

The **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

Vol. 69 No. 2

FEBRUARY, 2002

ABOVE ALL OTHERS

In this morning's newspapers the Registrar General, in his annual report, has stated that during the last year (2001) the most popular names given to baby girls were Chloe, Lauren, Emma and Meggan (in that order), and with boys, the most popular name was Jack, followed by Cameron, Ryan and James. Perhaps this apparent lack of imagination comes as quite a surprise to us, and we had the impression that more flamboyant names, based upon 'pop' idols and film-stars, were the order of the day. Names are, of course, very important, and there is a school of thought which suggests that people, classed as 'failures' in this world, are under-achievers because, at birth, they were given the wrong name. It is certainly sad to see a very dull child with a very dynamic name.

This stimulates, I suppose, the age-old question asked by Shakespeare, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose By any other name would smell as sweet" (Romeo & Juliet II ii). Shakespeare asks a very pertinent question, does he not? and certainly nothing much has changed since he penned these words. There is, perhaps, even less in a name, nowadays. Whether a boy is called John, or Robert, or William, or Thomas seems fairly academic, but I suppose such names are, at least, quite harmless. There are, however, countless numbers of children who have been saddled with some fancy or bizarre name and they have to cringe their way through school and through life with it. I heard about a little girl in a family called Clutterbuck, who was given the Christian name "Buttercup", and I certainly worked beside a man who, all his life, hated his Christian name "Jellicoe" (presumably after the First-World-War Admiral) and who was called 'jelly' all through school. Parents should be more thoughtful.

Despite this reported popularity of 'Jack' and 'Chloe' at present, one still hears of babies in prams stuck with trendy 'pop-star' names, and so parents are still taking liberties with their offspring. Names are, of course, essential for life-long identification, and the allocation of names was, I suppose, the very first task of Adam in Eden. What's in a name.?

MEANINGFUL NAMES

Nevertheless, in some other countries things are different, and names have real meaning and are taken seriously. While names are fairly meaningless in Europe they are full of meaning in African and Eastern countries and are of great interest to ethnologists. A name to an ethnologist is like a bone to an anatomist and so meaningful were names used by past civilisations, that random names, like old coins, can reveal

much of forgotten dynasties. The Bible is a fairly complete record of one of the world's oldest civilisations, and the Hebrews, perhaps more than anyone else, were particular in the manner of giving names. Even their common place-names had meaning and often highlighted some physical peculiarity, e.g. 'Beer' meaning a well (i.e. Beer-sheba): 'Abel' a meadow (as in Abel-mehola): 'Beth' a house, (as in Bethlehem): 'Ramoth' a height (as in Ramoth-Gilead) and so on. Personal names were usually given by the mothers and expressed a hope, a vow, a sentiment or an expression of thanks. Names were personal possessions, rarely hereditary, and often denoted a role or quality to which the owner tried to attain. At the very dawn of time, Eve called her firstborn Cain (acquisition of the Lord). Seth was so-named because he was 'a replacement for Abel'. Phinehas' wife called her son 'Ichabod' because 'God's glory had left Israel'. Israel meant 'a prince'; Jacob 'a supplanter'; Dan 'a judge'; Esau 'hairy'; Edom 'red'; Zechariah 'God has remembered'; Malachi 'messenger'; Nabal 'a fool'; Joseph 'God may add another child'; Micah 'who is like Jehovah?'; Judah 'praise' and multitudes of other examples could be added. Naomi said, "Call me not Naomi (kindness of God) but call me **Marah**" (bitterness) (Ruth 1:20). This style of appellation continued throughout Jewish history into New Testament times and we find Jesus saying to Simon (Andrew's brother), "Thou art Simon the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephass which is by interpretation, a stone." (John 1:42).

Occasionally names given at birth were changed in later life to conform to some new role, new relationship, or new hope. Benoni (son of my sorrow) was renamed Benjamin (son of my right hand). Abram (exalted father) was changed to Abraham (father of a multitude); Jacob was renamed Israel by the angel with whom he wrestled and there are other examples: one of which, I suppose might be Saul becoming Paul, the apostle.

ABOVE ALL OTHERS

When we consider that the angels have names, and that God has given names to the very stars, we can rightly conclude that names are important. We can say, "Yes" to Shakespeare: there is something in a name. Even God, when asked, gave Himself a name. When Moses, surrounded as he was by nations with gods which had names, asked God by what name he would identify Him when called upon, answered that He was "THE I AM" (always the present tense as being eternal). Moses had agreed (reluctantly) to rescue the Israelites from bondage in Egypt, and Moses anticipated that the Israelites would ask him the name of the god vouchsafing such rescue. "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM, and thus shalt say unto the Children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. Furthermore, this shalt thou say unto the Children of Israel, The Lord God of your Fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob hath sent me (Moses) unto you. This is My name for ever: and this is My memorial unto all generations." God's name is thereafter, and throughout the Bible a matter of great solemnity, dignity and gravity: to such a degree that devout men were reluctant even to mention it, and used a substitute. God's name is alternately described as blessed (Dan 2:20); glorious (Is. 63:14); great (Ps 99:3); strong (Pr. 18:10); fearful (Deut. 28:58); excellent (Ps. 8:1); hallowed (Matt. 6:9); everlasting (Is. 63:16); worthy of all praise (Ps. 113:3) and never to be taken in vain (Ex. 20:7). It is sad to relate that today, when God's name is raised in the world at large, it is but to take it in vain or to have it blasphemed.

