

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## THY KINGDOM COME

Some months ago I had a fairly long discussion with Christadelphians on the question of the **Kingdom Of Heaven**. A few weeks ago a sister in the church, who had been having discussions with J. W.'s (so-called) on the very same subject, asked me for some notes. There are, of course, several religious cults and groups (like J. W.'s and Christadelphians) who deny that Jesus was king, in N.T. times or that He had a kingdom then, but teach rather that His kingdom, is yet future as will be His coronation (at the 1,000 years reign).

There may be other brethren involved, from time to time, in discussions on this topic, and although the subject is a vast one, the following simple comments may be helpful to someone completely new to the issues. There may be some who will say, "Well, what does it matter" but on that basis what does **anything** matter.? We should really try to equip ourselves to refute false teachings from whatever quarter they come. Was Christ king in N.T. times?

### Christ is King — Then (And Now)

No sooner was Jesus born, in the manger, than wise men from the east came searching for Him, saying, "Where is he that is **born King of the Jews**?" Indeed, this is what troubled Herod — the thought of a 'King of the Jews' being born (Matt. 2:2-6). Note that the wise men knew what they were talking about and quoted Micah 5:2 ("A Ruler over Israel"). If J. W.'s had existed then they could, perhaps, have attempted to correct these wise men.

When Nathanael met Jesus (John 1:49) and experienced Christ's supernatural powers, he exclaimed, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art **the King of Israel**." We notice that Jesus did not contradict Nathanael, or deny the claim, but endorsed it and accepted it.

When Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on an ass, Matthew says (21:4) that all this was done in fulfilment of Zechariah's prophecy (9:9) "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold **thy King** cometh unto thee. He is just, and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Luke, in writing of the same incident, records that as Jesus descended the Mount of Olives on the ass, all the disciples began to shout (as per the prophecy) "Blessed be the **king** that cometh in the name of the Lord." When the Pharisees amongst the multitudes protested about this and called upon Jesus to rebuke the disciples, He replied, "I tell you that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." Again, if J. W.'s had existed in N.T. times they could have joined the Pharisees in claiming that the disciples were mistaken, that Jesus was not King and that this was not a fulfilment of Zech. 9:9.

When Jesus stood trial (part of the charge was that He claimed to be a king) and was asked of Pilate, "Art thou then the **King of the Jews**"? He replied, "Thou sayest it", and added, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth." Jesus also explained that the kingdom over which He was king "Was not of this world". That was why His subjects did not fight for His deliverance with swords and carnal weapons – His kingdom "was not from hence". Such a kingdom must have puzzled Pilate, as much as it must have baffled the Jews. A king is not a king if he has no kingdom, just as a kingdom must have a king. Christ had a kingdom, and was the King.

Quite apart from the gospels, we have the evidence of the epistles, and the Book of Acts. Paul in His letter to Timothy twice refers to the kingship of Jesus. "Now unto the **King** eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Tim. 1:17) and just in case anyone would be foolish enough to say that these words refer to God and not to Jesus, Paul also says, "... keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which in His times He will show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the **King of kings** and Lord of Lords." (1 Tim. 6:15). Thus, to Paul in his day there was **only one Potentate** and that was Christ – King of Kings and Lord of Lords. John twice, in the Revelation (17:14 and 19:16) refers to Jesus as "**King of Kings** and Lord of Lords."

No earthly monarch ever had more right, or greater authority, to reign. Jesus claimed "All authority" both in heaven and in the earth and was exalted to God's right hand. Paul adds (1 Cor. 15:25) "For He (Jesus) **must reign** until He hath put all enemies under His feet. As far as Paul was concerned, Jesus reigned (and must reign) at that time (in Paul's day). In view of all these statements, how can any serious student of God's word believe, and teach, that Jesus was not king and was not reigning in N.T. times.? But they can, and do.

### The Kingdom – Its Nature

Pilate found it difficult to comprehend a kingdom which was not of this world, and possibly so do we. When one country encroaches into the territory of another, conflict usually ensues. Countless wars have been waged, and even now are being waged, over territorial boundaries, (whether the Falklands, India or the Middle East): it has been common to all parts of the globe. Jesus assured Pilate that had His Kingdom been 'of this world' then His disciples would have taken up arms to defend it, and to rescue Him. But Christ's kingdom does not consist of some geographical location on an atlas, not even in Palestine, but is referred to quite commonly as 'the Kingdom of Heaven'. Paul said, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit," (Rom. 14:17), and is thus not centred on material things but spiritual. When it was demanded of Jesus by the Pharisees when His kingdom would come, He astounded them by saying, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for behold the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:20). The kingdom can not, therefore, be outlined on a map or have a huge fence built around it; it does not consist of so many square miles of rich soil flowing with milk and honey, it can not be pointed to with the finger "Lo, here, or, Lo there!" but is to be found only in the hearts of men and women. Jesus reigns, as king, in the hearts of His true subjects – this is the real kingdom of heaven. The kingdom is enshrined in hearts, not reckoned in hectares. Small wonder that Pilate was amazed at such a concept, which to a soldier must have been completely revolutionary. Pilate can be excused however when we realise that many Bible students still can't grasp the true nature of Christ's kingdom, and still

think in terms of a sanitised Jerusalem with the golden throne of David brought out of cold storage. This whole earthly ball is but a temporary residence for Christ's subjects and will, in due time, be completely destroyed (2 Peter 3) and Palestine will play no part in future blessings. Did not Jesus (while He stood on **Palestine soil**) say, "I go, to prepare a place for you". Jesus **had to leave this world** to 'prepare a place' – (of many mansions above) for His disciples, and will return, one day to collect them and remove them to that inheritance prepared in heaven.

