

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## TRUE GREATNESS

HUMAN nature being what it is, I suppose that it is inevitable when human beings come together in any kind of corporate body, whether it be a parliament, a limited company, an executive committee, a knitting bee or even the kingdom of God some individual or other will have illusions of grandeur and will want some form of pre-eminence. We see it all the time. Do not misunderstand me – it is not always a bad thing. Some men require to be led – some men are born to be leaders. By nature of the very structure of our society some have to give orders and some have to be content to take them. It would be a rabble and not an army if there were no officers. A committee would not get very far very fast without a chairman (and sometimes even with a chairman doesn't get very far). The orchestra needs a conductor just as a country needs a government and school needs a teacher. There is nothing wrong with healthy aspirations to want to do tomorrow something more important and responsible than we are doing today. Self improvement is, in fact, worthy of any commendations. In the kingdom of God however there is no authority or justification for the complex hierarchies we see in some of the religious bodies around us. Our friends in the Roman Catholic church, for example, would freely agree that their religious persuasion has a most intricate and complicated system of ecclesiastical government, with many differing ranks and officers, culminating eventually in the person known as the pope. The New Testament, as we know, gives no justification for any such system and recognises, in the church, only elders and deacons (leaving aside for the moment the matter of deaconesses and 'evangelists').

Some positions of rank therefore, are born of necessity, such as officers in an army, and some are the fruits of political strife, such as a malignant dictatorship (and we have seen a few of those in our short life span). As mentioned at the outset, one of the frailties of human nature is the desire for a place of pre-eminence. Very often men can not agree because one, or more, is striving to better the others. Men spend many hours lying awake at night scheming the downfall of their rivals in business, or even their partners in business. The downfall, historically and politically speaking, of the Scottish clans was that instead of fighting the common enemy they fought amongst themselves. I was reading some time ago some little interesting 'snippets' about the little village of John O'Groats. John O'Groats is in the north of Scotland and is 876 miles from Land's End, down there in England, and this is the greatest distance between any two points in Britain. A mound and a flagstaff near John O'Groats Hotel marks the site where John De Groot, a Dutchman, built his famous house in the reign of James IV (1488-1513). His seven descendants quarrelled about who should take precedence and occupy the most important chair and De Groot solved the problem by building an octagonal house with eight doors (one for each of the seven and himself) and an eight-sided table so that no-one occupied the important position at the head of the table. It may be of special interest to Scottish readers to know that John De Groot ran a ferry to Orkney and charged fourpence for the trip – the little

coin of this denomination subsequently becoming known as a 'Groat'. John De Groot is buried in Canisbay Churchyard, three miles from John O'Groats and his tombstone can still be seen there. So much for John De Groot's remedy for those who would seek the pre-eminence.

It should not be surprising to us that even in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ there shall arise men who will want to seek some predominance — after all it happened amongst the actual and close disciples of Jesus. In Mark's gospel (9:33-35) we read that the disciples, carefully, as they thought, out of the earshot of Jesus, disputed amongst themselves as they walked along who would be the greatest among them. Luke's gospel (22:24) tells us that the dispute was not an academic one for there arose 'strife' between them on the subject. When they reached their destination Jesus quietly asked them what they had been having a disputation about and, to their credit, they were too embarrassed to tell Him. But Jesus sat down and explained to them all that "If any man desire to be first, let him be last of all, and servant of all". Matt. (18:1-4) adds that as He taught them this lesson he introduced into the group a little child which He had called unto Him and said, "verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven". Thus those who would aspire to true greatness in the kingdom of God are those who are prepared to be the humble servants of all others. Oh what a lesson for us all to learn. What a paradox. But how profoundly true. Jesus tried to show that this eternal principle was epitomised in the washing of the disciples' feet. How many of us would be too proud for such a menial task — how many would agree to the subordination that such a task would admit or imply? By that act Jesus set the standard (and we have to lower ourselves to raise ourselves to such a high standard) for all time. True humility is the secret — difficult for some and not so difficult for others but vital just the same. Jesus Himself links true greatness and real humility in Matt. 23:11,12 when He said, "But he that is greatest among shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased, and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted". If a man humbles himself then God can exalt him, but if a man *exalts himself* then it is impossible, even for God, to exalt him. Let us humble ourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, and not seek the pre-eminence or think of ourselves more highly than we ought. Jesus came not to be ministered unto but to minister — who are we, therefore, that we should want things the other way around?

