,
Thy joy to do the Father's will;
It is the way the Master went:
Should not the servant tread it still?

Go, labour on while it is day:
The word's dark night is hastening on;
Speed, speed thy work, cast sloth away:
It is not thus that souls are won.⁵

⁴ Paved roads are very durable, and it would be fair to surmise that Augustine of Canterbury and others took advantage of Roman roads in their expeditions to re-Christianise this country! [Ed.]

⁵ Horatius Bonar, 1808-89.

Speaking in the assembly

I Corinthians 14:34 and other Scriptures (I)

The meaning of “speak” in 1 Corinthians 14:34 is more precisely defined by its context than almost any other word in the New Testament, because it has already occurred twenty-one times in this very chapter. These occurrences all denote some aspect of speaking in meetings of the church, particularly praying audibly and prophesying, whether in “tongues” or in plain Greek. The entire chapter is about “speaking in the assembly”! The first listeners to the letter would therefore have concluded that by “speak” in verse 34 Paul certainly meant audible prayer and prophesying, asking questions (v.35), and all the other types of speech during meetings of the assembly (e.g., v.26).¹ Various attempts to evade this conclusion, whether by arguing that verses 34-5 are a later interpolation or a Corinthian opinion or “culturally specific”; or by seeking to wrest the meaning of “speak” round to some very narrow definition, were examined in an earlier article,² and found to fail.

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Behind all these attempts is the further claim that to read “speak” in verse 34 to include praying and prophesying brings the verse into fatal contradiction with 1 Corinthians 11:5, “But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonours her head...” (NKJV). Those who assert the existence of this contradiction take it for granted that 11:5 concerns women praying audibly and prophesying *in assembly meetings*.

But 11:5 implies nothing of the sort. There is not even a superficial contradiction between the two passages. The section starts with 11:3, which is obviously not about meetings of the church: Christ is the Head of every man wherever “every man” might be! 1 Corinthians 11:4-5 do not specify the occasions contemplated for either the men or the women praying and prophesying, whereas 14:34 clearly specifies the occasion envisaged.

¹ But excluding communal singing, as a later article will argue, God willing.

² “Speaking in the assembly: the meaning of 1 Corinthians 14:34”, *Scripture Truth*, July 2017, pp. 191ff.

*We should seek to understand
both 11:5 and 14:34 as the Corinthians would.*

Against this it is claimed that since 11:4 (“Every man praying or prophesying...”) must include public meetings of the church, so must verse 5. But this inference simply fails to consider the relevance of:

1. Verse 36 of chapter 14 – “Or did the word of God come originally from you? Or was it you only that it reached?” This implies that the Corinthians knew that the practice they were introducing was at variance with the practice of other churches.
2. The fact that Paul had previously spent eighteen months with them (Acts 18:11).

When the Corinthians first heard 11:5 and 14:34 their minds were not blank sheets. They knew the practices of the other churches in this respect, and they must have already known Paul’s own doctrine on this matter. Their understanding of 1 Corinthians 11:4 and 5, as they heard them being read out, would be shaped by these pieces of information.

We ourselves do this sort of thing all the time as we listen to other people: we fill in what they don’t spell out by what we know about them or their opinions. Sometimes what we hear causes us to revise our initial presumption regarding the speaker’s opinion on the point in question; other times it reinforces it. But if we know the speaker at all well, our understanding of what he or she says will start by aligning it with what we think we know about them.

Therefore we should seek to understand both 11:5 and 14:34 as the Corinthians would, given points 1 & 2 above. Certainly, not all passages of Scripture can be interpreted from this angle. In very many cases we do not know enough about the first readers to do this; in others not even the writers could understand what they wrote! (cp. 1 Peter 1:10-12) But in regard to 1 Corinthians 11:4-5 and 14:34-5 we do know points 1 & 2. Moreover, both passages are *instructions*, and it is of the essence of instructions that they be expressed understandably to the intended recipients. (But the writer need not spell out at every point in his letter everything he thinks the readers ought to know already, particularly if he intends to deal with that very point at a later stage.)

