

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

---

VOL.51 No.7

JULY 1983

---

## THE LOST BOOK

THE Church Of Scotland have just recently concluded another General Assembly in Edinburgh. The Panel On Doctrine have, in their Report on Baptism, rejected the concept of 'second Baptism' and reaffirmed the Kirk's belief in infant baptism. This Report was triggered by the fact that last year the Assembly had heard of the 'second baptism' of one of their clergymen in Caithness (Rev. Ronald Riach) who, after studying the New Testament on baptism, got a local elder to immerse him in the sea. The Kirk has dubbed Mr Riach as a 'heretic' but stopped short of having him excommunicated. This is what the Kirk does to people who study their New Testaments and who try and follow what they read there. There is, however, concern in the ranks of the Church Of Scotland over a drop in membership last year of 20,000 and this has prompted a small group of the clergy to plead for 'old-time evangelism' and to leave aside their constant pre-occupation with politics and nuclear weapons. In all the deliberations of the 'Kirk' the scriptures are rarely mentioned and seldom invoked as being authoritative in matters of controversy. Brethren lay great store by 'Christian Colleges and religious seminaries yet the several hundred clergymen who attend the Assembly, and who place scant store on the New Testament, are not poorly educated 'laymen' but highly educated theologians - products of the most 'scholarly' Bible Colleges in the country, including New College, Edinburgh. *These* are the very men who nullify the influence of the very book they are pledged to uphold. *These* are the very men who have watered down the gospel message and who have, by casting doubts upon the reliability of the Bible, have damaged its integrity and rendered it a lost book.

Publishers keep telling us that the Bible is perennially the 'Best Seller' amongst books but, given the sad moral state of the world, one has to wonder what becomes of all the bibles. Satan certainly seems to have been most successful at smothering the effect God intended the Bible to have. I suppose that in almost every home there is a copy of the Holy Bible but perhaps it is kept mainly as a 'good luck' charm and rarely read. Some are to be seen on sideboards perhaps with a pot-plant on top, and some are mostly unseen, tucked away with some old faded photographs in the bottom of a drawer. The average working man jumps out of bed in the morning, gulps down his breakfast and is so busy with life's whirl that when he returns in the evening he flops into an easy-chair to watch the offerings on his T.V. set; eventually dragging himself off to bed - only to

repeat the process the following day. His bible gathers dust and Satan rejoices. The Bible is therefore, effectively lost to the world for an unread bible is equal to no bible at all. But God's Word has been lost before - recall, for instance, the case of Josiah.

### Josiah

Josiah's right to God's 'Hall of Fame' is truly undeniable. His wonderful works are described in II Kings 22 & 23 but presaged by a spectacular prophecy in I Kings 13. Crowned king at the tender age of eight years (in troublous times) he began, after becoming 16 years, a far-reaching purge of all the idolatrous wickedness in the country and a complete national religious reformation. He pulled down the graven images and altars of Baal, destroyed the groves, and put many of the pagan priests to the sword, burning their very bones, and literally grinding their altars to powder. Amongst the people of God idoltry had become rife and well entrenched, even within the temple. Having accomplished this purge he turned his attention to the restoration of the temple itself and it was while the rebuilding work was going on that a book was found amongst the rubble and dust. Closer examination of the volume revealed that it was a copy of God's law to Israel and Josiah was so anguished when he had read its contents that he rent his clothes and commanded a public reading of the book to his entire nation. He realised how far God's people had strayed from the standards set in the book and sought counsel with Hulda the prophetess "...For great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our Fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us." When Josiah made a public reading of the book to the entire nation, "... all the people stood to the covenant." Josiah's restoration movement, based on the contents of this book of the law, was an unqualified success for we read, "And all his days the people departed not from following the Lord". And so Josiah, while refurbishing *the temple*, found an old scroll with which he was able to reform a *nation*.

### How Lost?

"But", someone says, "the bible cannot be lost if there are millions of copies in the world". This rather like the words of the little boy who, while looking over the side of the ship, asked his Father, "Is a thing lost if I know where it is?" His father replied, "No, of course not" to which the little boy responded, "Then your watch isn't lost because I know where it is". "And where is it?" asked the anxious father. "Down there on the bottom of the sea" replied the little boy. Childish humour no doubt, but it is still true that many things are lost albeit we know where they are. The Bible certainly falls into this category. The scriptures can be lost:-

- (1) **By Neglect:** Obviously Josiah's father and grandfather had neglected to read their personal copy of God's word; probably far too busy with the affairs of state. In the hurly-burly of these present times many days can pass between readings of the scriptures and man must really 'make time' and set it part, inviolate, each day, for Bible reading. "Give attention to reading" says Paul.
- (2) **By Misunderstanding:** We must 'rightly divide' the word of truth. Many of us read the scriptures regularly but misunderstand them. Some read the Old Testament believing that its statutes and laws are binding on us today. Jesus said to some, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures". The Bible is lost to those who misunderstand the scriptures. Some things we shall never fully understand but we must learn to rightly handle the Word of God.