When we come into the N.T. we find that, while God's name in no way stands diminished, He (God) has delegated all authority in heaven and earth to His only Son, Christ Jesus. This is, of course, a very sweeping and far-reaching claim to make, but Christ Himself (after His resurrection) said, **"All authority hath been given unto Me both in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations."** (Matt. 28:18). God, in response to the obedience of His Son, hath given Him A NAME which is above every other name. Paul says, **"Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him and hath given Him a name which is above every other name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in the earth, and things under the earth."** (Phil. 2:9,10). Thus Joseph and Mary, when their child was born, were spared the responsibility of forming a name for their offspring. The angel Gabriel came all the way from God's presence to say, **"Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."** 'Jesus' was thus the God-given name of our Lord, denoting His all-prevailing function as **Saviour of men**. He was also called God's 'Anointed' ('Christ' in the Greek; 'Messiah' in the Hebrew) and so is referred to as 'Jesus the Christ' or 'Christ Jesus.' The term 'God's Anointed' refers, not so much to His role as Saviour, but to His **kingly authority and mediatorial position as 'Servant of the Lord.'**

Such is the importance of this God-ordained name, that **all that we say and all that we do must be in His name** - **"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto God and the Father by Him"** (Col. 3:17). When the police bang on a door and shout, "Open up in the name of the law" we understand them to be claiming to carry the whole weight and authority of the law behind them. Likewise, all that we say and do must **'be in His name'** and carry His authority or sanction. Our very salvation is irrevocably linked with Christ's name and Paul limits those who will be saved to those **who call upon His name** (Rom. 10:13) and Peter said, **"neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven, given amongst men, whereby we must be saved."** (Acts 4:12). Jesus instructed that after the apostles had been endued with the Holy Spirit they should preach the gospel **in His name** amongst all nations. The apostles duly complied with those directions and commanded their hearers to **"Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins."** Later, when Paul came across the disciples who knew only John's baptism, he explained to them that Christ's baptism had superceded John's, **"And when they heard this they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus."** (Acts 19:5). Yes, there is something in a name.

A GOOD NAME

Solomon had a fair bit to say about names and (in Pr. 22:1) suggests that **"A good name is rather to be chosen than riches, and loving favour than silver and gold."** It is not to be supposed that Solomon meant that any particular name could be chosen because it was good, but rather that a name is 'good' because the **owner** of it is good. It was **character and reputation** that Solomon had in view, not any intrinsic value in any name. Given the choice between riches and a good name (reputation) one is to seek the good name: and to be held in 'loving favour' (high esteem) is much better, says Solomon, than silver and gold. We should so live that we give ourselves a 'good name'. I suppose that some men inherit a name to be lived up to: while others have to live it down. There is still no love lost between Clan MacDonald and the Campbells and I

suppose there are Campbells who live in the shadow of past treachery. Likewise very few little girls, nowadays, seem to be called Jezebel or little boys, Judas, whereas Mary and Martha are quite common. Names represent something to every one of us, and there are names we associate with good remembrances and bad ones, and a person who has been nasty to us puts us against the name they bear, perhaps for ever. The name of Adolf Hitler is still loathed by millions, as is Joseph Stalin by the Russians. In the business world there are some firms with a 'good name' for quality and integrity and some we would not trust. Barlow Clowes International is a name unlikely to be forgotten by all those who have lost their life-savings. The names themselves have no inherent virtue; **our actions** alone provide the virtue or lack of it. Shakespeare said (comparing the names of Brutus and Caesar) that when **written** one name is as fair as the other, when **spoken** one sounded as good as the other; when **weighed** one was as heavy as the other; and when **conjured** with, Brutus would start a spirit as well as Caesar (Julius Caesar I iii) but the difference lay, of course, in the person. Some names are certainly names to conjure with. After the Philistine princes had departed "**David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul: so that his name was much set by.**" (1 Sam. 18:30). And so David acquired (by his behaviour and wisdom) a name to set much by: or a name to conjure with (as Shakespeare put it).

Cornelius had a very good name even before he encountered the gospel but had an even better one after he had obeyed the gospel; for from that time **his name** had been entered in the Lamb's Book Of Life. Osama Bin Laden was a name virtually unknown a few months ago, but now known to all the world, and unlikely ever to be forgotten. Yes, there is something in a name.