### The Kingdom – Its Coming

Is the Kingdom of God something yet future or was it a reality in N.T. times.? Well, John the Baptist urged his contemporaries, "To repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand". Jesus Himself proclaimed exactly the same message "From that time" (Matt. 4:17) as did the twelve (Matt. 10:7) as did the Seventy (Luke 10:9). Mark expressed it thus, "The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand Repent ye and believe the gospel" (1:5). Surely such proclamations were not only idle but extremely deceptive if the Kingdom of God was 2,000 or 3,000 years yet future. "The time was fulfilled" and on the strength of that truth men were called upon "To repent and accept the gospel". Did not Jesus say to the man who had 'answered discreetly' that the man "was not far from the kingdom" and that with a little more effort he could enter it? (Mark 12:32) and did not Jesus say to His auditors that some of them listening to Him "would not taste of death until they had seen the kingdom come with power" – i.e. many of them would live to see the coming into being of Christ's kingdom. Likewise many of the parables (especially those which begin "The kingdom of heaven is like unto ...") indicate that the kingdom came in those times. If we take, for instance, the parable of the tares, we read, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man who sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat." Both tares and wheat were to "grow together until the harvest" (the end of the world). At "the end of the world" (Jesus' expression) the reapers (angels) will gather **out of the kingdom** all things that offend and cast them into the furnace of fire. Thus the kingdom **will not begin** at the end of the world, but **will exist until** the end of the world and then be judged.

When did the kingdom come into being? It came into being simultaneously with the church, for the kingdom and the church are really different ways of looking at the same institution. Other terms include "The Vineyard of the Lord"; "The Household of God"; "The Temple of God", "The Body of Christ" and there are others; all expressing differing aspects of the same thing. In Acts 2 we read of momentous events on the day of Pentecost when the church came into being and when, at the preaching of Peter, no less than 3,000 men and women were baptised. They were commanded to repent, and be baptised in water (for the remission of sins) and were promised the Holy Spirit. Thus Peter's instructions were in keeping with Christ's statement to Nicodemus that a man had to be born of water and the Spirit before he could enter the **kingdom of heaven** (or church of Jesus). Jesus, we remember, gave to Peter (and the other apostles) **the keys of the kingdom**. Keys were symbolic of authority, and on that day of Pentecost Peter used those keys and declared the terms of entry to the kingdom of heaven; the church. Up until that time the kingdom was preached as being "at hand" but not thereafter – it had come into existence. And we need only read Acts 2 to see that the kingdom came "with power" as predicted by Jesus in Mark 9:1. Paul in his letter to the church members in Colosse describes them as those "who hath been delivered from the power of darkness and hath been **translated into the kingdom of His dear Son.**" (Col. 1:13). Thus the apostle described the church as "the kingdom of God's dear Son." Had Christadelphians existed in N.T. times they could, perhaps, have corrected Paul.

### Conclusion

Jesus was, in N.T. times, the King of Israel predicted by the O.T. prophets, and He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet. "Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and authority and power." (1 Cor. 15:24) Jesus began reigning over His kingdom in N.T. times and at the end (of the world) will hand the kingdom over to God; when its heavenly phase will begin. It is unlikely that Jesus would have urged men to "Seek ye first the 'Kingdom of Heaven'" if in fact such a kingdom had not existed.

There is a tendency today for us to be over-anxious about the mundane but vital things of life, such as what we shall eat and what we shall wear, but Jesus assures us that if we "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" all these necessary things will be added unto us. Let us strive now to enter into that kingdom for the time will come, says Jesus, when men shall seek to enter in and shall not be able. (Luke 13:24).

EDITOR.

## GLEANINGS

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

### DIFFERENT FROM THE WORLD

"The glory of the gospel is that when the Church is absolutely different from the world, she invariably attracts it. It is then that the world is made to listen to her message, though it may hate it at first. That is how revival comes. That must also be true of us as individuals. It should not be our ambition to be as much like everybody else as we can, though we happen to be Christian, but rather to be as different from everybody who is not a Christian as we can possibly be. Our ambition should be to be like Christ, the more like Him the better, and the more like Him we become, the more we shall be unlike everybody who is not a Christian."

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

### NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY

"We agree that words which are used in the New Testament for the Faith, or any element of it, should be employed in their New Testament sense, especially by those seeking to restore Christianity as at the first. This should be done even when such words are often used loosely, or in a sense differing from that of the New Testament. But the word "Christianity" is not a New Testament word, and it seems only necessary to define the sense in which we here employ it. This we do by prefixing the limiting words, "New Testament." The Christianity for which we here contend in opposition to whatever else is popularly so called is the Christianity authorized by Christ and presented in the New Testament.