True greatness is to be found in the kingdom of God by having the humility of a little child, not childish but childlike, and by *being the servant of all*. May we all, therefore, pursue greatness in the right direction and emulate our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. EDITOR

## IT IS MY PSALM — IS IT YOURS ?

MODERN Israel gains a lot of revenue from tourism, for one basic reason — that it is popularly known as the "Holy Land". This is even more true since the 1967 War, after which Israel controlled all main religious sites — Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth and Galilee. Many travel agents do a special line in Tours of the Holy Land. Not only does the state gain from these but also the many religious groups and orders. Could there be any value in this for the Christian?

There is a general surface appearance of religious fervour. The country is very small but has a great concentration of buildings used for religious purposes. One can hardly go along a street, especially in Jerusalem, without passing a church building; a synagogue; a mosque or a meeting house.

The most distinctive religious group is that of the fanatical Jew. He still looks for Messiah. Despite the 90°+ temperatures, he rigidly adheres to his mediaeval dress of long black coat, black hat and long side curls. He publicly rails upon and throws stones at those who dare to drive a car on the Sabbath. Yet, though clinging to the Mosaic Law, he appears to violate the Second Commandment when he worships at the Wailing Wall. This is the only remnant of the Second Temple. The religious Jew prays here by kissing the stones, bowing before them and pushing

into cracks little papers with special prayers written on them. The words of Matthew 6:5 seem to fit this situation, "when thou prayest, thou shall not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Also Matthew 23:5 "all their works they do for to be seen of men". The Moslem offers another facet of the religious scene. At regular intervals during the day he answers the call to prayer of the muezzin. Nowadays he rarely climbs to the top of the mosque tower to give his call, but employs an easy up-to-date loudspeaker system.

The so-called Christians: Armenians; Greek Orthodox; Catholics and Protestants (with all varieties of the latter two); form the third religious group. They vie with each other in catching the tourist to show him round their particular church building. Of course, he will produce his collection box at the door on leaving. If you contribute he mutters blessings on you but shakes his head if you walk past. Outside many "church" doors are little stalls selling "holy earth", specially blessed, packed and sealed in Israel. The words of Christ, Matthew 23:27 might be revised today to read: "Woe unto you, 'Christians' and Jews, Hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres which indeed appear beautiful outward, but within are full of dead men's bones". Again His words are proved timeless: Matthew 23:29 "—ye build the tombs of the prophets and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous". The absurdity of this is illustrated by the existence in Jerusalem of two supposed tombs where Jesus' body was laid. Also in Bethlehem one can visit the actual spot where Jesus was born!! — EXCEPT — there just happens to be two, depending on whom you'd like to believe. The value for the Christian in visiting this country lies deeper than the visible actions of men and the sight of beautiful buildings with priceless contents. Benefit for the Christian is in appreciating the geography, the climate of the land and the resultant effects on living here. It also gives a little more depth of meaning and impact to the studying of the scriptures. Even now this is a hard difficult land. The ground is dry and dusty. Water is a precious commodity and vital to the sustenance of animal, plant and human life. The sun is harsh and quickly drains the energy. It is foolish to travel far in the heat without carrying water. The combination of heat, dust, flies and insects of numerous varieties makes it easy to catch infection or disease. This is particularly noticeable among the poorer, more primitive people. How often do we read in the gospels of the blind, deaf, dumb, lame, sick? It is very probable these people were an everyday feature of life considering the climate and limited medical knowledge. The deformed and blind are not an unusual sight at present; usually huddled at street corners with hand outstretched — begging. We cannot appreciate the wonder and amazement that the healing of such people must have caused. To be blind, or otherwise handicapped then, meant the end of a meaningful life.