A NAME TO LIVE BY

David's name was a name much set by, by the Jews, yet David called Christ his 'Lord.' Christ's name is one we not only **set by**, but one we must live by. God, through Nathan, once reminded David of his humble beginnings, that God had raised him from the sheeppcote (and sheep watching) to be the great ruler over all Israel "**and made him (David) a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth**" (2 Sam. 7:9). Christ had even more humble beginnings, being born in a manger, but yet was exalted to much greater heights, and given a much greater name than David. "**Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him (Christ) 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 the earth, and things under the earth) and that every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father.**" (Phil. 2:9).

What, then, are the lessons we can derive from these things? Well, as earthly creatures we should bow the knee, and confess with the lips, the **NAME** which God has bestowed upon His Son Christ Jesus (and this is much easier to do today than it was in Roman times). Solomon exhorts us to pursue a good name as individuals, and to so live that we not only adorn our names; but so that men can not blaspheme **the worthy name** by which we are called. We have a name to live up to. Christ set the standard. He 'went everywhere doing good' and taught us that we ought to do likewise. No one could rightly point the finger at Jesus, either when He lived on earth or since, and we must try to be more and more like unto Him. Having taken the name of Christ upon ourselves we must strive to live up to it, and walk worthy of it. May God (who deems names important) help us all that "**Whatsoever we do in word, or in deed, we shall do in the**

name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto God the Father by Him." (Col. 3:17). Yes, there is something in a name; especially in the name of God's only Son.

There is a Name I love to hear,
I ought to tell its worth,
It sounds like music in mine ear,
The sweetest name on earth.

EDITOR.

MESSIAH'S THRONE HAS TO BE IN HEAVEN HE REIGNS NOW

Before Acts 2, the kingdom is always spoken of as being in the future. Afterwards it is spoken of as being here now:-

Ephesians 1:20-23 - "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised Him from the dead, and set Him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."

Colossians 1:13 - "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."

1 Corinthians 15:25 - "... he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet."

THE KINGDOM OF DANIEL 2, HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED

We saw that the kingdom is here and the Lord Jesus is reigning over it now, and, when he returns, it is to hand over the kingdom to God the Father. So he is not coming to establish his kingdom but to relinquish his kingdom.

1 Corinthians 15:20 - "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. 21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. 24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom of God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. 25 For he must reign, till he hath put all things under his feet. 26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. 27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. 28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

THE KINGDOM HAD TO BEGIN AT THE TIME OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the image which depicted the kingdom of God coming after four other kingdoms (Daniel 2:28-45.) The head of gold depicted the *first* kingdom Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom, Babylonia, (Daniel 2:38.) The *second* (silver chest and arms) was the Medo-Persia kingdom. To Nebuchadnezzar's son, Belshazzar, Daniel said, "PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." Daniel (5:28.) Darius the Mede sacked Babylon. The *third* kingdom (belly and thighs of brass) was the Greek empire. Daniel told Belshazzar

“The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king.” (Daniel 8:20-21.) The first king was Alexander. The Roman empire succeeded the Greek and so is the *fourth* kingdom (the legs of iron and feet of iron and clay). The kingdom of God had to be established when the Romans were in power: “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever” (Daniel 2:44). They were in power when Christ came (Luke 3:1). The Roman empire has long since disintegrated.

Passages from the book “Revelation” are used as proof text by protagonists of the theory that the Lord Jesus is yet to return to earth to set up his kingdom even though the Apostle John considered himself, at the time he wrote the book, to be in the Lord’s kingdom.

Revelation 1:9 - “I John, who also am your brother, and companion ... *in the kingdom...*”

CHRIST IS ON DAVID'S THRONE NOW!

HIS THRONE CANNOT BE ON EARTH

The Lord Jesus descended from Jeconias.

The last official king of Judah was wicked Coniah, also known in the Old Testament as Jehoiachin, rendered in the Septuagint as “Jeconias” as in Matt 1.12 A.V.

The Lord Jesus descended from Coniah (Matthew 1:12). No descendant of Coniah could reign on David’s throne in Jerusalem. (See “The Curse of Jeconias” <http://members.aol.com/zpaynel/>)

Jeremiah 22:28-30 - “Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not? O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.”

The Lord Jesus is both king and priest at the same time.

Zechariah 6:12-13 - “And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is THE BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: Even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”

He is our priest now in heaven

Hebrews 4:14-15 - “Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”

He cannot be a priest on the earth.

Hebrews 8;4 - “For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law...”

Since he cannot be a priest on earth, he cannot be a king whilst on the earth.

HIS THRONE IS IN HEAVEN

Psalm 89-2 **“For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens. 3 I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, 4 Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah. 34 My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. 35 Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. 36 His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. 37 It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven.”**

Verse 37 says that it is established in heaven. David’s seed would sit forever on David’s throne in heaven.

Acts 2-30 **“Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; 31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul as not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. 32 This Jesus God hath raised up...”**

Peter applied this to the resurrection of Christ. Having been raised from death began to reign upon his ascension to heaven. It will not be in the future on the earth.

THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM

Part of the problem is men’s misunderstanding of the nature of the kingdom.

