

A MAGAZINE TO ENCOURAGE THE STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES,
THE PRACTICE OF NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH PRINCIPLES
AND INTEREST IN GOSPEL WORK

Precious SEED

INTERNATIONAL

e-magazine—December 2011

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In the 21st Century we are conscious that many believers are moving away from traditional reading matter to material that they can access and carry around electronically. In the busy round of life and when access to our cherished reading material may not be possible it is good to have something that we can turn to for spiritual refreshment—an oasis in what would otherwise be a spiritual desert.

This first copy of the new *Precious Seed International* e-magazine aims to provide material which maintains the traditions of spiritual balance, and relevance that our readers have come to expect. Initially produced in pdf format it can be downloaded to

computer, ebook reader or smartphone, and provide something of spiritual refreshment to those on coach, train, or plane. It is our plan to produce this format of magazine for the month following the one in which the usual paper edition is available. For example, the first paper edition is in February of each year and the first e-magazine will be in March of each year.

We seek your prayerful support for this new venture .

John Bennett, Ministry Articles Editor

PSI Matters

Welcome to this new venture for *PSI* – an online magazine to be published quarterly in March, June, September and December 2012. Let us know what you think of it and we will welcome your suggestions to make it more effective.

We have a number of new books and reprints now available:

Precious Seed Publications for 2012

- 1) *Day by Day Living in the Promised Land*
400pp, compiled and edited by Ken Totton
£8.95 plus £1.50 p&p

This is the latest title (the fourteenth) in this popular series but it also marks a change in design. Now A5 format it includes maps, is printed in 2-colour throughout, has a marker ribbon and bookmark. It gives daily readings and meditations of the period from when Israel arrived in the Land until the captivity of Judah. A year's good spiritual reading and instruction by 24 well-known writers.

- 2) *The Local Church*
60pp, by J. H. Large, £4.50 plus £1.50 p&p

We have only 100 copies of this useful booklet available. It has been out of print for some time but we keep getting asked for it. Good to give to young folk and of interest to all believers.

- 3) *Galatians and Philippians*
70pp, by W. Trew, £4.50 plus £1.50 p&p

A limited run reprint of the booklet by the late Willie Trew of Cardiff giving a good exposition of these two New Testament Epistles.

- 4) *Behold your God*
32pp, compiled and edited by John Bennett,
£3.95 plus £1.00 p&p

This is a reprint in booklet form of the special supplement that accompanied the August 2011 issue of *Precious Seed International*. Only 100 copies available. You will have the truth about God in a more permanent form. Good to give to new converts and young believers

Precious Seed Calendar for 2012

You should have received your calendar with your November issue of the magazine. If you didn't or if you would like further copies then you can order these for £2.00 each, incl p&p on the website (www.preciousseed.org) or by emailing roy@royhill.com

Decapolis Press Publications for 2012

- 5) *Bible Plants, Fruits and Products*
288pp. hardback, by Tom Ratcliffe, £12.95 plus £1.50 p&p

This is a wonderful book, beautifully presented in full colour throughout covering all the plants, and fruits mentioned in the Bible and illustrated by amazing photos and drawings. A must for all Bible students and just right as a gift for others.

- 6) *The Heavenly Physician, Vol.1(of three)*
208 pp, by Romel Ghossain, £8.95 plus £1.50 p&p

A timely verse by verse commentary on the Gospel of Luke which will instruct and encourage believers of all ages.

- 7) *New Day with Jesus*
136pp, by Shirley Holland, £6.95 plus £1.50 p&p

This is a book of 90 daily devotions for primary schoolchildren. Well written and beautifully presented in full colour there are daily readings, colouring and drawing opportunities and questions to answer. An exciting and instructive book for children.

Robert Young—Bible Scholar

Brian Clatworthy, Newton Abbot, Devon, England

Robert Young was born in 1822 into a middle class family in Edinburgh. His father, who was a flour mill manager, unfortunately died during Robert's childhood. Robert was privately educated, and after leaving school at 16, he became an apprentice in a printing business. Unlike other young people of his age, Robert devoted his spare time to the study of ancient and oriental languages. This knowledge of other languages, especially Hebrew, would form the basis of his later work, and leave an indelible mark on wider philological studies. After completing his apprenticeship, Robert set himself up as a printer and bookseller, specializing in books relating to the study of the Old Testament.