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

Lancelot Oliver

### GIVE ME THIS WATER THAT I THIRST NOT

"In the heat of an Eastern noon, a weary pilgrim sits by a well-side, and begs a draught of its cooling waters from one who comes hither to draw. The boon is granted, but not without an expression of surprise that it should have been asked, for there is no kindly intercourse between the nations to which the giver and the receiver respectively belong. And then the stranger speaks to her, no longer as a suppliant, but in tones of solemn majesty, — "If thou knewest who it is that saith to thee, 'Give me to drink,' thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." Perplexing statement! "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. It was the gift of our father Jacob; hast thou better waters than these?" Mark the response. "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into ever-lasting life. **"Shall thirst again!"** True picture of earthly blessings. The cup is emptied, and the drinker thirsts again. But there is a spring whose waters fail not, a well that is never dry; and now, as on the day when the woman of Sychar came forth with her waterpot, the gift is His who gave to her the living water. 'Now, as then, He awaits the humble request, "Give me this water that I thirst not."

British Harbinger

### WHERE JESUS IS, THAT'S HEAVEN

"A poor little ragged street arab lay dying in the garret. An infidel who came to see him, said, "Suppose, sonny, you went to Heaven, and Christ weren't there, what would ye do then?" "Go and look for Him," was the quick response. **"But suppose,"** and here the atheist's voice sank to a tragic whisper, "suppose He was gone to Hell, what then?" The little chap turned a beaming and triumphant countenance, and looking on the man's lowering face, cried, "Ah, I see ye don't understand; cos where Jesus is, that's Heaven."

T. W. T.

### IN ALL THY WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE HIM

"God has a plan for every man  
Who has the mind to see —  
If you will go  
Where He will show,  
His best is yet to be."

Maurice Cox

Selected by Leonard Morgan

## THE WINDS OF CHANGE

### The World

Quite recently speaking to a young man, I had been telling him that back some 30 years ago, a woman on her own could walk along any street, at anytime of day or night, without fear of being attacked, robbed, raped or even murdered.

Whereas today not only a woman, but a man, thinks twice before such a venture, feeling sometimes that it would be a suicidal act.

Reflecting back on what the social standards once were, and what they have now fallen to, brings a very frightening effect. Back those some 30 years ago, it was a disgrace for any female to be expecting a child out of wedlock, let alone for two unmarried people to be found living together as man and wife.

Today to make all this look respectable new terms are added to the English language, that of a "one parent family" and "common law wife" We see society passing laws that protects and appears to make normal the practise of homosexuality. For hundreds of years such practices as this had been considered an abomination: something to be kept clear of and not even discussed, but to be left where it was found, behind locked doors. The great danger of all this is for the younger generation to see nothing wrong with what the world has accepted as normal. They think it normal to go off on holidays and other times with their girl-friends living as man and wife, and when it is pointed out to them that it is wrong, their answer is "Well everbodys' doing it," their idea being as long as the majority practise it, its got to be right. I shudder to think what the next 30 years will bring forth.

### THE CHURCH

She was founded upon the crucifixion and death of Her Author The Lord Jesus Christ, (Acts 20:28) "which He hath purchased with His own blood." In Matt.16:18 Jesus before His death promised "I will build my Church." Following this Church in the N.T. we find it called "The Church of God," again "The Church of Christ," She can have no greater author, she can receive no greater authority. She, as the bride of Christ, is responsible to heaven itself. As the Church for which He died she has not been left in ignorance, of what to preach and practise, commandments and doctrines being given unto trusted men; Apostles. These in turn were directed by The Holy Spirit to write down and instruct her, not just for that time but for all time, "Until He Come." How great and how noble each member was intended to be. "Let your light so shine before men that they would see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." How The Mighty Have Fallen.

At her birth satan sends forth his wolves in sheep's clothing, breaking her unity: destroying the great oneness, that her Master had prayed for (Jn. 17) that all his disciples (Church) be one. From her birth at pentecost Acts 2 she was soon to be divided into what we see around us today.

Soon lost was the great and noble name of Christ, replaced with the "Church of Rome." "The Church of England." "The Church of Scotland." etc., including the names of the apostles to be used in this way. As the name of Christ was abandoned so also was His commandments and doctrines. Man-made doctrines soon filled these denominations. The messengers of satan have and still are doing their work well.

But what of those, including myself, who still profess to be following in the footsteps of that first true religion, and name the Church of Christ.? Let the reader cast their mind back to what was and what now is, (and if any young Christians are reading this let them ask an older member of the Church who has been a Christian of 30 years or more.) It is when we look back some 30 years at the Church of Christ to realize that as the world, she too has made great changes, and (like the world) they are for the worse and not the better. In England over the last 30 years 1956-1986 she has begun to follow denominational doctrines she once condemned. But a few (Old Paths) remained true to the faith that was once delivered unto the Saints. In July many Church members would have watched the Royal Wedding on T.V. How many noticed that every female present at that ceremony and, before the Queen of England, had covered their heads as a mark of respect; how many Sisters in the Church (had they been invited) would have done the same!. Yet when they appear before the LORD OF LORDS and KING OF KINGS, their heads are now uncovered, deceiving themselves with "It doesn't matter. One can please oneself. It's up to the individual." making the Great GOD of heaven lower than men.

To such offenders would well fit the words of Peter... (Acts 3) To the people of that time who had made a terrible mistake (V15) killing the Prince of Life and told, in (V17), "in ignorance ye did it.." Many Church members follow others in this blind ignorance of God's word. (1 Cor. 11).

Far too often the church listens and follows those men who preach to her these denominational practices. She claims to be the true Church. How can she be when she now copies the denominations which use individual cups at the Lord's table, use the one man minister, allows women with uncovered heads, etc. with more on the way. These false teachings she once condemned but now practices: to her shame.