When James and John demanded justice on the Samaritans, because they had snubbed the Lord and his disciples, the Lord Jesus rebuked them for having the wrong spirit:-

Luke 9:55 - **“... he ... rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.”**

(Would those “christians” who want Bin Laden to be “taken out” have wanted Saul of Tarsus “taken out”?)

The Lord Jesus insisted that his would be a *spiritual* kingdom:-

John 18:36 **“Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence”.**

If we forget the nature of the kingdom we will have difficulty - both theologically and spiritually.

FOOTNOTE:-

Some people make a distinction between the throne of David, the throne of Solomon, and the throne of the Lord. These concepts are used interchangeably in 1. Chronicles 29:23:-

“Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David his father...”

ALLAN ASHURST

THE BIBLE

No book in the world compares with the Bible. It is unique. It is, quite simply, a revelation from God. I try to read it daily. To me, it is food and drink for a hungry and thirsty soul. Without it I would die. Therefore, I want to tell you a great deal about this

very special book. I hope you will read what I have to say, and I hope it will lead you to read the Bible all the more. You will be a better person if you do.

I have slept in many a hotel room. More often than not there has been a Gideon Bible at my bedside. I once found these words in a Preface: "The Bible - it reveals the mind of God, the state of man, the doom of the ungodly and the happiness of believers. Its teaching is holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, its prophecies are certain and its decisions immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practise it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, armour to sustain you and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveller's map, the pilgrim's stay, the pilot's compass, the builder's plan, the soldier's sword, the shepherd's staff, the sailor's anchor and the Christian's charter. It should fill the memory, rule the heart and guide the feet. Here, paradise is restored, heaven is opened and hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, redemption its plan and the glory of God its end. It is given to you here in this life, it will be opened in the judgement and is established for ever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labour and condemns all who trifle with its sacred contents. Come to it with awe; read it with reverence, frequently, slowly, prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a storehouse of food, a paradise of glory, a rose of rare fragrance, a river of joy, a life-giving fountain, a wheel with sixty-six spokes (books), each leading to Christ, its centre and hub".

Whoever wrote that knew what he was talking about.

The Bible is quite a large book. In fact, it is a book of books. It contains 66 in all - 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. (These numbers should be easy to remember. After all, 3 multiplied by 9 equals 27.) Some books are large and some, small. Let me give you the ten largest and the ten smallest from the number of words each book contains. 1) Psalms (42,732 words); 2) Jeremiah (42,729); 3) Ezekiel (39,442); 4) Genesis (38,520); 5) Isaiah (37,078); 6) Numbers (32,943); 7) Exodus (32,767); 8) Deuteronomy (28,402); 9) 2 Chronicles (26,123); and 10) Luke (25,986). So we readily see that nine out of the ten largest books in the Bible are found in the Old Testament Scriptures. Luke is tenth and is, therefore, the largest book of the New Testament Scriptures.

The shortest books in the Bible are as follows: 1) 3 John (295 words); 2) 2 John (299); 3) Philemon (431); 4) Jude (609); 5) Obadiah (670); 6) Titus (899); 7) 2 Thessalonians (1,023); 8) Haggai (1,134); 9) Nahum (1,285); and 10) Jonah (1,323). So, six of the shortest ten books in the Bible are among the twenty-seven New Testament books. The remaining four are found in the Old Testament canon.

The English Bible is divided thus: (Old Testament) *The Law or the Pentateuch* (5 books), which are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. *History* (12 books): Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. *Poetry* (5 books): Job, Psalms Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon. *Major Prophets* (5 books) Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel. *Minor Prophets* (12 books): Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. (New Testament) *Gospels* (4 books), which are Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. *History* (1 book): Acts. *Epistles* (13 Pauline): Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon; (8 General): Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2 & 3 John and Jude. *Prophecy* (1 book): Revelation.

The Jews divide their Hebrew Bible a different way. 1) *The Law or Torah* (5 books): Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. 2) *The Prophets or Nevi'im*. These are sub-divided thus: *Former Prophets* - Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings; *Latter Prophets* - Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve, which are the books Hosea to Malachi. 3) *The Writings or Kethuvim*, which include a) the Poetical Books - Psalms, Job and Proverbs; b) the Five Rolls or Megilloth - Ruth, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations and Esther; c) the Historical Books - Daniel, Ezra- Nehemiah and 1 & 2 Chronicles. The divisions might be different, but please note that the books are the same. Some of their books have different titles too. Genesis is "In the beginning"; Exodus: "These are the names"; Leviticus: "And He called"; Numbers: "In the wilderness"; Deuteronomy: "These are the words"; Psalms: "Praises"; Song of Solomon: "Song of Songs"; Ecclesiastes: "The Preacher"; Lamentations "How!" and 1 & 2 Chronicles: "The words of the days".