Whilst there is no formal record of his personal conversion to Christ, he was connected with the Free Church in Scotland,¹ and most biographers suggest that he was a moderate Calvinistic theologian. He was certainly associated, at one time, with Thomas Chalmers' territorial church Sabbath school in the West Port area of Edinburgh.² After marrying in 1856, he went to Surat, in Gujarati state, India as a literary missionary and superintendent of the mission press in that city. Here he acquired knowledge of Gujarati,³ and as GORDON CAMPBELL confirms, 'Young was a self-taught student of languages whose linguistic portfolio extended . . . to include Finnish, Gaelic, Gujarati, and the languages of the Bible, of which his command of Hebrew was outstanding'.⁴ Returning home to Edinburgh, he conducted the Missionary Institute between 1864 and 1874, but failed in his attempt to gain the Hebrew chair at St. Andrews University in 1871. He died in Edinburgh in 1888, but his literary legacy remains with us today, and continues to provide us with some valuable tools for biblical exegesis.

He is, of course, best known for his *Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, which he first produced in 1879, only nine years before he died. In the prefatory note to his first edition, Young stated, among other things, that 'the work was the result of very many years of labour, and was designed to lead the simplest reader to a more correct understanding of the common English Bible, by reference to the original words in Hebrew and Greek, with their various shades of meaning'. The concordance is based on

the King James Version of the Bible, and is still considered by some scholars as being better for word studies than Strong's due to the way in which it analyzes English words. Young placed every English word under its original Hebrew or Greek, and then proceeded to give the literal meaning in each case. This ensured that the English reader could easily identify the various nuances of the words being used in the original text. The concordance is still in print today although not in the beautiful rice paper edition that appeared as late as the 1960s. It has yet to appear in electronic form.



Young also produced a number of other scholarly works including a Literal Translation of the Bible where he sought, according to the preface, 'To secure a comparative degree of uniformity in rendering the original words and phrases'. He also endeavoured to maintain the tenses of the Hebrew and Greek, and in so doing, produced some rather strange translations.⁵ Young was, in fact, particularly critical of the translators of the King James Bible who he considered to be ignorant of the correct Hebrew tenses! GORDON CAMPBELL suggests that Young's 'assault on the competence of the King James Version (KJV) revisers may have been unwarranted, but it struck home, and was a stimulus to revision of the KJV'.⁶ As a companion to his literal translation, Young provided a short commentary on the whole Bible, but this work failed to impress some of his Victorian contemporaries. In his review of the book, SPURGEON inimitably commented that it was 'too small to be of any use. You cannot put the sea into a tea cup'.⁷

Robert Young's adult life was dedicated to textual criticism and there is no doubt that a countless number of Bible students have been greatly assisted by Young's prodigious work. We give thanks to God then for such a man of faith, who, though dead, still continues to speak to our generation.

1. See for example the entry for Young at page 446 in *The Wycliffe Biographical Dictionary of the Church* (Moody Press) by ELGIN S. MOYER.

2. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

3. One of his achievements was a translation of Chronicles into Gujarati.

4. *The Story of the King James Version 1611-2011* (OUP), pg. 212.

5. F. F. BRUCE *History of the Bible in English* (Lutterworth Press), pg. 132 took the view that Young's translation of the Old Testament was largely spoiled by his eccentric theory about the tenses of the Hebrew verb.

6. *The Story of the King James Version 1611-2011* (OUP), pg. 213.

7. *Commenting and Commentaries* (Banner of Truth), pg. 43.

Their Finest Hour—Abraham

John Scarsbrook, Killamarsh, England

When Stephen addressed the council in Jerusalem he first reminded his audience that ‘the God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia’, this was a defining moment in the life and experience of this great man of faith. The writer to the Hebrews takes up the story and records that ‘when he was called . . . he obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went’. But in Abraham’s first step away from ‘country, kindred and father’s house’, the course of history was marked out and God’s great plan of salvation, conceived in eternity and foreshadowed in the early chapters of our Bible, began to take form and substance in God’s dealings with Abraham and his descendants.