Let us suppose then, in conformity with one interpretation of 14:34, that Paul did permit the women to participate audibly in assembly meetings except for teaching and evaluating prophecies. The Corinthians would know this (Acts 18:11), and when the reader reached 11:5 of the first epistle they would “hear”

it to include women praying and prophesying in assembly meetings. However, when they reached 14:34 their understanding of 11:5 would receive a check. Why had Paul used the word “speak”, whose most recent use (v.29) had denoted prophesying, and whose twenty previous uses had almost all denoted prophesying or praying, whether in “tongues” or plain Greek?³ If Paul had written 14:34 as it stands, but held the doctrine of the first sentence of this paragraph, he would have sent a most misleadingly phrased instruction. The Corinthians would probably have ended up thinking he held the opposite of what (on this supposition) he did hold.

But suppose Paul held the “wide” view of the meaning of “speak” in 14:34 that is championed in this article. The Corinthians would know this. They would instantly understand that 11:4 comprehended such utterances during church meetings whereas 11:5 did not. We cope with such subtleties many times every day in listening to others; and so could the Corinthians. And when they heard 14:34-35 they would find the presuppositions on which they had understood 11:4-5 to be clearly confirmed.

By recognising, then, that 11:4,5 & 14:34 are instructions, and that the Corinthians had prior knowledge of Paul’s views on this matter, the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:5 that excludes audible⁴ praying and prophesying in assembly meetings clearly emerges as the correct one.

Rather than inquiring (as they ought) into the presuppositions upon which the Corinthians would fill in what is unstated in 11:5, most opponents of the wide view of 14:34 simply substitute *their own* assumptions. They simply *assume* that 11:2-16 are “instructions for church meetings”; Paul doesn’t mention such

³ Some have an answer to this. “The Corinthians,” they say, “would discern that 14:34 refers only to the end of 14:29 (‘...let the others judge’), and therefore that no previous occurrence of “speak” in the chapter was relevant to its meaning in 14:34.” But *how* would they discern this? Not a single Bible translation known to me has spotted this exclusive connection of v.34 with v.29b, to judge by their paragraphing. What chance had the Corinthians? Even those who propose this exclusive connection concede that it is not obvious.

⁴ Though of course the women’s *inaudible* prayers are of the essence of such meetings.

*Most opponents of the wide view of
1 Corinthians 14:34 simply assume that 11:2-16 are
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Paul doesn’t mention such meetings till 11:17.*

Paul's focus in 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 is not on the horizontal dimension, the earthly venues where the pray-er or prophet spoke, but on the vertical, the heavenward!

meetings till 11:17, where the section is clearly demarcated from 11:2ff by being criticism rather than praise.⁵ They think that Paul considered the meetings of the church the proper place for prophesying. But Old- and New-Testament prophets prophesied in all sorts of places; Paul himself would go on to prophesy on board ship (Acts 27:21ff). They think it unimaginable that Paul would have bothered himself about head-covering in venues other than public meetings. Those who so think have never stopped to ask why Paul formulated his requirement of head-covering in terms of *praying* and *prophesying*. It is because these two forms of speech are unique in being either speaking *to* or *from* God Himself.⁶ What concerned Paul was that praying and prophesying bring the pray-er or prophet, so to speak, into the ante-chamber of heaven with the great doors to the throne-room wide open. Are they properly attired for so direct an audience with the living God? (The deprecation of what concerns the *body*, intrinsic to much modern Christianity, dismisses Paul's concerns.) Contrary to the assumption of most commentators, Paul's focus in 11:3-16 is not on the horizontal dimension at all, the earthly venues where the pray-er or prophet spoke, but on the vertical, the heavenward! (This explains the phrase "because of the angels", that so many make such heavy weather of.) In 1 Corinthians 11:4-5 Paul simply "takes as read" the normal earthly venues; his mind is on the heavenward dimension.



1 Timothy 2:8-15 might seem like straightforward corroboration of 1 Corinthians 14:34-6. It states that the men are to pray in assembly prayer meetings (see verses 1, 8), using a word that expressly means "adult males"; and that the women are not to teach but be in quietness. But even here the ingenuity of those who wish to eliminate, or at least limit, the range of, Paul's prohibition

⁵ The praise with which the section starts (1 Corinthians 11:2) implies that here Paul is correcting what he considered ignorance, not wilful defiance. This, too, supports the view that the practice of uncovered prophesying had not occurred in public places while he was there.