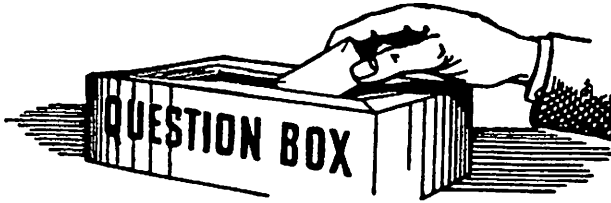
A lot of people do not realise the famous sayings that come from the Bible. Here are some of them: "*Let there be light!*" (Genesis 1:3); "*Am I my brother's keeper?*" (Genesis 4:9); "*Fire and brimstone*" (Genesis 19:24); "*Sold his birthright*" (Genesis 25:33); "*A land flowing with milk and honey*" (Exodus 3:8); "*Eye for eye*" (Exodus 21:24); "*The scapegoat*" (Leviticus 16:10); "*The fat of the land*" (Numbers 13:20); "*the apple of his eye*" (Deuteronomy 32:10); "*God save the King!*" (1 Samuel 10:24); "*Played the fool*" (1 Samuel 26:21); "*How are the mighty fallen!*" (2 Samuel 1:25); "*The half was not told me*" (1 Kings 10:7); "*Girded up his loins*" (1 Kings 18:46); "*Sackcloth and ashes*" (Esther 4:3); "*I am escaped with the skin of my teeth*" (Job 19:20); "*Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings*" (Psalm 8:2); "*Go from strength to strength*" (Psalm 84:7); "*Spare his rod*" (Proverbs 13:24); "*Pride goes before destruction*" (Proverbs 18:18); "*All is vanity*" (Ecclesiastes 1:2); "*Flies in the ointment*" (Ecclesiastes 10:1); "*The voice... in the wilderness*" (Isaiah 40:3); "*A drop of a bucket*" (Isaiah 40:15); "*A word in season*" (Isaiah 50:4); "*All we like sheep have gone astray*" (Isaiah 53:6); "*As a lamb to the slaughter*" (Isaiah 53:7); "*Arise and shine*" (Isaiah 60:1); "*Holier than thou*" (Isaiah 65:5); "*Can the leopard change his spots?*" (Jeremiah 13:23); "*Wheel... in a wheel*" (Ezekiel 1:16); "*Sour grapes*" (Ezekiel 18:2); "*Feet... of clay*" (Daniel 2:33); "*Wrote.. upon... the wall*" (Daniel 5:5). These are enough to digest meantime. I shall give more famous quotations that originate from the New Testament next month. Anthony Burgess has written: "Today, the English of the Authorised Version seems quaint and sometimes it is obscure, but there is no doubt of its beauty and power. There is no writer who has not been influenced by it - even writers like Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells, though not Christian, have fallen heavily under its spell. Even people with little learning tend, when writing letters, to use the rhythms and language of the Bible".

(TO BE CONTINUED)

IAN S. DAVIDSON, Motherwell.

ONLY SIX!

It is told that a Sunday school teacher was once lamenting to C. H. Spurgeon about the smallness of her class. Spurgeon asked her how many scholars she had. "Six" was the reply. "My dear, Spurgeon replied, "Enough for you to be responsible for in the day of judgement."



Conducted by
Frank Worgan

The events of recent weeks and months have undoubtedly drawn the attention of more people to the fact that the existence of the Islamic Religion is a reality that must be faced.

Consequently a variety of questions have arisen, one of which I want to deal with in this issue.

A brother writes: *"A tricky issue Muslims raise. We disparage the permission in the Koran allowing Muslims to take any women captives as concubines and wives, yet the same right was given to the Jews under the Law of Moses in Numbers 31:18 and Deuteronomy 21:10-14.*

Would you tackle it in the 'S.S' Question Box?"

If you will read these verses - too long to print here - you will see that they reveal that the Israelites were given permission to make slaves of their captives, and were allowed to make wives of certain women.

If you will also read Deut. 20:16-18, you will see that this was not an unrestricted permission. It did not extend to the seven Canaanite tribes named in those verses, but probably related only to the Midianites, mentioned in Numbers 31.

You may remember that the Midianites were descendants of Midia, the son of Abraham by his second wife, Keturah, so there was a racial connection between the Israelites and the Midianites which did not exist between Israel and the Canaanites.

Furthermore, the passages referred to, do not speak of *concubines*. The Midianite women were to be taken as wives, and, as such, the law would require that they be treated as wives. A case in point would be that of Hagar, who bore Abraham's son Ishmael. When Sarah demanded that Hagar be sent away, Abraham was unwilling to yield to this demand, until instructed to do so by God. Even the Nuzu laws of that time decreed that, having given birth to a son, Hagar should be given the respect due to a wife, and Abraham was prepared to honour that law.

However, at the root of this question lies the issue of slavery in the ancient world.

1st Let us bear in mind that, after the entrance of Sin into our world, man ceased to be the perfect creature that God had first made. Losing fellowship with God, mankind sank deeper and deeper into sin, Murder, theft, falsehood, immorality became common-place among human beings. Social injustices were created. It was never God's desire that one person should become the slave of another, but as men exercised the free will with which God had blessed them, slavery was established.