As we trace the steps of Abraham a number of milestones mark his course, each of which could qualify for the adjective ‘fine’. Take for example the moment when he stood on the border of the land for the first time and heard the Almighty say, ‘Unto thy seed will I give this land’; an unassailable promise, yet to be fully realized, but as certain in its reliability as the ordinances of the universe, Jer. 31. 35-36.

Or, again, his gracious dealings with his nephew Lot when strife between their servants threatened to disrupt the family. On this occasion, journeying north from Egypt Abram was found with Bethel, the house of God, on his left hand and Ai, a heap of ruins, on his right. Realizing that a parting of the ways was best for all concerned, Abram offered to Lot the choice, generously suggesting first that he turn toward Bethel. Ignoring this advice, ‘Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan’, with disastrous consequences! Abram, left alone, continued his pilgrim quest for the ‘city . . . whose builder and maker is God’.

Another ‘fine’ moment is seen in Abram’s meeting with Melchizedek in Genesis chapter 14. Fresh from his victory over the four kings who had put to flight the five, Abram was met by the king of Sodom. As the victor in the battle, Abram had first claim on all the spoils of war. The king of Sodom, however, offered him a compromise which would remove his responsibility to the released captives and ensure great material riches for Abram - a tempting prospect. It was just at this moment of crisis another person appeared, the enigmatic priest-king Melchizedek. He blessed Abram, and refreshed him with bread and wine. Thus strengthened and blessed, the

choice was made; he refused the offer of the godless king and received the confirmation from heaven, ‘Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward’.

Surely Abram would have considered it a ‘fine’ hour when, with terrifying fascination, he watched ‘a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp’ pass through the cloven pieces of the sacrifice in chapter 15. Jehovah, the covenant-keeping God, binding Himself with an enduring, unbreakable oath which guaranteed the land of promise to Abram’s descendants. Or, again, when the Almighty placed on permanent record His promise regarding Abram’s seed by changing his name to Abraham; from ‘High father’, a name linked with an idolatrous past, to ‘Father of many nations’ through whom ‘all families of the earth’ would be blessed; that was truly a ‘fine’ hour.

The promise of a son, named before his birth, would have featured prominently in Abraham’s mind as a ‘fine’ moment. His desire that Ishmael, the son ‘born after the flesh’, might live before God was overruled, yet later provided an analogy for the Spirit of God through Paul to explain the liberty of sonship for the believer, Gal. 4. 22-31. The confirmation of this promise given by the heavenly visitors in chapter 18 and Abraham’s prevailing prayer on behalf of the righteous in Sodom also indicate to us heaven’s appreciation of this man of faith.

However, though there are a number of contenders to fulfil the title of our meditation, surely few would challenge the opinion that chapter 22 of Genesis records Abraham’s ‘finest hour’. As ever, the context of the chapter throws light on the events and we do well to consider both the reason and the purpose for this remarkable experience. To discover a reason we need to cast our minds back to what has gone before, a purpose looks forward and takes into account the sovereignty of God in the whole matter.

In chapter 12, Abraham had journeyed down into Egypt where he had suffered embarrassment through his own insincerity and learned some important lessons. It would not be difficult to defend Abraham on this occasion; he had only lately come from idolatrous Ur of the Chaldees, there was a grievous famine in the land, and he had yet much to learn about his God. When, however, some twenty-five

years later, having experienced the hand of God, having heard the voice of God and with no famine to avoid, Abraham repeated his dishonesty, a time of testing follows. In effect, God was saying to him, on two occasions you were willing to give up Sarah who is equally important to my purposes, now are you prepared to give up Isaac?

Before we consider the purpose of this time of trial, we shall take a brief look at some of the details, which will in most cases be very familiar to the reader. The immediate response, the early rising and the unqualified obedience of Abraham have often been noted. One wonders, however, just what agonies engulfed this man of God as he contemplated his instructions. 'Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest . . . and offer him', each succeeding phrase must have fallen like a hammer blow to Abraham's mind. We are aware through the Psalms of many of David's emotions and fears; likewise, the writings of Jeremiah, the apostle Paul and others unveil their feelings from time to time. But of Abraham's inmost strivings we know nothing. The unembellished record of scripture stands, 'By faith Abraham . . . offered up Isaac', Heb. 11. 17.