A notable feature of Jesus' story telling was his constant use of local scenes e.g. Luke 10:30ff the "good Samaritan" story. A little local knowledge heightens the meaning. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho is very much an ideal place to "fall among thieves". As far as one can see around one is nothing but hills, dunes and large rocks, all sand coloured: no shrubs, trees or bushes, nothing to give shade; no water, no houses or any sign that there might have been habitation. A dreadful place to leave anyone who was wounded and incapable of walking. Flies ants and other infection-carrying insects make an instant beeline for the smallest graze; an open wound would be a feasting ground for them. Jesus' listeners would realise the traveller's plight and the callous behaviour of those who refused help.

Whether you enter Jerusalem from the north or south you must **go up** to Jerusalem. Right from Old Testament records 2 Samuel 19:34, 2 Kings 12:17 through the Gospels Matthew 20:17,18, Mark 10:32, Luke 18:31, Acts 15:2 and Paul's letter to the Galatians 1:17,18; all speak of going **up** to Jerusalem. It is very much a city set on a

hill, in a good defensive position, which accounts for much of its chequered history. From the foot of the hill running south, is the Kidron Valley. On both sides of this are graves and sepulchres, many more than 1,000 years old. These are all made from a pure white stone resembling marble. There are so many that when the sun strikes them, they glint and dazzle the eye. So clean, shining and attractive, but merely a cover for decaying bodies returning to dust — an apt description for the pious Pharisees (Matthew 23:27). In the green well-watered fertile land of Britain can we appreciate Psalm 23:1 & 2? Water here in Israel is so scarce, so precious and so necessary. Green pastures are few, as are still waters. Around Galilee and the Jordan is where much of the action of the gospels takes place: absolutely to be expected since these are the main sources of water for the entire country even nowadays. From the glaring white dusty ground around Jerusalem to the hills and trees of Galilee; the difference which water makes to growth is self-evident Matt. 3:6; Mark 1:5 show that people came from Jerusalem and all Judea; a large area, to Jordan where John was baptising — one of the few places where there would be a sufficient amount of water.

Finally, Matthew 25:32,33 depicts the Son of Man separating the sheep from the goats. Flocks of animals are still herded by the Arabs in the way they've been doing for hundreds perhaps thousands of years. However to the stranger it is very difficult to distinguish which are sheep and which goats. The two species are remarkably similar in external form. The Shepherd who knows the creatures beyond their outward appearance; He can differentiate. To return to my original question of can the Christian benefit from coming here? He can deepen his understanding, but only if he is prepared to look beyond commercialised religion.

Marion Jess Jerusalem.

(Sister Marion Jess belongs to the church in Tranent but was recently working in Jerusalem and very kindly sent me this fine article, for which I am very grateful. Ed)

## IT IS MY PSALM — IS IT YOURS ?

TRUTH is a very scarce commodity in the world today. This is readily seen to be true in the material and political world but it is also true, unfortunately, in the Spiritual realm.

Before we talk about truth, however, we should be reminded of the existence of the 'half-truth'. These two things, truth and half-truth, come from different sources and while the former enriches mankind the latter destroys him. Deceit has been around in the world for a long time now, in fact since the time of the Garden of Eden, and deceit is the father and mother of the half-truth. Deceit divides men, families and nations and its source can be traced to Satan. Those deceived by the deceit of Satan range from dope addicts to atheists. It is possible that although we may not be deceived by Satan's largest lie we may easily succumb to his cleverly disguised half-truth. The half-truth could be considered to be almost more dangerous than the straight lie and through the half-truth Satan can still be the victor over many in this present world, having them under his strong delusive power. Thanks be the God, however, that there was One, nearly 2,000 years ago who was more than a match for the half-truths of Satan. In Matt. 4:5,6 we read of Jesus being forty days and nights in the wilderness and of Satan taking Him into the holy city and setting Him on a pinnacle of the temple. "If thou be the Son of God", suggests Satan, "cast thyself down for it is written that God shall give His angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone". The devil here was, of course, masquerading as an angel of light and, apparently, seriously quoting to Jesus passages from the Old Testament — what could be wrong with that? What Satan quoted was true but in the context used was but half-true. Yes, God would give His angels charge concerning the Son of God but not concerning this event, staged by Satan, but rather in connection with His death, burial and resurrection. The devil succeeds with the half-truth where he would fail with the lie and has nearly all the world under his power.