2nd Remember, also, that the Law of Moses did not introduce slavery. It was wide-spread in the ancient world many centuries before the people of Israel came into existence.

Indeed, for centuries they were themselves slaves in Egypt, and therefore, as a people must have come to accept slavery as a normal state of affairs.

History reveals that slavery was widely practised in the Roman world of New

Testament times. It has been reckoned that 50% of the population of the Roman Empire belonged to the slave class, and this class included doctors, lawyers and scholars.

3rd It is also true that the Law of Moses did not *abolish* slavery. What it did was to set out a law for the protection and treatment of slaves, that was more benign and far higher than anything the world had ever seen. For example, according to the Mosaic Law, one who had become a slave because of debt must be set free in the Year of Jubilee, but provision was made for the slave who loved his masters, to choose to remain in his master's service. The ceremony is described in Ex.21:17.

4th Why did God allow His people to practise slavery? The answer is, for the same reason that He permitted divorce. The Lord Jesus explains this when he says, "*Because of the hardness of your heart*".

In Matt. 19:1-9, and Mark 10:1-12 Jesus points out that from the very beginning God intended marriage to be a life-long commitment. But the Israelites had used a law, which was meant to protect the purity and sanctity of marriage (See Deut.24:1), and were abusing it, and making it an excuse to divorce their wives for the most trivial of reasons, because of their un-spirituality. It was this abuse of the Law which resulted in women being degraded and treated as easily disposable chattels.

It remained for Christianity - and Christianity alone - to elevate womanhood, and to establish the principle that, in the sight of God, men and women are of equal worth.

Similarly, it remained for Christianity to change men's minds about slavery, by changing their hearts and making them realize that, when human beings become Christians they must appreciate that '*in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female, for you are all one*' (Gal. 3:26-27)

5th Finally, whatever was *permitted* under the Law of Moses has no relevance for us today, because when Jesus died on the cross the old Mosaic covenant with its laws and ceremonies, ceased to be valid.

By his sacrificial death Jesus has ratified the New Covenant, under which all men are brought into a personal relationship with God, and this, in its turn has introduced into the world a standard of morality and social justice that is higher than any found elsewhere.

(Questions to Frank Worgan, 5 Gryfebank Way, Houston, Renfrewshire, Scotland, PA6 7NZ).

BE NOT ENTANGLED AGAIN WITH DIGRESSION'S YOKE

"Having been in the bondage of Egypt, and having felt the scorpion lash of sectarianism, I know as those who are freeborn can never know, how sweet a thing it is to enjoy the light and liberty of the gospel truth, both as to faith and practice. Our children think us in our dotage, and that we see ghosts and hob-goblins where no real danger exists. But I know what I am talking about and would turn them against any, even the slightest, departure from the plain teachings of God's Word. I am willing to be liberal, and will be as far as it is lawful; but I must not be liberal at the expense of truth. We may be as liberal as we please with our own things, such as opinions and speculations, for they are private property; but let us be careful how we touch the Ark

of God!

When the devil wants to make us slaves, he baits his trap with sentiments of extreme liberality and a show of abounding love. When he wants to enslave men, he is not as silly as to let them see the prison he has prepared, or the chains he has forged for them. When he comes to us with purposes of hate, he often covers himself with a cloak of charity, and many are weak enough to take the bait and lose their liberty forever. We must remember that divine precepts and practices cannot be set aside for any consideration. God's Word must be the measure of our charity, of our liberality, of everything pertaining to life and doctrine, or practice. When it speaks, we speak. When it is silent, we must be silent." - Samuel Rogers, one of the pioneers of the Restoration movement. "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

Apostle Paul.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Mar. 3	Psalm 45	Hebrews 3
Mar. 10	Genesis 1:26 to 2:3	Hebrews 4
Mar. 17	Psalm 110	Hebrews 5
Mar. 24	Exodus 26:15-37	Hebrews 6
Mar. 31	Genesis 14:8-24	Hebrews 7

THE TRUE HOME OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD (3:1-4:13)

In this portion of Scripture we have the following sub-divisions: *Jesus Greater than Moses; The Rejection of Jesus is More Serious than the Rejection of Moses; The True Rest of God may be Forfeited; and Exhortation to Attain God's Rest.*

Moses was a great leader. He is one of the most outstanding characters of the Bible. It was he who led the children of Israel out of the land of bondage - Egypt. The Hebrew writer later included him in that great list of Heroes of Faith (11:23-29).

He said of him: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of

Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward" (11:24-26). We also read in Scripture: "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face" (Deuteronomy 34:10).