Much has been written and many precious thoughts have been gleaned from these verses: the three day journey to Moriah, the lifting up of the eyes, the place afar off and the promise to worship and return; father and son treading alone the final fateful steps of the journey. Even the order of the words is instructive. The normal order of sacrifice would be first the knife and then the fire. Here in verse 6, foreshadowing Calvary, the order is reversed. On Golgotha's hill it was first the fire, endured and extinguished, then the knife as He entered into death.

We cannot fail to notice throughout, the compliant nature of Isaac. No remonstrations, no word of dissent. How we are reminded of Another who trod a pathway of obedience, even though it led to the death of the cross. Only once did father and son speak, and that with reference to the apparent lack of a sacrifice! All other provision was made, Isaac

mentions the fire and the wood but omits the knife; maybe he had already realized where this journey was leading!

On Moriah's mount, Abraham built his final altar. The wood he laid in place, bound Isaac and laid him on the altar. The emotions of that moment are indescribable. To lose a child through illness or accident must be too awful for words. To be placed in Abraham's position, about to take the life of his beloved son cannot be expressed. Yet, as the knife is raised, we are privileged to behold Abraham's 'finest hour'. James, in his Epistle, says succinctly, 'Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?' Jas 2. 21. What then was the compelling motive for his actions? 'He believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness', and, James adds, 'he was called the Friend of God'.

Abraham's hand was stayed, the fatal blow did not fall on the son but on a substitute, the contrast with Calvary is evident and on the surface. So what was the purpose in this extreme time of testing? God had on several occasions pronounced blessing upon Abraham and his descendants; but never before had He explained why. Now He says, '**because** thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee'. The lesson taught to and through Abraham is that the sacrifice of the whole animal creation is inadequate to accomplish the plan and purpose of God. It must be by the giving of the Son! Looking back, we can appreciate intelligently, through Abraham's experience, the One who 'spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all', and we rejoice in the apostle's assurance, 'how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?'

In the will of the Lord, we hope to continue this series and explore the finest hour of others within the record of scripture.

From the Archive . . .

God glorified in Christ's Death—C. H. Darch, Taunton, England

Human beings are naturally self-centred and are always inclined to see themselves the centre of everything; it is therefore little wonder if when surveying the death of Christ we view it from our own standpoint, instead of seeing the glory of God in it.

The death of Christ was an act between the Father and the Son, by the Spirit, and while it was for man's good, we must never forget that it was also for God's glory, and that the great aim of God in Christ was not only the reconciling of the world to Himself but His glory in it.

Through Christ's obedience and death God magnified His Law, Isa. 42. 21. The Lord Jesus kept the law of God in a world of sin, which made Him as conspicuous as a fire burning in mid-ocean. Even in the midst of all the suffering, He never deviated, but was obedient to the very last letter, and thereby honoured God's law more than it was dishonoured by Adam's fall.

God magnified His love by sending His only begotten Son to save rebellious men, and, when men treated Him so wickedly, God did not withdraw Him from this scene but gave Him up to death, because He had set His heart on fallen man to redeem him to Himself. It is love unchangeable, incomprehensible, and unfathomable!

God magnified His justice inasmuch as when the Lord Jesus made Himself responsible for our sin, God called upon the sword to smite Him, Zech. 13. 7. Justice and judgement are the foundation of God's throne, Ps. 89. 14 RV, not love and mercy, as many would have us believe. Mercy follows justice but does not exist without it.

God magnified His holiness. It has been said that God manifested His love to the sinner at Calvary, and we might add that He showed His hatred of sin more completely in the death of His Son than He ever will in eternal judgement.

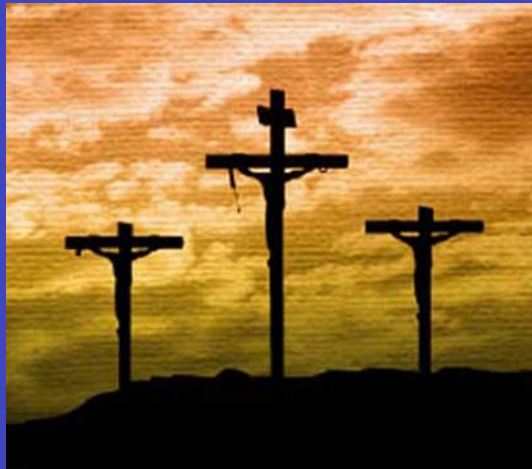
God magnified His truth by fulfilling all His promises and prophecies concerning Christ, so that not one

failed but all were fulfilled as touching that great event. He will yet magnify His truth by fulfilling the whole of His promises to His Son, while at present the Son is waiting till the right time comes for His enemies to be put down, Ps. 110. 1.