- (3) **By Substitution:** Jesus often charged the Jewish lawyers of His day of having nullified God's law by supplanting it with the traditions of the elders. God's word was made of none effect because they overlaid it with their own, grievous, commandments (over 300 such commandments). In our own day there are those who have replaced the Bible with other books which better suit their particular purpose; e.g. 'New World' translation of J.W.'s; the Book of Mormon; the Apocrypha etc. etc. To all such, the Bible is a lost book.
- (4) **By Mutilation:** In Jer. 36 we read that when Jehudi read God's will (through Jeremiah) to King Jehoiakim he only got as far as three or four pages when the king snatched the book, cut it up with a penknife and threw it into the fire in the hearth. There are many modern Jehoiakim's amongst us today who mutilate God's word by cutting out the unpopular parts. When Stephen spoke God's truth to the Jews they stuck their fingers in their ears and gnashed upon him with their teeth. Man is basically unchanged, albeit a little more subtle in his response to God's truth, but still closes his ears to unpalatable facts in the scriptures and still weilds the scissors of prejudice and ignorance. 2,000 years ago God closed the Book and to it nothing can be added or taken away.
- (5) **By Misrepresentation:** Who can calculate the damage done to God's word over the years by Higher Criticism? Who can possible estimate the damage caused by the clergy and theologians who have cast doubts upon the veracity of the bible by their basic refusal to accept its infallibility and Divine inspiration? They have cast doubts upon such matters as Adam and Eve; the Garden of Eden; the flood; the crossing of the Red Sea; the swallowing of Jonah by the great fish; the virgin birth of Christ; the miracles of Jesus and the resurrection. How can the common people be expected to exhibit simple acceptance of the authenticity of the Bible when the highly educated clergy are very reluctant to do so? The force of God's word has been completely quenched by such mischievous expressions of doubt, and once again Satan rejoices.

### Continual Restoration

These are but a few of the more obvious causes of the Bible being a lost book today, but of course there are many others. If history tells us anything it tells us that restoration must be a continual process. Just as weeds grow in the best-kept gardens and barnacles collect on the bottoms of the best boats, so does rubbish collect in the attics of even the best homes. Every so often a 'Spring clean' is required. Every generation needs a Josiah - one who will tear down the graven images and altars to Baal erected by previous generations. Each generation must be prepared to critically examine the spiritual legacy left by the previous generation and be prepared to amputate anything not in harmony with God's word. Just as Noah's Ark would collect a few barnacles the church is likely to collect a few malpractices and we must be clever enough to recognise them and honest enough to remove them. Brethren talk about the 'Restoration Movement' in the past tense as if it was a 'one-off' historical moment of a century ago, but surely it should be a continuous process - surely a question of constant introspection and examination. This surely is to be preferred to the philosophy which takes pride and pleasure in the claim that 'Churches Of Christ are the fastest growing denomination in the country.' Most denominations can claim *large numbers*. Indeed the Church Of the Scotland *loses* more members in one year (20,000 last year) than we shall ever have in many decades to come. They lose them because they have lost their way and *lost The Book*.

Surely it would be tragically sad if we too lost our way, and lost touch with the claim of the Restoration Movement that "We speak only where the Bible speaks and are silent where the Bible is silent." It is a noble claim but obviously a difficult one for men to stick to. Will churches of Christ ever lose touch with the claim and become just another denomination - or has it happened already? History shows that it was not the 'rank-and-file' members of the Church of Scotland who led it so far astray from God's Book, but it was the highly trained professional clergy; products of colleges and theological seminaries - elite men committed and paid to uphold God's truth. "If you can't beat them, join them" is a popular philosophy which abounds today and it certainly makes for a quiet and comfortable existence, but surely the spirit of young Josiah is not entirely dead in the church? Is it?

EDITOR

## IN THE TIME OF TROUBLE

"FOR in the time of trouble He shall hide me." Psalm 27:5.

All experience trouble of some sort or another. Some people are called upon to endure more than others. To some, molehills are mountains; to others, mountains are molehills. It depends entirely upon the frame of mind we are in.

The waters of trouble had passed over the Psalmist; one day shallow, another day very deep, yet through them he had learned God's care and benefits. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble," he declares. "In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me upon a rock". Jesus came to share our troubles, temptations, afflictions and woes, enduring upon the cross the greatest trial of all. His resurrection from the dead declares His victory over them all. Because He overcame we also shall overcome through active faith in Him.

"God is our refuge and our strength,  
A present help is He;  
To share our troubles He endured  
The cross of Calvary."

God promises strength in the time of trouble. Note, we are not exempted from trouble, but we have one with us whose strength will not only help us to endure, but also to overcome our troubles. How wretched is the one who has none to help, to confide in, to trust. How happy the child of God who has been promised strength for the time of adversity, of sickness, grief, pain and death. Paul affirms "My God shall supply all your needs through His riches in glory, by Christ Jesus."

What a wonderful example Jesus is to us. He did not give in when trouble came, but committed Himself to the task His father had given Him to perform, and received from God the Father strength, and glory and honour. Jesus conquered Satan, and in Him we shall achieve our victory.

"His perfect strength He will supply  
To meet my every need.  
E'en though temptation I endure  
The victory's His indeed."