Perhaps his most successful modern, present day half-truth is the one that tells us to quietly read our Bible but not take it too seriously — most certainly don't offend anyone and do not get too involved in standing up for its truths. Students of the scriptures are the main target for Satan and his half-truths. We no doubt pride ourselves in being too smart for Satan and that we could never be fooled by knowing or only believing only half of the truth. If we think we stand we should beware lest we fall for his subtleties. Those who think they have the truth are Satan's main targets, as I said. Spurgeon was once asked a question by someone who made no claim to being a disciple of Christ's and the question was, "If Satan were to come into this room whom would he take first, of the two of us?" Spurgeon replied. "He would take me, of course, being a Christian, because he's already got you". Let us beware, therefore, the half-truth for although Satan may not bring it he will certainly send it.

Buy the TRUTH and sell it not. Like the pearl of great price we should be prepared to sell all that we have that we may be able to buy it, and having bought it never to sell it. We must grasp the truth when we find it and never let go. Truth brings with it a challenge and a responsibility because it is not cheap nor shoddy - it is if fact, eternal. Grasp the truth and hold on to it — never underestimate its value. It is to be found in the Old Testament and in the New. Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. The truth was taken for granted in the Old Testament but challenged at the beginning of the New. The law came by Moses (never in dispute) but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Jesus became flesh and dwelt amongst us and we beheld His glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Jesus was full of grace and truth (John 1:14). Pilate was so perplexed that he asked the ever recurring question, "What is truth?" In reply Jesus said, "For this cause came I into the world, to bear witness of the truth". In John 14:6 Jesus said that He was the truth. God's word is truth (John 17:17). Truth is the legacy which he has entrusted to man and it is around this truth which the church revolves. The apostles were guided into all truth and they in turn were to impart it unto faithful men. Paul said to the young Timothy, "The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also". May we also in our turn try and do the same making sure that we impart only that which we know to be the truth. To the church at Corinth Paul could justifiably say, "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God". There were certainly no half-truths coming from the lips of the apostle Paul. We must love the truth more than ourselves and even more than we love our brethren. The speaking of the truth certainly will attract differing reactions as we see from the results of the preaching of young Stephen, of Peter at Pentecost and Paul at Mars Hill. Stephen certainly didn't buy the half-truth about not getting too involved in standing up for the truth. His hearers gnashed on him with their teeth and they stoned him to death — all because he spoke and obeyed the truth. Thanks be to God his death was not in vain and the seed sown then brought about the conversion to God of the one who was looking after the clothes that day. Truly the story and the truth though old are yet ever new.

Be satisfied with nothing short of the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. When you find it grasp it and let it not escape. William Black, Dalmellington, Ayrshire.

## HE HATH DONE WHAT HE COULD

HAVING read with interest your good article entitled "DOING WHAT YOU CAN", I was reminded of a true story heard many years ago in a church.

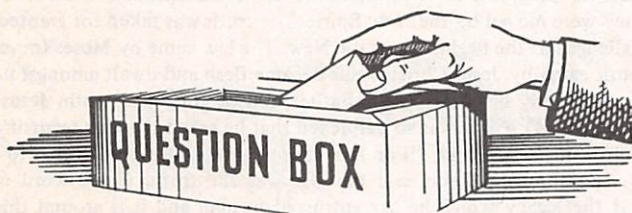
A bachelor grocer owned a small village shop but did not seem to prosper much—his premises were very bare and rather dilapidated—sometimes it was even difficult to find a decent chair to sit on. He lived very simply on plain food and was shabbily dressed. Local folk said he must be very mean, in fact a miser, and often wondered what he did with his money! The vicar and others called on him at times regarding the state of his soul, but the only enlightenment he gave them on each occasion was "I DO WHAT I CAN", so they went away mystified. After some years this grocer died and at his funeral about twelve little orphans followed his coffin each bringing their little posies.