Moses was great, but Jesus was far greater because He is THE prophet of God. Of course, He is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. In addition, He is "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession" (Hebrews 3:1). In other words, Jesus is our everything; Jesus is our all. As the Father said of Him both at His baptism and His transfiguration: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear you Him" (Matthew 3:17;17:5)

The disobedience of the Israelites in Moses' day is a lesson to us all today. We must learn from their history (Romans 15:4;1Corinthians 10:11). Many of them did not see the promised "rest" because of unbelief (3:19). What a tragedy! The Christian's promised rest is in heaven. We shall see it if we remain faithful. "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" (4:11). Jesus will guide us, help us and strengthen us along the way. After all,

He has already trod the path. He knows all the difficulties, all the temptations, all the pitfalls. The marvellous thing is this: "For we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" (4:15). Brethren, "Let us hold fast our profession" (4:14b).

THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST (4:14-6:20)

There are also the following subdivisions: *Christ's High Priesthood an Encouragement to His People; Qualifications for High Priesthood; Christ's Qualifications for High Priesthood; Admonition Against Spiritual Immaturity; No Second Beginning Possible; Encouragement to Persevere; The Steadfastness of God's Promise.*

There, of course, was a high priest under the first covenant. Aaron, the brother of Moses, was the first called to the office by God Himself (Exodus 28). It was he who entered the Holy of Holies once a year (known as the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur) to offer sacrifice for all the people, including himself (Leviticus 16). "The twelve tribes were brought into the form of one great worshipping family, presenting through the common High Priest their united worship to God...They had one king, one high priest, one national altar, one national house of God, one morning and evening service, one great national sacrifice, and one great national atonement" (Alexander Campbell).

In the fifth chapter we are informed that Christ has a better priesthood than that under the Law. Like Aaron, Christ was ordained by Divine decree. But His ordination was different because He was not of the lineage of Aaron. Instead, He was made a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek (5:6, 10;6:20;7:11,

17, 21). Who was Melchizedek? He was a unique king and priest in that he had no earthly successor to office. "**He was King of Salem and Priest of the Most High God**". To him the patriarch Abraham paid tithes or gave the tenth of the spoils taken in war, and Melchizedek blessed him. He was of an order of his own sort. He had no predecessor, successor, nor equal, in the age of family worship" (Campbell).

"In the sixth chapter we are told that we have better promises than those given to Israel. There were two requirements of those who would receive the promises of old: faith and patience. The Hebrews were told in this letter that they must exhibit the same qualities. It is said of Abraham, '**After he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise**' (15). Encouragement is given us to imitate his conduct as we '**lay hold upon the hope set before us**'" (W. Carl Ketcherside).

Faith has to be tested to prove its worth. The Israelites were tested, grew impatient, and started to murmur and complain against God. Despite all wonders they witnessed, many of them died in the wilderness for their unbelief. There are lessons here for us all today. We should all possess the resolve never to be defeated by the chances and changes of life. After all, we have a greater hope, which is "**as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast...**" (6:19).

In these two sections of Scripture, there are many other points to be carefully considered: the fact that Jesus, the Son of God, is the builder of God's house (3:3-6); Christians have to encourage one another daily (13); the word of God is powerful (4:12); God sees everything (13); we should approach the throne of grace with

confidence (16); Jesus was made perfect through suffering (5:8-10); we should aim for spiritual maturity (5:11-6:3); apostasy ends in eternal punishment (4-8); God's promises are always certain (13-18).

THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK (7:1-28)

This chapter can be sub-divided as follows: *Melchizedek the Priest-King; the Greatness of Melchizedek; the Imperfection of the Aaronic Priesthood; the Superiority of the New Priesthood; Superior Because of its Divine Oath, its Permanence, and the Character of Jesus.*

In the seventh chapter, we are told that Christ is better than Aaron. Jesus is not a priest after the order of Levi, but of Melchizedek. The inauguration of Jesus was validated by an oath, which meant He became the guarantee of a better covenant (22). And because Jesus lives for ever, His was a permanent priesthood (24). We, therefore, do not look for another, no matter what the Mormons teach!

Our High Priest meets all our needs. He is **“holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needs not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this He did once, when He offered up Himself”** (26-27). In Him, we are a holy and royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:5,9). Our task is to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ and to show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. Jesus sacrificed Himself. We should, therefore, present our bodies **“a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service”** (Romans 12:1).

We should go back and read what Moses wrote about Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18-20). Also, we should study the 110th Psalm of David, which is quoted by the Hebrew writer. Melchizedek is a fascinating figure. He played an important part in the eternal plans and purposes of Almighty God.

IAN S. DAVIDSON,
Motherwell.

TEST YOUR BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE

1. Who came seeking corn in Egypt?
2. Who was the prophet “whom the Lord knew face to face?”
3. Who ordered the Hebrews to be thrown into a burning, fiery furnace?
4. She is “a woman whose price is far above rubies”.
5. What happened to the disobedient Israelite named Achan?
6. Whom did the ten tribes of Israel chose as their first king?
7. Who was the orator who, before Felix, was the Jews’ spokesman against Paul?
8. Paul said of her: “She has been a succourer of many and of myself also”.
9. What building in Capernaum was built by a centurion?
10. What was the clothing of John the Baptist?