How often the happenings of our daily lives cause us to doubt. To ask the inevitable question "Why". Should we really claim immunity from all the woes of life simply because we are God's children? Is it not because we are His that Satan

hurls his fiery dart at us. David knew this. He was the Lord's anointed, and yet was constantly in fear of his life from Saul. Over and over again his confidence in God shines through. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." The things of earth may be shaken and removed, but the things of God cannot. "He is my fortress, I fly to Him and I am safe. He is my rock; with Him as my foundation I cannot be moved. If this was the confidence of one who lived in a world of promise, what should be our state when God has visited us in the person of Jesus Christ His Son? The things of earth may perplex, disturb and annoy us, cause us grief, anxiety and distress, but active faith in Jesus through the application of His word will help us to overcome and strengthen our resolve to serve Him in sincerity and truth.

"The earth may move, the mountains shake,  
Yet I will faithful be;  
For He's my fortress and my rock,  
And He will watch O'er me."

What then should be our objective? To allow the abiding spirit of Jesus to reign in our hearts, to govern, control and sustain us through all the changing scenes of life. To look no longer upon the visible things of earth which one day will pass away with a great noise; but upon the unseen things of God, for these work out for us a far more exceeding weight of glory, for these are the lasting things.

Let us rejoice in the day of trouble, that we have an ever present Saviour to help us in the hour of need. One who has by Himself been tested and tried in all points, like we are, and yet has successfully overcome all trials, troubles and temptations, and is thus able to help, strengthen, encourage and support those who put their trust in Him.

"So on I'll go till life shall end  
Depending on His grace;  
Troubles may come and cares arise  
But I shall see His face."

"In time of trouble He will be  
Close by my side to encourage me,  
Whether my troubles be large or small,  
He'll stay with me through them all."

TOM KEMP, Wigan

## GLEANINGS

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

### BELIEVE ALL THE BIBLE!

"President Garfield visited the Metropolitan Tabernacle with great interest in 1867, and the Journal published after his death says - "C.H. Spurgeon evidently proceeded upon the assumption that the Bible ... All the Bible ... in its very words and phrases is the Word of God, and that a microscopic examination of it will reveal ever opening beauties and blessings."

### TAKING THE BIBLE APART!

"In conversation with a deacon of a coloured church, a friend asked him if he liked the new pastor. He said, "Not berry much." And being asked the reason why, replied, "Well, I'll tell yer how it is. He's de best man I ebber seed to take de Bible apart, but he dunno how to put it togedder again."

**WHAT, THEN, IS CHRISTIANITY?**

"We admit that, as popularly used, the word "Christianity" often includes more in many directions, and sometimes less in other directions, than is authorised by Christ. Amid this varied mixture commonly called Christianity, we would lay down the discriminating principle, "What Christ taught, instituted, or authorised, can be learned from the New Testament, and from no other source; hence of all that mass teaching, and of institutions, which disfigure Christendom today, we distinguish as Christianity strictly so called that which is sanctioned by the New Testament."

L.O.

**OUR TASK**

"Let us then return to the good old way, abandon every humanism, and with all our powers struggle for the restoration of original Christianity, the only efficient instrumentality for the thorough civilisation of our now but partially civilised race. Let all who would become philanthropists indeed, determine to restore original Christianity, to walk in the good old paths, and consent only to call that system Christian which bears the stamp of Christ's own authority."

D.K.

**FAITH**

"If we could know everything as certainly as we know how many fingers we have, or that two and two make four, there would be no need for faith. Life would tick on as regularly - and as drearily - as a clock which never needed winding. But life is not like that. Every day men and women do many things without knowing with certainty what will be the result of doing those things because they have faith in somebody or something. Let us take an example. When you board a train to make a journey, you do not know that you will arrive safely at your destination. You know that there are such things as railway accidents, but this does not stop you from travelling by train. Why doesn't it? Because you have faith in the platelayers, signalmen, engine-drivers and others; you believe that they are competent to do their respective jobs, and more than that, you trust them, you rely on them. Faith means both of these things - belief and trust. The railways are only one example. Every day we have faith in bridges, tunnels, bus drivers, our fellow workers and in many, many other persons and things. Indeed, so vitally important is faith in our every day life, that if everybody ceased to have faith in everything, human activity would come to a standstill. Faith is just as important in our religious life. One inspired writer has said that "without faith it is impossible to please God." (Hebrews 11:6). Faith in God, like all other faith means belief and trust. We must believe that there is a God, and we must trust Him absolutely."

T.M.

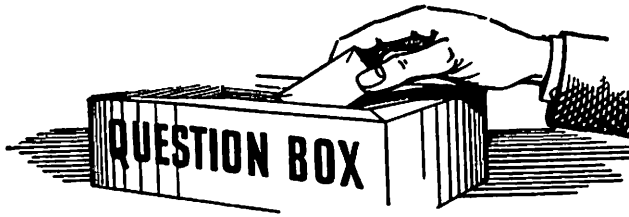
**FEEDING HIS FLOCK**

"I will feed my flock." - Ezekiel 34:15

"We need to be fed. Even when we are born again we are only babes in Christ. We have got quality of life; we lack quantity, the forceful, irresistible, abundant life which filled to the full the channels of the Christ. How are we going to gain the abundance? It is largely a matter of diet. "I will feed My flock.' We are to be fed into maturity by the bread of life. But how various are the forms of bread which the gracious Providence employs! He suits the bread to the precise condition of our needs. 'Thou givest them their meat in due season;' Yes, 'in due season; at the right time the right kind of bread. The Lord's feeding of His children is tenderly discriminating, and to bring us to maturity He uses very varied breads.