In July I was told the church has received further new light! WHY ITS A NEW DOCTRINE, (an old one for the denominations) but new for her, it is that of women leading in open prayer. Rejected again is GOD'S word (1 Cor. 14:34) "Let your women keep silence in the Churches." So she goes, year by year, following after strange teachers, strange doctrines, yet still claims to be "Pleading for the return to new testament christianity as it was in the beginning." She still claims "to speak where the bible speaks and is silent where the bible is silent." Such claims would be amusing if the matter were not such a serious one. We should give up these Pioneer slogans or give up the practices. Even the vocabulary used in our churches nowadays is borrowed from the denominations.

This implies that bible words are out of date. How can we call upon others to return to Christianity "as it was in the beginning," to "speak and be silent where the bible speaks, and is silent" and at the same time totally disregard the scriptures.?

Churches of Christ in England in just 30 years have fallen from the truth, and the grace of her LORD JESUS CHRIST., (as did 5 of the 7 Churches of the Revelation who were told to REPENT OR ELSE). Here the great majority were wrong and not right, only two of the seven were found worthy.

What of the future.? It's probably too late but brethren should resist these changes and try and get the churches brought back to how they were. Let's speak only where the Bible speaks, and let men be truly silent where the Bible is silent.

Ivor Carey, Bristol.

(I was pleasantly surprised to receive the above article and to learn that others are noticing the changes in the churches and are concerned about it. I had formed a distinct impression that nobody really cared any more. For many years now, in this paper and elsewhere, I have expressed my own worries about the digressive direction the churches are taking and as recently as last January wrote an editorial "What can we learn from History." Such efforts have received virtually no support and have only served to make me a little more unpopular in some quarters. Those who claim to take seriously the scriptures should not only be concerned about the changes but should actively make their opposition to such changes known — they should stand up and be counted. Many influential brethren are mute on the matter and their silence is taken for acquiescence — so be it. We shall certainly all discover that once we have taken the first digressive step, there is no stopping place. The estimate that 'Churches of Christ' in Britain, will have women evangelists and women elders within the next 20 years may certainly not be too far-fetched — time will tell. Millions (indeed billions) of Dollars have been expended on Britain in the last 25 years and 'progress' is claimed. Is becoming more like the denominations our idea of 'progress'? Most denominational bodies have their own Bible Colleges to supply suitable men to occupy the pulpits and preserve the denominational identity — what's new?

The 'Old Paths' movement was lauded in the 1920's because of growing digression in the Churches of Christ, and is now slowly grinding to a halt because a 'wind of change' has been blowing through the land. History shows (even Jewish history) that those advocating popular change are more acceptable to the masses than those seeking to adhere to the given position, and so the 'Old Paths' ideology is currently on 'a hiding to nothing'. As brother Carey points out, the seven churches in Asia (mentioned in the Rev.) had a very good opinion of themselves but an opinion not

shared by God. We can but hope that God will initiate another 'Old Path' movement some time in the future and raise up a few brethren of the calibre of the Crosthwaites and Barkers. In the meantime those who really disapprove of the direction in which the churches are moving should make it known in an effective manner, and take steps to prevent their own congregations from going down the same road. Our silence will be interpreted as approval. We know who set the digressive machine in motion, but who can stop it now? But we must try.

Editor.

## A CHAT WITH AN 'OLD PATHER' (Cont.) (8)

(A chat between I. Davidson and the late Tom Nisbet)

IAN : R. K. Francis. Did you meet him?

TOM : I met R. K. Francis about twice. He was a powerful preacher, a wonderful man. I met him the last time at Whiteinch in Glasgow when I was chairman of the Sunday School Teachers' Conference. R. K. Francis was there along with a brother Gardiner who had come from Overdale College. He had a great voice.

IAN : James Hoggan?

TOM : James Hoggan was very precious to me, of course. He lived in Tranent quite a long time and was one of the leading preachers here when we discovered the Church of Christ. He was a fine preacher. Wherever he went he had converts. And yet when George J. Hammond came up — he was trained along with Jimmy Hoggan — he had not a convert in the District. That worried him a lot.

IAN : Lancelot Oliver?

TOM : No I never met him. He worked along with John McCartney, of course, in the training of evangelists. He wrote a fine book - **New Testament Christianity**.

IAN : Robert Halliday?

TOM : Robert Halliday was our missionary to Thailand. I think he married a daughter of James Anderson. I followed his work in Thailand when I was young because we had a paper called "**The Open Door**" and it was all about the activities of the missionaries. Sometimes we would see a photograph of him with his wife and daughter Esther. I admired him very much. He translated the whole Bible into the language of Burma at that time and that's why he was knighted for that in Burma.

IAN : Sydney Black?

TOM : He was a great man. I have read the book of his life-story. A fine preacher, a fine evangelist, another man who would not accept payment for preaching the gospel. He came off a wealthy family. Actually, they were Scots, and they belonged to a little village in Dumfriesshire called Twynholm. His father was a draper. There was a Twynholm in Fulham, London. They called the home Twynholm — it was they who started it — after their home village in Scotland. He travelled all over the world preaching. He was one of the men who would not accept a discount when he went into shops. In America you can get discounts if you are 'a minister,' but he said he was not going to accept discounts from his purchases because he was a gospel preacher. A fine man.

IAN : David Dougall?