The secret of the grocer's life was at last revealed — he had made it his life's work to provide for these orphans for years, and this accounted for his simple mode of life! Of course, when the truth leaked out about the true character of this man, the villagers were most astounded and they suggested that a fitting inscription on his tombstone should read "HE HATH DONE WHAT HE COULD". (May this be said of each of us!)

If I remember correctly the grocer's name was Wm. Dobbin, buried in a London cemetery, with the above epitaph.

What stupendous things will come to light on the Great Day! Also, how false mankind's judgement is sometimes! James says one of the attributes of "pure religion" is "to visit the fatherless", and this was especially necessary in past times when there were few social services.

SISTER E.C. PAYNE (Reading).




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Conducted by  
Alf Marsden

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WHAT should be the Christians' attitude to euthanasia, even though it might seem more compassionate to bring a life to an end if the patient desires it?

THE advocates of euthanasia, 'mercy killing', as it is often referred to, insist that what they are campaigning for is 'voluntary euthanasia', that is, when a patient asks to die and someone fulfils that desire. But obviously, it would only be a step to the state when someone else might take it upon himself to decide that the patient ought to die and that would present more serious implications. It seems to me that we need to look at this question from several viewpoints so that we might have the understanding to appreciate that what may start as a compassionate and humane thing could possibly develop in course of time into something monstrous. Before we can proceed we must first define our terms so that we know what we are talking about.

#### What is Euthanasia?

The word comes from two Greek words, EU - which means 'well', and THANATOS - which means 'death'. I suppose a literal rendering of euthanasia would be 'to die well'. The Concise Oxford Dictionary gives it, 'gentle and easy death; bringing about of this, especially in the case of incurable and painful disease'. This indicates to us two precise and fundamental truths:

- 1) someone must die, by inference before they would normally have died, and
- 2) someone has to bring about that death because of an ultimate physical condition. This would normally be a qualified medical practitioner who had signified that the patient was suffering from a terminal disease and would, in his view, have to endure extreme suffering as death drew near.

Let us examine the problem from various viewpoints.

#### The Advocate of Euthanasia

Powerful voices have been raised urging us that euthanasia can be a benefit to society. The argument might develop as follows:

- 1) the disease is incurable therefore it is only a matter of time before death occurs. Surely it is more civilised and humane to avoid further suffering by acceding to the request of the patient to terminate his life and thus allow him to die with dignity.

- 2) the relatives of the stricken person might also be spared a measure of personal suffering by knowing that their loved one was at peace where pain could not intrude any longer.
- 3) the public need not fear any abuse of the process because it would be administered under the most stringent medical authority whose sole compassionate motive would be the welfare of the patient.

These, no doubt, are sincerely held views by many who advocate euthanasia. We shall return to the implications of them a little later.

#### The Patient

It is extremely difficult to try to place ourselves in the position of someone who could possibly be a candidate for euthanasia. I have always visualised such a person as being in extreme pain which no known drug would alleviate. He or she would probably be incontinent and there would be no foreseeable relief. The burden of being alive would increase as each day passed.

In such a condition a person might say that death would be a release, in fact, we have heard many people say this in the past even when there has been no terminal disease present. I remember sailing from Fleetwood to the Isle of Man one wild and stormy night, and so seasick did I become that I remember quite vividly praying that the ship would sink in order that the awful motion would cease. I have thought since, "Well, what if God or someone else had answered that prayer. I and many others would undoubtedly have died".

#### The Relatives

It is true to say, of course, that relatives in time, if voluntary euthanasia were legalised, might be invited not only to give their views on euthanasia but actually to consent to it if one of their loved ones were involved. It is never easy to watch our loved ones suffer and many times we have heard the expression from relatives, "It would be a blessing if the Lord would take him" (or her). Such a view is understandable because the more we love the more sensitive we are to the feelings of others, especially if they are our own flesh and blood.