J.H.Jowett.

Selected by LEONARD MORGAN.




---

Conducted by  
Alf Marsden

---

### "How can God be three in one?"

I must confess that I do not know *how* God can be three in one. Similarly, I do not know *how* the Holy Spirit can in-dwell millions of Christians at one and the same time. But I *do* know that God in His nature can be Omnipotent, Omnipresent, and Omniscient, and it is from this standpoint that we must proceed so that we can trace the *manifestations* of God as His Word reveals them.

#### Necessity for Explanation

The controversy over the nature of the Godhead has raged from the first century A.D. even to now, so we need to be very careful of what we say, and this necessitates saying only those things for which there is Scriptural warrant, and which do not rely on speculation or spiritualisation, i.e., let us stick to the facts as they are presented to us.

There seems to be no doubt at all that before the Incarnation of the Lord there was a strong monotheistic inheritance which had been carried over from the Old Testament; this is embodied in the Credo given in Deuteronomy, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. 6:4). After the Incarnation of Christ, and with the advent of the Holy Spirit, there was a necessity for a radically changed viewpoint. Many of the Jews, of course, were still rooted firmly in the traditions of their Old Testament Fathers, and could not accept Jesus as Messiah. But to, the Greco-Roman world explanations of otherwise incomprehensible phenomena (to them) had to be given, and we are indebted to the Apostles Paul and John for precise statements concerning what we know today as the teaching relating to the Godhead; some would refer to this as the Doctrine of the Trinity, but there is no Scriptural warrant for this term which is a purely theological term, and is not found anywhere in the Bible. The name 'Trinity' is applied to the peculiarly Christian idea of the Godhead, in which, within the unity of the Godhead, three distinct 'persons' are identified.

#### Modalism

This doctrine, taught by some in the early days of Christianity, needs a little explanation so that we know what it means. Maybe some people still subscribe to it today.

Modalism represents the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as three *modes* of the self-disclosure of God. They are not as *distinct* within the being of God. Therefore, this doctrine teaches that God came to earth merely in a different mode; i.e., in a different manner or fashion when He came as Christ and as the Holy Spirit. Now you will understand that this doctrine precludes the idea of Jesus being the Only Begotten Son, and denies the distinct Personality of the Holy Spirit. So Modalism does not offer an adequate explanation of what the Apostles term the Godhead, indeed, the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.) stated what was to become a crucial formula, i.e., the Son is "of the same essence as the Father", but the statement said little about the Holy Spirit.

### The Divine Unity

When we speak about the Divine Unity we are not referring to mere temporal manifestations or modes, nor are we thinking in terms of three Gods (Tritheism); the Bible nowhere teaches this. As a matter of fact, Paul says in his first letter to Corinth, "As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice to idols, we know that the idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many, and lords many), But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus, by whom are all things, and we by him" (1 Cor. 8:4-6). Similarly James, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well, the devils also believe, and tremble" (James 2:19). In view of these two statements, we cannot look upon Jesus as a 'person' with a separate independent existence, but we see Him in the Divine essence of the Godhood, the essential Personality of God Himself; in Him, says Paul, "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9).

The phrase 'the fulness of God' is an interesting one. The Bible asserts quite definitely that there is One God, so whatever is in the Divine nature of the One God must also be present in what comprises the Godhead. Now we know that Paul has stated that in Jesus all the 'fulness' of the Godhead dwelt bodily, i.e., corporeally, which according to the word used in Col. 2:9 means tangibly, visibly, physically. Furthermore, in his Ephesian letter Paul states, "And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph 3:19). Therefore, to be filled with Christ means to be filled with the fulness of God. Christ dwells in our hearts by faith; the Holy Spirit takes up residence in our lives when we become God's children; God is our Father, and underneath are the Everlasting arms. When we know Christ, we know God in the completeness of His Being, for, says Paul, "it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell" (Col. 1:19).

If the foregoing is true, which it undoubtedly is, then we ought to be able to find the perfect co-ordination of the Godhead relative to the most important aspect of Divine Revelation, i.e. Salvation, and indeed we do. In what the Church knows as the Great Commission we have Christ saying to His Apostles, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:18-20). Also, in invoking a Benediction on the saints at Corinth, Paul says, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen" (2 Cor. 13:14).