God magnified His wisdom by proving to the universe His ability to deal with the question of sin in justice, and yet in love and mercy. Apparently, Michael the archangel did not fully understand how this was to be, Jude 9, but today it is clearly demonstrated and thereby God is magnified.

God magnified His power by proving to our wondering eyes that His Son could endure all the judgement that was meted out to Him as the result of our sin. How great was His sustaining power! God magnified His grace by condescending to touch poor fallen man and to allow His Holy Son to have the iniquity of us all laid upon Him, Isa. 53. 6.

God magnifies His mercy by receiving sinners on the ground of that work. Even in the intensity of His suffering the Lord said to a criminal who was being put to death for his crime, 'Today shalt thou be with me in paradise'. 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past tracing out', Rom. 11. 33 RV.



In September 1945 Charles Darch was one of three brethren from Taunton whose names appear as members of the committee that commenced the work of Precious Seed. Along with E. F. Hulbert, he was treasurer of that fledgling work and laboured tirelessly to see the work established and flourishing.

More articles from this faithful brother can be found at: www.preciousseed.org/search.cfm

From the Archive . . .

The True Vine—C. H. Darch, Taunton, England

There has been much disagreement over the branches of the Vine which are taken away, John 15. 2. Are they taken away from the vine? Do they illustrate those who are true believers in Christ? Many other such questions have been asked from time to time. To obtain a clear picture, we need to go back to Psalm 80, to which the Lord was undoubtedly referring and to which the minds of the disciples would naturally go, for the psalm was to them a well-known hymn.

Psalm 80 verse 8 says, 'Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it'. This is a very definite reference to the fact that God brought Israel out of Egypt and placed them in the land of Canaan. Then the questions are asked, 'Why hast thou then broken down her hedges?' and why allow the wild beast of the field to devour it? The answer to these questions is found in Isaiah chapter 5 verse 4 where the Lord says, 'I looked that it should bring forth grapes', and adds that it brought forth 'wild grapes'. Instead of righteousness, Israel brought forth sin: therefore, He adds, 'I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up'.

'Every branch in *me* that beareth not fruit he taketh away'. This is the statement which has caused such differences of opinion in this country, but in the land of Israel no such divergence exists because there the people understand the vine better than we do. The vine is a plant that has long branches which are so weak that they cannot carry their own weight; therefore they fall to the ground. When they touch the ground, they begin to throw out roots into the soil and so become earth bound and fruitless. Therefore men, called lifters, are kept in large vineyards to visit

the vine constantly and lift its branches away from the ground. Then, the branch needs cleansing in order that it may bear fruit.

The word translated 'taketh away' is translated in the New Testament thirty-six times 'taketh up' and 'lifteth up'; it is used of a man lifting up his hands in blessing, so we may well believe the Lord was refer-

ring to its being taken away from the ground and not to its being taken away from the vine. A friend who lived for twenty-six years in Palestine said, 'No one there thinks of the branch as being taken away from the vine, but always as being taken away from the ground'.

Again, verse 6 has caused

difficulty because it is assumed that this has to do with a man who is in Christ and is a branch; observe, first, he is never called a branch but the simile 'as a branch' is used and note also that he is not *in* Christ because it plainly states that he is not abiding in Christ, and therefore 'he is cast forth as a branch . . . and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned', v. 6. NEWBERRY translated it, 'they gather them', which seems to be a reference to the angels who gather the tares from the wheat, Matt. 13. 39. In Psalm 80, such branches were covering the land; and when our Lord was on earth many were boasting of the fact that they were Abraham's seed, but they were far from Christ and trampled down by the Gentiles.

God's great purpose is that we should bear fruit for His glory! This means we must be in Christ and not become earthbound, or unclean.