TOM : David Dougall and I were great friends indeed. We were right bosom companions. I think outside David's family, there was nobody closer to him than I. We had many discussion about Bible matters and I think we both encouraged



each other. David was a fine chap and I liked him very much indeed, although I differed with him on some of his ideas about Bible study and things of that sort.

IAN : Willie Steele?

TOM : He was an excitable sort of man, but a great teacher of the Bible. Aye, I can say that without the shadow of a doubt. There are many things that I preach about today that I never would have been preaching if I hadn't come under the teaching of Willie Steele. He was a great teacher indeed. It was sad that he went away.

IAN : Do you believe in capital punishment?

TOM : Yes, I believe in capital punishment and I think our country did wrong when they did away with capital punishment. According to what I now hear and read, we have more murders now than ever before and life is not sacred by any manner of means. God introduced capital punishment after the Flood and it has never been abrogated since, to my knowledge. It was God who did it, and there were no capital punishments before the Flood. There was no capital punishment for Cain for murdering Abel. After the Flood he said : " If any man shed man's blood by man shall his blood be shed." That was a law given to the world of men and women long before there was the Mosaic law, and to me it has never been abrogated. So I think Britain did wrong in getting rid of it.

IAN : Do you think there could ever be a nuclear holocaust?

TOM : It looks awfully like it just now, but I don't think so. I think the American idea of having a deterrent helps. I think as long as you have that, each powerful nation will be afraid to start it. The Bible tells that the world and the earth and the works thereof shall melt up with a fervent heat. I say to folk : " You will not get a much more fervent heat than nuclear heat." So may be that is how the world is going to end.

IAN : You have been in the church a long, long time and you have seen a lot of changes. What do you think are the main issues facing the church today?

TOM : Well, to me, the trouble today is that we have too many people who are like a reed waving in the wind. Too many people are easily influenced by any kind of doctrine which comes to them. They are ready to accept it if the person giving it is simply a member of the Church of Christ. These are difficulties that I see today. Little bits of American doctrines that cause division even in the U.S.A. Mind you, if these new teachings were in the N.T. I would have have no objections to them. But these things are happening, and you would think that our brethren in days-gone-by did not know their Bible.

I also think there is too much laxity in the Church. The governing bodies of the Church are not disciplining the Church members enough. There is not enough discipline in the Church, and there should be more. We have elders in some churches, but no discipline, and that is all wrong. I believe that whenever something untoward comes up in the church the elders should go into that right away. That was done in my young days and that is what I feel today. People are far too 'easy-oasie' today.

IAN : What do you think of the establishing of the Bible School in Corby.

TOM : Well, I just think the same of it as I thought of Overdale. I don't think it is scriptural. The only Bible school in the Bible is the Church. Simply to say that this organisation is responsible to the elders of the Church, does not meet the case. No, I don't agree with it at all.

IAN : What would you say to someone who was seeking the truth?

TOM : If there was anybody seeking the truth or salvation. I would simply tell them

what the Bible says. I would be like the evangelist with the Ethiopian eunuch. He simply preached unto him Jesus. Jesus is the answer.

IAN : Why do you think so many people today are not interested in religion.

TOM : Why? I think prosperity has something to do with it. That seems to have been the habit of people right from the beginning, right through the Old Testament into the New. When the people were prosperous they forgot all about God and left him. Then when they were hard-up again they came back to God. Prosperity and the craving for these worldly amusements seem to be a deterrent to spiritual life. It is a deterrent to spiritual life — all this pleasure seeking. Pleasure is the god today. That is how I see it.

IAN : How do you face death?

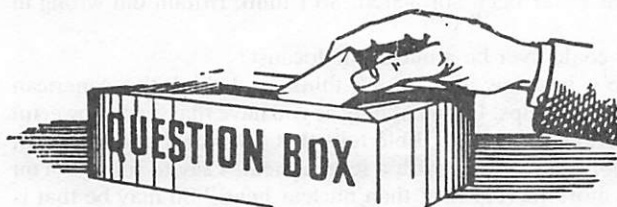
TOM : I don't think very much about it, but I know it is coming quickly, and I don't care for it very much. I like to be here. I like to be among people. I hope that I will be ready for it — that I am ready for it.

IAN : What would you like as your epitaph?

TOM : Well, I put on my wife's tombstone "Asleep in Jesus." I think the simplicity of that is wonderful.

IAN : Thank you, Tom.

*(This is the concluding article)*




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Conducted by  
Alf Marsden

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*"I have often heard it said that the Church of Christ is too exclusive. Would you give me your views on this because it troubles me when I hear people talk like this."*

Let us be absolutely clear on one thing, and let us state it with all the vigour we can to other people; the Church of Christ excludes no one. How can the Church exclude people when Christ its Head, stated, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him" (John 3:16,17 N.I.V.) (the reader will understand, of course, that 'the world' means the people in it). The plain and unmistakeable message of the Bible is that **anyone** who comes to God in faith and obedience to His Christ can be a partaker of the grace of God. So taking the above into account we can be sure that neither God nor Christ would exclude anyone from salvation, and as the Church is the body of Christ then it has no right to exclude people if He **includes** them. But this statement needs some clarification so that we shall not misunderstand the answer to this important and serious question.

#### Invitations

The verb 'to invite' means 'to request courteously to come.' Invitations come to us in several ways.