### The Only Begotten Son

What sort of glory did John and his fellow-Apostles see when they say Jesus? John says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14 A.V.) The Englishman's Greek New Testament renders part of that verse as 'a glory as of an only begotten *with* a Father'. The Greek word PARA, which means 'with' or 'from', indicates that John is not making earthly comparisons but stating the unique, eternal relationship which the Son had with the Father before the foundation of the world. There are some people who think that Jesus was merely a man who became the Son of God at His Incarnation. Nothing, according to the Word, could be further from the truth. John goes on, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom



of the Father, he hath declared Him" (1:18). This expresses the eternal and essential relationship which Jesus had in the Godhead with His Father. Surely we do a grave injustice to the Lord when we look upon Him as a subordinated and down-graded Christ of God. God sent no angel to this earth, but His Only Begotten Son in Whom resided all the fulness of the Godhead.

### The Holy Spirit

The Personality of the Holy Spirit is testified to by John also. In John 14:26 we read, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you". It is interesting to note the interplay of essentiality in the Godhead by what Jesus said, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me" (15:26). Spiritual fulness satisfies our deepest needs. The fulness of God is as much applicable to the Holy Spirit as it is to Christ. He will see to it that we get all we need for the true consummation of our new life in Christ Jesus, as Paul put it, "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Col. 1:9).

Yes, the Holy Spirit fills this part of the work of the Godhead in teaching, guiding, spiritually motivating, and leading us into wisdom and spiritual understanding.

### Summary

What, then, have we learned? Well, we know that there is One God and not three. We also know that the Son and the Holy Spirit are not merely *modes* of the self-disclosure of God, but that even in the One God they have distinct Personalities and are of the essential Personality of God Himself. We know that the Godhead expresses the Eternal Will of God Himself, and that through and by the Son and the Holy Spirit we know God in the completeness of His Being. We know that all of this is for our Salvation and eternal well-being. And wonder of wonders, we know that the child of God becomes a *partaker* of the Divine Nature. Is there more that we need?

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

## STRENGTH UNDER PERFECT CONTROL

Opposite St. Giles in Edinburgh's famous Royal Mile are the City Chambers. The building was originally erected in 1753 as the Royal Exchange, the architect being John Fergus, working to the design of the celebrated John Adam. In the centre of the piazza, is the statue of Alexander taming his horse, Bucephalus, by Sir John Steell. It is a magnificent piece of sculpture.

Andrew R. Burn in his book "ALEXANDER THE GREAT AND THE MIDDLE EAST" touches upon this famous taming episode. Alexander was in his boyhood. The colt was certainly a fine looking creature, but very nervous and unmanageable, and not worth the sale price of thirteen talents (then seventy eight thousand day wages) as far as Alexander's father Philip was concerned. The young Alexander, however, thought differently, and asked to prove his point.

Burn narrates: "Alexander went quietly out to the horse, took hold of his bridle-rein and turned his face towards the sun.... Alexander stood for a few moments stroking and patting him.... he moved from the horse's head to his neck; patted him on the shoulder, rested his hand there and with a spring was suddenly seated astride him. Still in no hurry, he sat there for a few moments, gently, feeling his mouth, and then, with a word and a pressure of his heel, set him in motion. Bucaphalus went off headlong, with the tremendous acceleration that his owner had promised, leaving Philip standing in anxious silence, while Alexander and the horse disappeared over the plain in a cloud of dust.... Once Alexander had gone a few hundred yards, the battle was won. The horse, with the freshness taken out of him, revealed himself as the fine, sensitive animal which had been promised, and which Alexander was to love for many years. It was not many minutes before Alexander, laughing and proud, came back at a more moderate pace, the horse, now apparently a reformed character, answering willingly to the rein."

Bucephalus had been tamed - a dramatic change indeed. The ancient Greeks had a word for this. To them, a horse which was once wild but which had become obedient to bit and to the bridle was PRAUS. In English, PRAUS is MEEK - so translated, three times, in fact, in the New Testament Scriptures.

There is a great lesson here. A lot of people today equate meekness with weakness. They could not be more wrong. Yes, there is a gentleness in PRAUS, but behind the gentleness there is the strength of steel. And the supreme characteristic of the man who is PRAUS is that he is the man who is under perfect control. William Barclay has said: "It is not a spineless gentleness, a sentimental fondness, a passive quietism. It is a strength under control. Numbers 12:3 tells us that Moses was the 'meekest' man upon the earth, but the same Moses was a man who could act with decision and blaze with anger when the occasion arose."

But there is something important to add. No man can attain such perfect control by himself and his own efforts. The man who is PRAUS is not the man who is perfectly SELF-controlled, he is the man who is perfectly GOD-controlled. That strength, indeed that perfect mastery, is given by God alone.

The next time you see a horse, dear reader, think of that incident with Alexander and Bucephalus, think of the strength under control, and think of meekness. Reflect too on these passages:

"Blessed are the MEEK; for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5).

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, MEEKNESS, temperance: against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23).

"Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, MEEKNESS, long-suffering, bearing with one another, and forgiving one another...." (Colossians 3:12-13).

IAN DAVIDSON, Motherwell.

---

## MISCELLANY

IT is not to those who *wish* for righteousness, but to those who *hunger and thirst* for it and would sell all to gain it (as the famishing would sell all other things for bread) that the promise is made, "They shall be filled."

Spurgeon tells of a poor old woman whom one of the church members visited to bring a little financial help. He got no answer, however, when he knocked at the door. He went to the back door, but all was still.