Book Reviews



The Sufficiency of Scripture

Joseph Stephen

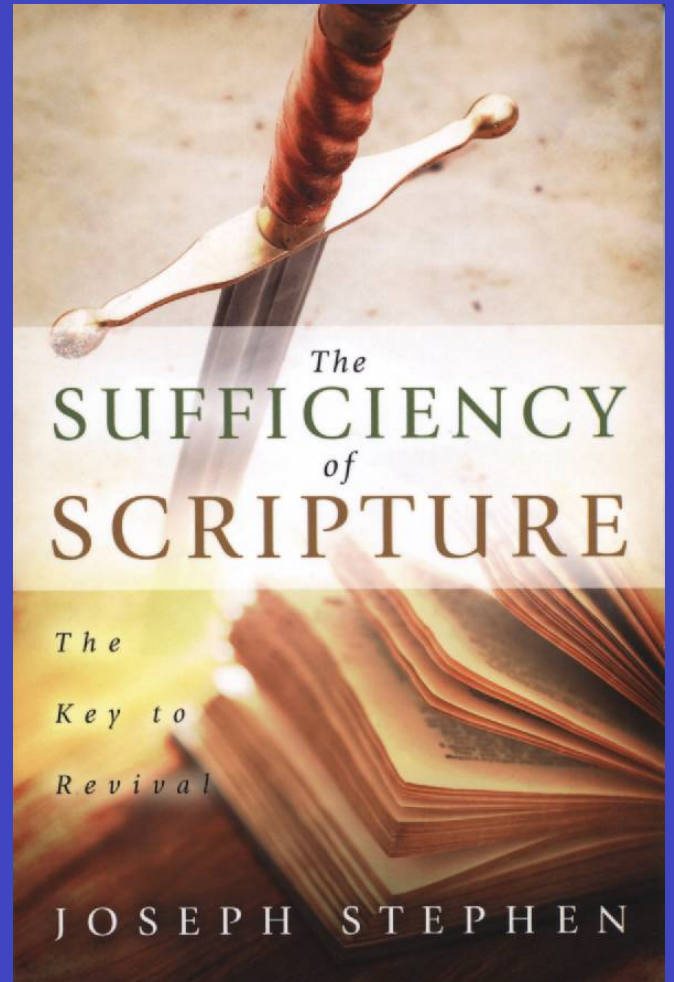
Paperback, 190pp. Published by Pleasant Word, PO Box 428, Enumclaw, WA, USA

ISBN 978-1-4141-1777-5

In the eight chapters that make up the book STEPHEN covers: personal revival; revival in the home; revival in the church; the role of prayer in revival; the spiritual battle; and complacency. Each chapter includes extensive quotations from scripture to illustrate and explain the points that the writer is making. If, as he has set out to do, the author wishes to prove the sufficiency of scripture he can do no better than to quote it in reference to the points he wishes to make.

Revival, which is at the core of the book, is described by the writer as 'calling the already saved to a closer walk with God'. In his chapter on personal revival the author bids us take 'the desert island challenge' – 'if we were on a desert island with only the Holy Bible, how would we live? What would we know about life, family, marriage, relationships, children, education, values, the church, etc.?' In speaking of revival in the home, STEPHEN describes it as 'a home in which God's word, love and order is foundational'. He goes on to detail the role of the father, mother, and children in the context of Christian marriage. Equally, he argues that education, as the schooling of persons in the ultimate values of a culture, should be a religious function.

For many readers, STEPHEN's chapter on revival in the church will be of particular interest. In it he argues that the biblical view of the church is of a called-out company, not to be confused with the ecumenical church, build on the foundation of faith in the finished work of Christ. He stresses that government of



such a company should be by God-appointed elders rather than a one-man leadership. He recognizes the distinctive spheres of service for men and women and the way in which gatherings of the local church should be conducted. Indeed, this chapter is a searching one.

Overall, JOSEPH STEPHEN is to be commended for writing a book which addresses the very heart of the life of the Christian. It would be easy to assume that the book is about inerrancy, infallibility, or inspiration. However, it is a challenge as to whether we really believe in the sufficiency of the word of God – are we prepared to recognize its sufficiency for every area of our lives?