SEEK AND YOU SHALL FIND

In this remarkable paragraph are hidden the names of 15 books of the Bible. It's a real lulu; kept me looking so hard for the facts, I missed the revelations. I was in a jam, especially since the names were not capitalized. The truth will come to numbers of you - to others it will be a real job. To all it will be a most fascinating search; yes,

there will be some that are easy to spot and others hard to judge so we admit it usually results in loud lamentations. One lady says she brews coffee while she puzzles over it. can you find all fifteen?

COMING EVENTS

Special Saturday Night Meeting At KIRKBY IN ASHFIELD

With Bro. Ernest Makin
16th March, 2002
at 7.00 pm

KIRKCALDY LADIES DAY

18th May, 2002
(Details later).

PETERHEAD

(Special Week-ends)

Sat/Sun. 23rd/24th February
Speaker: Joe Nisbet, Aberdeen.
Sat. 7p.m. (followed by refreshments)
Sun. 11a.m. Breaking of Bread
6p.m. Gospel Meeting

Sat/Sun. 23rd/24th March

Speaker: John Kneller, Tranent.
Sat. 7p.m. (followed by refreshments)
Sun. 11a.m. Breaking of Bread
6p.m. Gospel Meeting

Our Social Weekend

Dates and Times

Saturday 13th April: 3pm and 6pm
Lords Day 14th April: 10am Bible Study
Speakers: Brothers Mark Hill
(Loughborough)
and Robert Marsden (Wigan)

Gospel Mission

from Sunday 16th June to Sunday 23rd
with no meeting on Monday 17th
Speaker: Bert Ritchie (Coleraine, N.I.)
assisted by the Harding Students

TRANENT

Annual Social

Saturday, 9th March, 2002
Details to follow.

BUCKIE

Annual Social

Saturday, 11th May, 2002
Speaker: Michael Gaunt
Also Guest Speaker
on Sunday, 12th May

GHANA APPEAL

Again we extend our thanks and appreciation to those who have contributed to this appeal. Through it many have been cured of illness, even from death and what is of supreme importance, saved from spiritual death.

Among current cases is a sister who has been receiving hospital treatment for chronic heart disease but has been unable to pay the costs of this. Although the hospital is prepared to accept her for further essential treatment she will not accept this as it would mean adding to the existing debt which she has been unable to pay. Can we avoid this threatening situation by clearing this debt and paying the cost of the further treatment which is necessary?

As evangelism proceeds and more people are obedient to the gospel the request for bibles in their own languages continues. Can we satisfy this hunger for the Word by sending funds to buy these?

As new congregations come into being they naturally feel the need of a place in which to worship. Three such meeting places are still unfinished and it would be helpful if they could be completed. We know they will be well used.

There has also been an appeal for clothing for children going to school and the request for spectacles is ongoing.

Brethren who were previously unable to read their bibles are now able to do so. Can we imagine what this would mean to such a brother or sister who has enthusiasm to learn and understand God's Word?

The sewing machine which was given by someone who had no further use for it has now been passed to a sister who is using it to maintain the family's livelihood, her husband being an active leader in the Church.

Those wishing to help please make cheques payable to:- *Dennyloanhead Church of Christ Ghana Fund* and send to the treasurer: Mrs. Janet Macdonald, 12 Charles Drive, Larbert, Falkirk, Stirlingshire. FK5 3HB Tel: 01324 562480.

I WONDER

I wonder what makes some children of God think they would enjoy themselves in Heaven, spending eternity with God, the Lord Jesus, and the redeemed of all ages when it appears they do not enjoy spending an hour or two with Him and His brethren on the Lord's day in worship.

I wonder how some members think the voice of our Lord will sound so

sweet at judgement, when His voice through His written word holds no interest for them at all.

I wonder how people think they can expect to escape the wrath of God in the day of judgement, when they live lives of indifference, neglect, disobedience and sin during this worldly sojourn.

I wonder how people expect to reap that which was not sown, or how they expect to harvest life while sowing death or how they can lay up heavenly treasures but never make any deposits, or how they can expect to grow spiritually but never engage in spiritual exercises.

H. SPURLOCK.

- ANSWERS**
1. Ten of Joseph's brothers (Genesis: 43:3).
 2. Moses (Deuteronomy 34:10).
 3. Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 3:3-21).
 4. A virtuous woman (Proverbs 31:10).
 5. He was stoned (Joshua 7:25).
 6. Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:20).
 7. Tertullus (Acts 24:1).
 8. Phoebe (Romans 16:1,2).
 9. A synagogue (Luke 7:5).
 10. Camel's hair and a girdle of skin or leather (Mark 1:6).

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is published monthly.

PRICE PER COPY— POST PAID FOR ONE YEAR

UNITED KINGDOM.....	£10.00	
OVERSEAS BY SURFACE MAIL.....	£10.00	(\$16.00US or \$20.00Can)
OVERSEAS BY AIR MAIL.....	£14.00	(\$22.00US or \$28.00Can)

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