# SCRIPTURE READINGS

AUGUST 1983

7—Ezek. 24:6-27	Luke 19:28-48
14—Zech. 9	Luke 20:1-26
21—Psa.110 & 111	Luke 20:27-47
28—Ezra. 6:1-19	Luke 21:1-19

## THE ENTRY OF THE KING

THE entry of Jesus into Jerusalem was indeed a dramatic one. There could be no mistaking its meaning — the Messiah, God's Anointed King had come. Zechariah the prophet in the 5th century B.C. had declared: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, your King is coming to you; he is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on an ass, a colt the foal of an ass." (Zechariah 9:9). The prophecy was now being fulfilled.

Why did Jesus ride on an ass and not on a horse? The answer is very simple. Only in war did kings ride upon a horse; when they came in peace they rode upon an ass. Jesus came as a King of peace and love.

Luke tells us that many spread their garments in the way of the colt. Matthew, Mark and John reveal that the branches of palm trees were also cast down. "This was a common way of testifying joyful and triumphant feeling", says Albert Barnes.

John said of this incident: "His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him."

## By What Authority?

To those chief priests, scribes and elders who questioned Jesus's authority, Jesus responded by putting a simple question to them: "The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?" Their answer to this question

would answer their own question.

Remember, John had declared that he was the fore-runner of the Messiah. "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He that is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry: He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Matthew 3:11). If these men acknowledged that John's authority was divine then it followed that they had also to agree that Jesus was the Messiah, because John had said so. But if they denied it, they were in real trouble with the people. In the end, they refused to answer, because they refused to face the truth. William Barclay has written: "To face the truth may confront a man with a sore and difficult situation; but to refuse to face it confronts him with a tangle out of which there is no escape. The emissaries of the Pharisees refused to face the truth, and they had to withdraw frustrated and discredited with the crowd."

## The Parable of the Wicked Tenants

At the conclusion of this parable, the chief priests and the scribes sought to lay hands on Jesus because they knew He had spoken it against them. Once again, the truth hurt.

A passage to read in the light of this parable is Isaiah 5:1-7. There, the vineyard is clearly defined as the house of Israel. Here, the vineyard is also the nation of Israel. The tenants are the rulers. The messengers are the prophets who were all rejected, persecuted and killed (Luke 13:34). The beloved son is Jesus Himself. And the condemnation is that "the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it" (Matthew 21:43).

An important point to note in this passage is the fact that the hearers condemned themselves out of their own mouths. Verse 16 is their own reply. A study of Matthew's record will confirm this.

The quotation about the stone which the builders rejected comes from Psalm 118:22,23. R.C. Trench wrote of this subject: "The reason why Jesus leaves for a moment the image of the vineyard, is because of its inadequacy to set forth one important part of truth, that the malice of the Pharisees should not defeat the purpose of God, — that the son should yet be Heir". This stone is clearly identified by Peter as Jesus (Acts 4:10-12 and 1 Peter 2).

### Caesar and God

Jesus, when he lived on earth, lived in enemy-occupied territory. Palestine was part of that vast Roman empire which, by Jesus's day, had conquered most of the then-known world. At the summit of the empire stood the emperor or Caesar. And with the Caesar was a Cult of the Caesar, a religious system in which the Roman emperor was worshipped as a God. Titles he claimed were "Lord", "Son of God", "King", "Saviour of the World" and "High Priest". Inevitably, all this brought a clash, first with the Jews, then with the Christians.

Should you pay tax to Caesar, was then one of the burning questions. Jesus's enemies put it to Him thinking it would impale him on the horns of a dilemma. His response was unexpected. He called for a DENARIUS. One was produced. "Whose image and superscription is on it?" "Caesar's". In the ancient world the sign of kingship was the issue of currency. If a man had the right to put his image and superscription on a coin then he had acquired the right to impose taxation. Jesus was saying here: "If you accept Caesar's currency and use it, you are bound to accept Caesar's right to impose taxes"; "but", he added, "pay to the emperor what belongs to the emperor, and pay to God what belongs to God". In other words, fear God, and honour the king (1 Peter 2:17).

### The Saducees' Question

The Saducees were a Jewish group quite different from the Pharisees. For example, unlike the Pharisees they did not believe in the resurrection from the dead or in angels and spirits. The question they put to Jesus pertained to levirate marriage (Deuteronomy 25). This, they thought, showed the ridiculousness of a belief in the resurrection of a body. Jesus's response showed something else — that "that world" is very much different from the present one.

Notice that Jesus, in his exchange with the Saducees, referred to an incident recorded in the Torah or Pentateuch. There was a reason for this. The Saducees stressed only the law of Moses in the Old Testament and set no store on the other books. Jesus met them on their own ground.

### Destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem

The parallel passages to this one are found in Matthew 24 and Mark 13 and should also be carefully studied. At a recent Mutual Benefit meeting of the Slamannan District Churches the subject — "Matthew 24 — Does It Tell Us About the Destruction of Jerusalem or the End of the World?" — was discussed. It proved most interesting.