⁶ Notice, however, the overlap between prophesying and teaching that is presumed in 1 Peter 4:11, and in our passage by the verb "learn" in 1 Corinthians 14:31.

has been at work. Two slight interpolations can make verses 8-9 read rather differently, as the following fairly literal translation shows:

“⁸I desire therefore the men to pray in every place, lifting up holy hands without murmuring and disputing; ⁹ likewise the women [to pray] in modest apparel with propriety and moderation; [and] to adorn themselves, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.”

Here a second “to pray” is interpolated in verse 9 to replace “to adorn” as the verb going with “the women”, and an “and” is interpolated before “to adorn” to make its subject-matter into a separate clause. An elegant solution to their problem! Its justification rests on the word “likewise”. The supporters of these interpolations argue that this “likewise” signals that Paul’s subject in relation to the women is still public prayer.

But there is no manuscript support for either interpolation. To my mind, inserting two interpolations into a text in order to change its sense, when the text makes perfect sense without them, is to subvert its meaning. Rather, the “likewise” of verse 9 invokes the common point in verses 8 & 9, namely, practical holiness. The same characteristic as was to give reality to the men’s praying (and signified by the “holy hands”) was to actuate the women in regard to dress and conduct. Godliness of life is a central theme of this Letter. In 3:8 & 11 of the same Letter the occurrences of “likewise” also serve the purpose of carrying forward the subject of moral qualities.

It is also argued that the word in 1 Timothy 2:11-12 that the KJV and NKJV translate “silence” is really “quietness”, and does not prohibit women’s non-disruptive vocal participation. But the foremost lexicon gives for *hēsuchia* (i.e., the word translated “quietness”), “state of saying nothing or very little, *silence*”⁷ – a definition that scarcely supports their case. Anyway, one cannot use *hēsuchia* to override 1 Corinthians 14:34. Paul probably wrote “silence” in 1 Corinthians 14:34 because his focus was on the simple fact of silence *versus* speech; but “quietness” in 1 Timothy 2 because he was also concerned about the attitude behind the silence. It is not enough for the women to say nothing but fume silently. Compare Acts 21:40; 22:2. Here *hēsuchia* (22:2) is something more than “silence” (*sigē*, 21:40).

Something needs to be said about the range of venues to which Paul’s prohibition in 1 Timothy 2 applies. About fifteen years earlier Aquila and Pricilla had taken Apollos aside and jointly explained to him the way of God more accurately (Acts 18:26). This had happened *in Ephesus*, where Timothy

⁷ The relevant definition in Danker-Bauer-Arndt-Gringrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament...* (Chicago, 2000), p.440.

was when he received “First Timothy” (Acts 18:24; 1 Timothy 1:3). There must surely have still lingered a reminiscence of this event in Ephesus when the Letter arrived. If we believe in the unity and inspiration of Scripture we should regard this event, therefore, as excluding more private get-togethers from the range of Paul’s prohibition. However, regarding the more public venues Paul’s wording here implies no limits. To this extent, then, the range of application of Paul’s prohibition is wider than just “meetings of the assembly”. It has the effect of extending the prohibition on the side of more public meetings to events such as Paul’s “reasonings”, or “discussions”, in the school of Tyrannus – also in Ephesus! (Acts 19:9)



Having considered the compatibility of 1 Corinthians 11:5 and 1 Timothy 2:8ff with 1 Corinthians 14:34, I turn now to the events of the day of Pentecost. Concerning Acts 2 one eminent opponent of the “wide” interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14:34 wrote, “Speaking in tongues could be considered a form of prophecy. So here in the first meeting of the church, Luke desires his readers to notice that the Spirit enthused and enabled both men and women to participate audibly.” The women did indeed participate in the evangelisation of that day: see Acts 2:17-18 – “... your sons and your daughters will prophesy...” But talking to little groups in the streets of Jerusalem is not a meeting of the church! (That they were talking to small groups, is shown by the contrast with Peter who “raised his voice” to address the whole crowd – v.14.) Those who want to force a contradiction between Acts 2 and the natural interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14:34 seem to presume that there was a praise and prayer meeting inside the upper room before the commencement of the evangelisation. The Scripture doesn’t say so: therefore the claimed contradiction rests on something that is not stated. In any case the assumption that there was such a meeting would force the Pentecostal saints into a contravention of 1 Corinthians 14:27 (“If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three...”). And if the 120 saints spoke in turn in tongues the “meeting” would have lasted ten hours (assuming each spoke for only 5 minutes) – all prior to 9 am! (see Acts 2:15)

However Acts 2 does have a lesson regarding the participation of women in evangelism.