It may very well be that we as relatives may be asked to make a decision in respect of one of our loved ones. Such a decision will never be easy but I believe that we as Christians have certain guide lines.

#### The Objections

There are many who examine the plea for legalised euthanasia on the grounds of humanity and who sincerely oppose and reject the plea. They argue that to give the power of life or death to an individual, or group of individuals, no matter how scrupulously fair and sincere and compassionate they might be, is opening the gate for abuse of this power by people who, in different circumstances and for different motives, might not be quite so scrupulous. Absolute personal integrity can never be guaranteed for any man.

And what of the patient? We are all aware that in times of severe stress, pain, or depression, people react in abnormal ways. Consent might be given for certain things to take place when in more normal circumstances such consent would be withheld. Law books abound with cases in which wills and gifts have been contested because, it is argued, the wills were drawn up and the gifts bestowed when the balance of the mind was not normal, or where, it is thought, certain influences had been brought to bear in order to make a person change his mind during a time of acute physical or mental disturbance.

Relatives, too, may have mixed motives when considering a decision as to whether euthanasia should take place or not. If the sick person is in the home among the family then this is the time when maximum care and attention is needed; when family pressures are brought to bear it is not always possible to give that care and attention, and even the most compassionate and devoted relative might wish at times to be relieved of such a burden. Furthermore, if financial gain were to accrue to the relative on the death of the sick person, who knows what motives would predominate under such conditions? There are many other facets of this very emotive question which would have to be examined in detail but space does not permit such detailed examination.

### The Christian

It is quite obvious that the christian will have his or her viewpoint on this important subject, and we need to explore any guidelines which might be given to us. The first thing that we should appreciate is that God alone has the power of life and death. When Satan wanted to afflict Job God said to Satan, "Behold, he is in thy hand; but save his life" (Job 2:6). Job appreciated that God had given everything, even life, and that God had the prerogative to take away. "the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21). Throughout the ages men have wanted, and have taken, the power of life or death over their fellowmen, often with disastrous results. It is not right for men to play at being God.

But someone will argue, "Every time a surgeon performs a successful operation he takes the power of life into his hands. Why should he not have the legalised right to perform a successful death if that is what the patient wants". This seems to be a different point entirely. It is the duty of a doctor or surgeon to preserve life. Perhaps the medical profession could not achieve the degree of unanimity within its ranks to condone voluntary death.

Again, the controversy over euthanasia is related to a physical condition solely, the christian must think of a spiritual condition also. THANATOS is to be viewed in relationship to the soul and not only to the body. Death, in scripture, is the separation of the soul from the body (the latter ceasing to function and turning to dust). Spiritual death can also occur if the person dies with the soul uncleansed. Death is the opposite of life; it never denotes non-existence. Spiritual death is 'conscious existence in separation from God'. It may be compassionate to voluntarily relinquish life, but from the christian viewpoint one would find it difficult to condone euthanasia when this meant the separation of the soul from the body into a conscious state of eternal separation from God.

### Conclusion

What shall we say, then? Voluntary euthanasia could be looked upon as suicide by the hand of someone else. If it were not voluntary then some might say that manslaughter or murder had been committed. The christian, however, might say that while there is life there is hope; that sometimes miracles seem to happen. He would also be conscious that the soul of a candidate for euthanasia might be in an unregenerate state. These considerations would possibly modify his attitude towards this very serious and emotive subject and prevent him being carried along by a popular tide of sentiment.

(All questions please, to Alf Marsden, 66 Mitchell Street, Newtown, Wigan, Lancs.)