We may be invited to a wedding or some other function. The invitation usually specifies **by name** who is to attend. Therefore, anyone so invited is included; conversely, anyone who is not invited by name is excluded. It follows, of course, that anyone who is invited by name has the right to refuse the invitation. The invitation to salvation

given by God is **not** of this nature: if it were, then God would have to choose who should be saved. This He does not do.

Then there is the invitation to apply for a job: this invitation usually comes via newspapers and other agencies. This type of invitation is normally accompanied by requirements of academic qualifications or skills levels on the part of the applicant, and so excludes all others who do not possess such qualifications or skills. God's invitation is not like this, although, as we shall see, He **does** make certain requirements of us in His Word, the Bible. But sufficient to say, **anyone**, even those who consider themselves to be the deepest-dyed sinners may respond to the invitation: it is the nature of the response which is important.

There is also the **general** invitation: this is to all who want to respond to it. In theory, this type of invitation is not exclusive: in practice, it is. There will be many who will never hear of the invitation and so will be excluded. There will be many who will ignore it, and so will be excluded. There will be many who will want to respond but will not want to fulfil any requirements: they will want to try some other way, and in so doing they will **hope** that they will not be excluded. It seems to me that this is the way that God's invitation through the Gospel is received by people. He wants to include all, and so makes a general invitation through the Word: it is we, the invited, by our refusal to accept who make God's Will exclusive.

#### Exclusions

We know that the verb 'to exclude' means 'to shut out from.' We also know that it is not the intention of God to exclude anyone, therefore, we ask ourselves, "who does the excluding?" The short answer is, of course, we ourselves.

One of the ways in which we exclude ourselves is by not being ready. You remember the parable of the ten virgins who were waiting for the coming of the bridegroom. All of them knew that it was the custom at Jewish weddings for the bridegroom to tarry for a long period of time before he came to the wedding ceremony, but they didn't know the precise time that he would appear. The foolish virgins were wrong on two accounts; they hadn't taken sufficient oil for a lengthy wait, and consequently they were totally unprepared when the time came. The door was shut against them. Who was responsible for their exclusion? Was it the one who shut the door? No, because they weren't there ready to enter while the door was open. Was it the wise virgins? No, they had prepared for **themselves** and that was all they could do. Was it the foolish virgins themselves? Yes, by their state of unreadiness they had excluded themselves. The message is clear. The Lord is coming again. It will be **our** fault if we are not ready to meet Him (See Matt. 25:1-13).

Another way to exclude ourselves is by relying on our own standard of righteousness. We think that our own way is best. The Scribes and Pharisees thought that way as well, but Jesus taught His Disciples "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. 5:20). The Apostle Paul in his letter to Rome said, "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10). How do we, then, learn of the righteousness that God will accept? Listen to Paul again, "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets. Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:21-23). So if we rely on our own righteousness to get us to Heaven, and we are excluded because of that, who is to blame? We are!

One of the surest ways to exclude ourselves is by maintaining a stubborn will in spite of the pleadings of God for us to yield. Matthew records that Jesus sadly looked out on Jerusalem and said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets

and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and **ye would not**. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Mat. 23:37,38). Here we see the Saviour yearning to save the lost. All they have to do is come to him in faith and obedience, and yet their stubborn wills hold them back. Is it any different in the twentieth century? What chilling words the Saviour had to utter out of a heart filled with love and pain, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Who does the excluding in this respect? We do!

We could go on giving example after example but I feel sure the point is made quite clearly.

#### Let God be True.

Paul in his letter to Rome says, "For what if some did not believe? shall their belief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yes, let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom. 3:3,4).

I get rather impatient with people, Christians included, who blame God and the Church for everything which goes wrong. It seems to me that the world is waging a relentless war against God, and tragically, people who should know better are assisting in this war. But I ask you to look around. Does the escalation of violence, drug abuse, sexual abuse, pornography, and a general feeling of helplessness make you believe that peace, and truth, and hope are by-products of the world? Or is it rather that the much-maligned call of God through the gospel of Jesus Christ is the only effective answer? But you may say to me, "Even so, there is much that is good in the world." Well, of course there is, but it is only in so far as society has appreciated the love and compassion as revealed by God and manifested in His Christ that this is so. How can a world that is lost in sin produce qualities like that?

Therefore, let God be true. Let us determine not to exclude ourselves from His grace, but let us believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, confess Him before the world, be truly repentant of our sinful state, and be immersed in water into His name. Then the burden of sin will be lifted: then we shall know that God is really true, and that any man who tells us otherwise is a liar. Above all, never, never say that God or the Church excludes anyone. Let us put the blame for being out of fellowship with Him squarely where it lies. With ourselves!

(All questions please to :

Alf Marsden, 20 Costessy Way, Winstanley, Wigan, Lancs. WN3 6ES).

### SCRIPTURE READINGS

Oct. 5	Dan.6:1-24	Acts 12
Oct. 12	Psalm 35	Acts 13:1-15
Oct. 19	1 Sam. 8	Acts 13:16-41
Oct. 26	Isa. 42:1-16	Acts 13:42-52

#### THE HERODS

A number of herods appear in the Scriptures. Let us try and work out who was who.

**First**, there was Herod the Great. He was an Edomite (a descendant of Esau or Edom). It was he who tried to kill

the new born Jesus (Matthew 2:16-18). He died when Mary, Joseph and Jesus were safe in Egypt.