A key verse, I think, in this chapter of Luke is verse 32. It reads: "Assuredly, I (Jesus) say to you (disciples), this generation (the generation of that day) will by no means pass away till all things are fulfilled (all things previously stated.)"

Flavius Josephus (born 37/38 A.D.) was a Jewish historian who corroborated many of Jesus's statements recorded here. It should be noted that Josephus was present at the siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and in fact he acted as interpreter for Titus the leader of the Romans. For example, Jesus said: "As for these things which you see, the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another

that shall not be thrown down" (verse 6). Josephus wrote: "...Caesar gave orders that they should now demolish the entire city and temple" (Wars of the Jews, book 7). Is it any wonder that Jesus in knowing all this wept over the city?

IAN DAVIDSON, Motherwell

## REBUKE A WISE MAN

Proverbs 9:8-9 reads: "Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee; rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will yet be wiser; teach a just man and he will increase in learning." Although this inspired advice is directed to the rebuker, it sets forth how one may determine the character of the person who is rebuked. One who hates his rebuker is a scornful rather than a wise man. All who are rebuked classify themselves by their attitude toward the one who has rebuked them.

Christians need to learn to accept and use criticism (rebuke) properly. Each rebuke should be carefully evaluated for its worth. Upon determining the validity of a rebuke, the one rebuker should make correction, and he should love his thoughtful critic. We must not be so proud as to reject, without consideration, all censure. Our prayer should be: Help others to care enough to rebuke us, and help us to be wise enough to love them because they care. With this attitude, we can help each other to be better Christians.

---

When he saw the old lady again in the church meeting, he asked her, 'Where were you when I called on you? I came to bring you a gift, but you weren't at home.' 'Oh, was that you? I thought it was the landlord to collect the rent.'

---

So men think that when the gospel comes God wants to collect something

from them, and do not understand that He has come to bring them the most precious of all gifts and blessings.

---

## BELIEF : (11)

OUR Lord's final instruction was that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name . . . beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). We have seen that repentance arises out of a deep sense of guilt for sin. This in turn gives rise to a feeling of deep sorrow and a desire to undo any wrong which has been done. All this, however, does not constitute repentance, though here we are getting very near to it. It would be more accurate to describe such emotions as remorse, or

### the half-way stage

towards repentance. There is still something missing before we reach true repentance (or change of mind).

Many only reach this half-way stage, simply because they do not know what other steps they can take to ease their guilty conscience. One might go on for years in such a position.

It is true that the memory of one's guilt can be pushed aside, even for years; but every now and then guilt rears its head as a grim reminder. It points an accusing finger, and seems to say: "**Thou art the man!**"

Nathan, God's prophet, hurled this accusation at David (2 Samuel 12:7). David had ordered the commander of his army to put Uriah into the forefront of the battle, so causing his death. He wanted Uriah's wife for himself. This was murder for lust, and it would be difficult to conceive a more heinous sin. Yet David was God's chosen servant, and out of his loins was to come the Saviour of the world (Matthew 1:6; 22:42).

### The deceitfulness of sin

That story is in 2 Samuel 11-12. David's remorse was later expressed in Psalm 51: "For I acknowledge my

transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."

Thus David lamented in his abject confession to God. As a punishment his child died. Moreover, God warned him that the sword would not depart from his house. This was later fulfilled in the death of his eldest son Amnon at the hand of his half-brother Absalom. Absalom himself rebelled against his father David, and was ultimately put to fight and killed.

How great a deceiver is sin! How it allures its victims with its imaginary pleasures, but how bitter and tragic the results when it has run its course. "Oh my son, Absalom, my son! Would God I had died for thee, oh Absalom, my son, my son!" So wept David.

#### What is sin?

Sin is no respecter of persons. It affects the highest and the lowest. How true John's words, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8).

The above question probes the depth of all human actions. Considering the varying degrees and types of sin, a detailed definition would provide many answers. Apart from the particular sins specified in the Bible, sin is referred to in very general terms as if those addressed well knew what it meant, without being told in so many words. Is not this also true for us?

#### Is a definition required?

As responsible adults, do we need to be told when we do wrong? Do we need to be told what these wrongs are? Don't we know when we have sinned — without consulting a dictionary? When John says "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves . . ." he does not need to tell us of what particular sins his hearers were guilty. Nor did Zacharias when he said of John the Baptist, "Thou, child, shalt be called the

prophet of the highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways: to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins" (Matthew 1:76-77). Nor did Paul when he said, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). See his list of sins in Romans 2, and compare it with James 1:13-16. James 4:17 is as good a definition as any: "to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

#### The tragic results of sin

Even if we had no definition of sin we would know it by its tragic results. This we shall discuss in our next article. We hope also to show what is the object of repentance which leads to remission of sins. We must also bear in mind the final purpose of these studies: to discover what sanctification of the spirit really means.

#### Exercises in belief

Psalm 51; Matthew 3:1-6; Luke 18:9-14; Romans 4:7-8; 5:6-10; 6; James 4.