The main Scripture advanced against the plain meaning of 1 Corinthians 14:34, especially by the Christian feminists, has not yet been considered – Galatians 3:28. This text, as well as various Old-Testament passages also deployed against this plain meaning will be examined in another issue, God willing.

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I am Kept

by Charles Mawson

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Charles Harold Mawson, known as “Charlie”, was born in Bradford in 1898, the son of J T Mawson, *Scripture Truth*’s first editor. The family settled in Whitley Bay, Northumberland, and as a young man he took up employment in a bank. Around that time, he began to keep a diary, and the entries are notable for the honesty with which he muses on his desire to be a totally committed follower of Jesus Christ.

However, following the passing of the Military Service Act in early 1916, on October 25th of that year he was called up for military service in the 2nd Life Guards, and was assigned to the Household Battalion. Diary entries ceased, but letters home (always liable to be censored) began. From the extracts from his letters it is clear that the aspirations expressed in his diary entries were fulfilled in his experiences at the infantry training camp in Windsor, where he took every opportunity presented, informally and in Christian services, to talk about his Saviour.

But how would he fare when sent overseas to “France” (more accurately, Flanders, in Belgium)? He was only there for some 4 months, but his letters home reveal how faith can be triumphantly joyful in the most dangerous of circumstances. He is truly inspirational. He was taking part in an action at Poelcappelle, near Ypres, on October 12th, 1917, in the First Battle of Passchendaele, when a shell exploded nearby and he went to be for ever with his Lord and Saviour, no longer to be found on earth. He was 19 years and 8 months old.

The effect of his life on his comrades in arms is well evidenced by the letters which they wrote to share memories of him with his family. His name is recorded on Panel 3 of the Tyne Cote Memorial to the Missing in Zonnebeke, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium; but, as he himself said of other believers, “How splendid to leave the army with a record in the Lamb’s Book of Life.”

The extracts from his diary and letters home form a fitting memorial: on reading them, the Bishop of Durham could write, “I bless God for this splendid young life, filled and used, first in peace, then in the fiery crucible of soldier-life, not by any vague ‘new thought’, nor worship of mere manhood, but by the old and unchangeable Gospel of the Grace of God in Christ” [Handley Moule, (May, 1918)].

100 years have passed since that day in October 1917 and his story remains a challenge to us all: in these more settled days, do we face our problems with the same uncompromisingly cheerful faith as Charlie faced his?

Gathered To Thee Here, Lord Jesus

Gathered to Thee here, Lord Jesus,
All Thy beauty we would see:
Beauty that exceeds all worship!
Beauty found alone in Thee!
In the midst, Thou art, blest Saviour;
Of Thy presence we're assured.
All Thy works and ways we'll ponder
As Thy blessèd name's adored.

Gathered to Thee here, Lord Jesus,
We would seek the Father's will.
Prick Thy servants by the Word, Lord,
Work and witness to fulfil.

In the midst, Thou art, blest Saviour,
With a keen, discerning eye.
Show us, Lord, how best to serve Thee
So Thy name we don't deny.

Gathered to Thee here, Lord Jesus,
We would turn to God in prayer.
Fill our hearts and lips with purpose
That will draw Thy Father near.
In the midst, Thou art, blest Saviour,
Lending power to each prayer.
May the incense that is rising
Be committed to His care.

Gathered to Thee here, Lord Jesus,
We would bless Thy Father's name.
Lead our songs of praise and worship
So His glories we proclaim.
In the midst, Thou art, blest Saviour,
In the Spirit's mighty power.
Thou wilt keep Thy precious promise
And wilt fill this holy hour!

G. E. Stevens (July, 2017).

Tunes: Satisfied (Williams), Beach Spring.