**Second**, there was Herod's son — Herod Antipas. He had a personal encounter with Jesus (Luke 23:7-11). Someone wrote: "Whereas the father sought to murder the Messiah at His birth, the son mocked Him in the day of His death: the miserable decision of a profane person." History relates that he lost his throne, was condemned to perpetual banishment by the Romans, and eventually died in exile in Spain.

**Third**, there was Herod Agrippa I, a grandson of Herod the Great. This is

the Herod of Acts 12. What a man! He sought popularity by persecuting the early Christians. "He killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also" (12:2-3). The miracle of Peter's escape from the soldiers ought to have stopped him in his wild career, but instead of giving earnest heed to God's intervention on behalf of His servant, in a murderous rage he ordered the execution of Peter's guards, and then went off to Caesarea. There he was killed by an angel of the Lord (12:21-23). Josephus also recorded his death, which occurred in A.D. 44.

Fourth, there was Herod Agrippa II, great-grandson of Herod the Great and son of Agrippa I. He later became king. Together with his sister Drusilla, who was married to the Roman Governor Felix, Agrippa II heard the apostle Paul's eloquent defence of his behaviour (Acts 26). Another sister, Berenice (Acts 25), became the mistress of Titus, the Roman general who captured Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

#### BARNABAS

His name means son of encouragement. Originally he was called Joseph. He was a levite and a native of Cyprus, an island in the Mediterranean Sea. He had possessed a field but sold it, and brought the price thereof to the apostles for distribution to the needy (Acts 4:36-37). "He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith" (Acts 11:24). Alexander Brown has written: "Such a one was well fitted for the conciliatory work which was likely to be required in a church where, for the first time, Jews and Greeks were received together; and his known character was a sufficient guarantee to the most scrupulous Jews."

Many brethren are puzzled by the fact that Barnabas is described as an apostle (Acts 14:14). This can be explained by pointing out that there is a three-fold application of the term. First, there were the apostles of God, such a Jesus Him-

self (Hebrews 3:1). Second, there were the apostles of Jesus, such as Peter, James and John (Matthew 10:2-4). Third, there were the apostles of the churches, such as Paul, Barnabas and Epaphroditus (Acts 14:14; Philippians 2:25). The word "apostle" comes from the Greek *apostolos* and simply means one sent forth, that is, on a mission. Four things are implied: a sender, the one sent, the ones to whom he is sent, and the message or mission to the latter.

#### ANTIOCH IN PISIDIA

The events in Pisidian Antioch demand careful reading. But what of the city itself? In earlier times it was an important Seleucid fortress. The same strategic advantages probably moved Augustus in 6 B.C. to give the city the status of a Roman colony under the new designation *Colonia Caesarea*. F. F. Bruce has written: "Army veterans were settled there among the local population, the city became the military centre for the surrounding territory, new roads were built leading deep into Pisidia for the more effective romanization of that region."

If anyone is interested may I suggest a most useful study: that of "The Roman Colony." Greater knowledge of this subject will lead to a new insight in, for example, Paul's epistle to the saints at Philippi. You see, Philippi itself was an important Roman *colonia*. Just to whet one's appetite: a Roman colony was a settlement of Roman citizens designed to safeguard and promote Roman interests in an environment of non-Roman inhabitants (*incolae*).

In Pisidian Antioch the gospel was preached. Paul's audience in the synagogue consisted of Jews and God-fearing Gentiles. Alexander Brown detailed Paul's address thus: God's doings for the Jews (17-24); John's testimony to Jesus (24-25); Treatment of Jesus by the Jews (27-29); Resurrection of Jesus (30-37); Salvation and how obtained (38-39); Warning (40-41). The leaders of the Jewish community were displeased with

the Gentile numbers at the second service. But these Gentiles were more receptive to Paul's address and, indeed, accepted the salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

### GENTILES

I would think that almost everyone who reads this magazine is a Gentile. Consider what God has done for us. Paul wrote to the Ephesians: "This mystery (hidden truth) is that through the Gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus" (3:6 N.I.V.). In the same epistle he also said: "Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called 'uncircumcision' (a dirty word) by those who call themselves 'the circumcision'... remember at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. (2:11-13, N.I.V.).

I have already recommended a study in this article. May I also suggest research into the subject: "Mystery and Revelation." As a Gentile it might well make one look quite differently at fellow Gentiles in the future. Certainly, it should remove any feelings of racial or cultural prejudice. (God forbid that such feelings were ever there in the first place!).

### PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS

The trip from Antioch to Seleucia, and thence to Cyprus, saw the beginning of Paul's first missionary journey. Three were undertaken altogether. They make fascinating reading. To fully appreciate them, one should readily consult the Bible Dictionaries and Bible Atlases. Geography is such an important element in Bible study.

Paul went everywhere preaching the word. Opposition meant little to him. His complete confidence was in God. In Christ Jesus he felt more than a con-

queror. Towards the end of his life he could, therefore, write: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7-8). What a wonderful man! What a great example!

Ian S. Davidson, Motherwell

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

### STRETFORD, MANCHESTER

At the public meetings recently held at the UMIST Manchester and Chadderton Town Hall, Muslims and others were present to hear Brother Paul Suban from the Church in Nelore, India, and in Manchester Algerian Brother Nino Braik from the Church in Belfast, give their reasons for leaving Islam and following Jesus. Both had been struck by the personality of Jesus. Paul had initially been influenced by Jesus' words on the cross "Father forgive them for they know not what they do" and Nino by his instruction to "Love your enemies."