W. BROWN

*To be continued*

## DEEDS OF COVENANT

The following letter received re: the above:-

Dear Bro. Editor,

As one who has actively encouraged the use of Deeds of Covenant in giving, may I present a different point of view to, and specifically answer the points raised in, the report of the Slamannan District Mutual Benefit Meeting in the April issue of the "S.S."

I do not believe that giving under covenant is improper or that it should be disallowed in our congregations. To deal with the three points raised:-

#### (1) Confidentiality in Giving

There is no reason why giving need not remain confidential between the giver and God. Although the covenanted

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

amounts will be known to at least one person in the congregation (other than the giver), the covenanted amount need not be the total of what the covenanter gives. *e.g.* a person may covenant £1 per week and yet give £5 per week into the treasury. Only the covenanter knows if that is the case, and hence confidentiality is maintained. Personally, I have always suggested that the covenanted amount should not be a persons total giving.

### (2) Giving must be on the first day of the week.

This principle need in no way be contravened. Covenant giving need not be an annual event. The Deed can be drawn up to specify that the giving will be weekly (each Lord's Day). I accept that the actual repayment is made annually but then so is Bank interest on church accounts etc.

### (3) Money must not be given by the 'world'.

This clearly does not occur in covenant giving. The repayment to the church is made from money which has been *earned* by the individual covenanter and paid over to the government in taxation (a non-taxpayer cannot enter a Covenant). Therefore it is not the world's money but a re-allocation of the individual Christian's money which he has earned.

I realise that many other points will have been raised in the discussion of this topic. In making this response it is not my intention to provoke controversy but to help those who give by this means, not to feel that they are giving improperly. I would close by making the following point:- surely it is more acceptable that the money we pay in tax should be given back to the church for use in the Lord's work than for some of the un-Christian activities in which all governments indulge.

Robert Marsden,  
387 Poolstock Lane, Marus Bridge,  
Wigan, Lancs.

**Longshoot, Wigan:** We have recently concluded a Mission at which brother Michael Gaunt was the speaker. The time proved to be a great time of encouragement to the congregation at Longshoot, and also to these from neighbouring congregations. We are thankful to the brethren in the area who came along to share in the fellowship with us, and we praise God for the blessing we all received.

Our special thanks to Michael who preached the word with power and conviction, and we pray that the seed sown will ultimately bear fruit. We are pleased to report that during the mission Dawn Seddon expressed her desire to become a Christian and was baptised at the concluding meeting.

D.MELLING, Sec.

**Kirkcaldy, Scotland:** We are again happy to report the addition of two more precious souls to the Lord's Body in Kirkcaldy. On Lord's day 29th May, Mairn Campbell and Graeme Tullis (Son of sister Rena Tullis) confessed Jesus as Lord and were baptised for the remission of their sins. May God be with them and bless them on their journey heavenwards.

Robert Hughes Sec.

**Kirkcaldy, Scotland:** It is with regret that the elders have found it necessary to remove brother Tom Moffat from fellowship from the congregation. Should Tom approach sister congregations with a view to placing membership with them, we recommend that that congregation should contact the elders in Kirkcaldy before accepting him as a brother in Christ. We solicit your prayers for Tom that he may come to realize his position and make his peace with God.

Robert Hughes Sec.

## AID TO INDIA

It will be of interest to the readers of the 'Scripture Standard', who have contributed to the assistance of brethren in India, to know that we have received replies from nearly all those to whom we have sent help, expressing their great gratitude to us. Brother Chukka Isaac has been most helpful in this regard. Is it not a wonderful privilege to be able to help, even in a small way, the 'have not' brethren in India?

We have also sent off £25 to brother Aziz Masih to help him in his present illness. He was an inspector on the railway but unable to work recently. The church meets in his house. We also hope to send a few £'s to help buy artificial limbs for an unfortunate (Methodist) boy who had both legs severed on a railway line. Some of these 'Methodists' meet with the church of Christ for Bible Study and immerse adult believers.

Money continues to come into our fund, some in quite small amounts, but we are delighted to receive all donations, no matter how small, and look forward to your continued support. There is no 'National Health Scheme' in India to provide artificial limbs or sickness pay - indeed there are precious few hospitals and doctors. A little can go a long way in India.

Miss Ruth Nisbet, 1F Station Court, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland.

---

## CHANGE OF SECRETARY

**Mayfield, Easthouses, Scotland:**  
The Secretary of the church is now brother Morris Finlay, 14 Ninth Street, Newtongrange, Midlothian, Scotland.  
Telephone No. 031 663 3841

---

**THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD** is published monthly.

### PRICES PER YEAR - POST PAID BY SURFACE MAIL

UNITED KINGDOM and COMMONWEALTH	....	....	....	£5.00
CANADA & U.S.A.	...	....	....	\$10.00
AIR MAIL please add £1.50 or \$3.00 to above surface mail rates				

### DISTRIBUTION AGENT & TREASURER:

JOHN K. KNELLER, 4 Glassel Park Road, Longniddry, East Lothian, EH32 0NY  
Tel. No. Longniddry (0875) 53212 to whom change of address should be sent.

**EDITOR:** JAMES R. GARDINER, 87 Main Street, Pathhead Midlothian, Scotland, EH37 5PT Telephone Ford 320 527