The meeting held in Manchester attracted over thirty Iranian and other muslim students who showed keen interest in both speakers. Since the meeting several have had lengthy discussions with Brother Steven Masood.

We thank all Brothers and Sisters who gave their support and assistance.

If anyone who would like a audio tape copy of extracts from these meetings please send a C90 cassette, a self-addressed label and return postage to :-  
Allan Ashurst, 60 Kenwood Road,  
STRETFORD, Manchester M32 8PT.

Adrian Ashurst (Sec.).

### ST. DAVID'S, NEWTONGRANGE

On Saturday, 9th August last a group of souls from the church that meets at Newtongrange, travelled to the picturesque

village of West Linton. On this day the weather was so gracious to us, as the sun shone all the day through.

During the afternoon the youngsters from 8 - 80 enjoyed the field sports ably led by Brothers Currie, Morris and Wilson; who by the way have since recovered from the arduous of the games.

In a village such as West Linton — where times seems to stand still — its old fashioned calming effect took its toll. A Brother who shall be nameless, seen to nod off during the games!

All too soon the coach arrived to convey the company back to reality. A grand time of fellowship was had by all, and we certainly, God willing, look forward to the next time. Tears were few on that day just the odd graze and bump: soon put to ease by the First-Aid lady. The children had a great time. On reflection there were more tears when it was time to depart and all was over.

A. P. Sharpe (sec.).

#### PRISON MINISTRY IN ZAMBIA

A voice speaking down the phone in desperation. "Please come and see me. This is my one phone call I am allowed. I am being locked up in the prison."

One aspect of Chester Woodhall's ministry in Zambia is his prison visitation. Once a week Woodhall visits the prison near Kitwe and gives Christian counselling. In recent months he has seen prisoners of various nationalities: — German, American, British and, of course, Zambian.

There is an interest in Baptism from some of the inmates but so far there is no provision for baptizing within the prison and outside the prison might provide the occasion for a breakout. Discussions on the subject are progressing. One prisoner who is a member of the Church of Christ would like to go to a school of preaching — but he has a lengthy sentence for robbery to serve first. New Testaments and hymn books have been given to the Bible study group at the prison.

Angela Woodhall.

**Haddington, East Lothian:** Just a short report which will interest all those who assisted us with financial contributions towards the building of our Meeting-house. The work has been proceeding slowly but steadily and we have been performing marvels with the limited funds at our disposal. We certainly have not wasted one penny, and with the help of some brethren from other churches have avoided having to employ tradesmen (except plumber and electrician). The lower room (auditorium) is virtually complete as is the small upper hall, but there is still work to be done to the small kitchen (sinks to buy). The new toilet building is nearing completion although, again, toilet fittings, wash-hand basins, heaters require to be purchased, plastering, and flooring laid. We thank all those who have expressed interest, given money to us and actually come to help us. We are often asked if we require more financial help and I suppose we will before we are finished. We are trying to manage on what little we have left at the moment and hope to spin it out a bit yet, however **we will welcome** any further gifts of money, materials, or physical services from any of the enthusiastic DIY brethren. We will report again later.

R. NISBET.

#### OBITUARY.

##### Tranent, East Lothian

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of our dear Sister Janet (Nettie) Riddle on 10th May, at 71 years of age. She was a faithful member of the church for many years and will be remembered with great fondness. She will be missed not only in the church but also in her local community in which she worked and served in many ways. The

funeral service was conducted by brethren James Sinclair (Senr.) and David Scott. We commend her family to our Heavenly Father, remembering the promise of that crown of righteousness to all those faithful to the end.

JOHN COLGAN, (Sec.)

#### Wallacestone

It is with deep regret that the church meeting at Wallacestone records the passing of Sister Margaret Clifford. She fell asleep in Jesus on Wednesday 4th June, after an illness of eight months, during which her faith and fortitude were apparent for all to see. She was laid to rest on Saturday 7th June, the writer officiating at both services. Both in her life and in her death she will be remembered as an example to all of us who bear the name of Jesus.

JAMES GRANT.

#### Change of Venue

Church of Christ (Stretford) now hold their 6.30 p.m. Sunday gospel meetings in Platt Chapel, Platt Fields, Wilmslow Road, Manchester. (Opposite Hollings College).

The Breaking of the Bread is still in 60 Kenwood Road, Stretford at 12.45 p.m.

A. Ashurst. (Sec.)

## COMING EVENTS

**Newtongrange Church of Christ.** Brethren, the Church at Newtongrange, God willing, will hold its Annual Social on October 4th 1986, within the meeting place at St. David's, Newtongrange, at 4 p.m.

*Chairman* : Bro. J. Wilson, Newtongrange.

*Speakers* : Bro. M. Plain, Tranent

Bro. G. Pearson, Glasgow.

A warm welcome is extended to all the churches and friends. Make the effort to be with us. A day of fine fellowship is assured. We look forward to seeing you there.

A. P. Sharpe (Sec.).

#### Special Saturday Meetings

On August 23rd, 30th and September 6th, God willing, at 6.30 p.m. in Motherwell meeting place.

Talks on (1) The Holy Spirit; (2) The Gift of the Holy Spirit; (3) The Gifts of the Holy Spirit, by Ian Davidson, Motherwell.

These meetings are for earnest students of God's Word. Plan to attend.

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