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

MAY 1975

4—Deut. 28:58-88	Luke 21:5-24
11—Daniel 9:20-27	Luke 21:25-38
18—Exodus 12:1-20	Luke 22:1-23
25—Job 1:9-22	Luke 22:24-34

### PRIDE BEFORE DESTRUCTION

THE Temple built by Herod the Great was famed as one of the seven wonders of the world. A heathen historian calls it "a temple of immense opulence". The stones were of immense size, and sacred offerings from famous people adorned its walls, including a grape vine made in solid gold with bunches the size of a man. It appears that the apostles raised the

question of its greatness. Jesus had already wept over the city, and the Temple was its glory. The Saviour's predictions of its destruction must have been most astonishing, and it was natural to ask "When?".

The answers are recorded also in Matthew 24 and Mark 13, which may be read for further help. The first warning is against claimants to Messiahship. The second is against fear of national and natural portents. The third is against fear of persecution and betrayals. Then explicit instruction is given to get out of the city when armies are gathering around it. Flight must then be immediate and quick. Extreme suffering will befall the nation. Fulfilment is recorded by Josephus and Tacitus, giving entirely unbiased testimony to the words of Jesus. Earthquakes, crimes, violence and commotions seem to have been prolific as the end of the age and dispensation culminates



in the destruction of the centre of the Old Covenant worship. Jews converted to Christianity could have continued worship and custom while the Temple stood but when it was destroyed; this became impossible, and must remain so. In Hebrews 8:13 we read "But that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away". This must have been written before A.D. 70.

### The Second Coming

Part of the answer of Jesus obviously refers to something more final than the end of the Old Covenant. Many of the portents are similar, and are continuing. When men are giving serious thought to the future of the race either locally, or as it is now, in a general sense, the futility of life without God and His Word become evident. Man has never even approached the golden age of peace and plenty. Utopia is known to be a hopeless dream. There have been bright spots in human history as men have sought to live by truth, justice and love, but always the scene is marred by strife, disagreement and war. Jesus said this would be so, and while His coming again is the great hope and consolation of His people, it must be the terror and disappointment of all who place their trust in any man-made material scheme. The graphic picture in Rev. 1:7 portrays what Jesus is saying in 21:25-28. The immediate signs indicated by the parable of the fig tree prove beyond doubt that the kingdom preached by John Baptist and Jesus and His disciples right up to the concluding days of His ministry is in fact the church of Christ begun at Pentecost and to continue until "Heaven and earth shall pass away" (21:33).

### The Dastardly Plot

"Chief priests and scribes" with all their authority and political power cannot destroy their enemy by wordy battle or open violence. So secrecy and darkness are necessary. Their determination has reached the point of no return. This is the sad and terrible fate of obstinate refusal of truth and righteousness, and remains a matter of individual choice with all mankind. It would seem to be the unforgivable sin, and yet some of the persons in the plotting did have opportunity for repentance when the supreme evidence of Jesus being indeed the Christ was witnessed to and preached by the apostles with such power and miraculous backing.

We wonder how it could be that Satan entered into Judas. It would appear that avarice, jealousy and disappointment worked upon his mind, and he allowed them to stay and fester there. Such motives have to be resisted and dismissed if they are not to poison us. The chief priests saw that there was only one way to get Jesus into their power, that is by stealth, and then work upon the disappointment of false messianic hopes and so cancel the wonderful influence the words and works of Jesus had exercised. Naturally the defection of Judas exactly filled their need, and the bargain was clinched. The confession Judas afterwards made is the most tragic in history - "I betrayed innocent blood" (Matt. 27:4). It is a so human fault to act and afterwards realise the sin.

### The Last Supper

How many times before, I wonder, had Jesus reclined around with His disciples and eaten? For about three years they had been with Him, and doubtless some others too Acts 1:21, and the women who loved and served Him. Taking food together is one of the simple and pleasurable parts of life. What a privilege to have been with Him in that way! He was able to say to those who remained with Him at the table after Judas had gone out into the night (John 13:30), "Ye are they who have continued with Me in My temptations". Most of them had been invited with Him to the wedding feast at Cana (John 2:2). They had now heard Him say He had longed to eat with them BEFORE HE SUFFERED. So they must have understood what a solemn occasion it was, and that in a sense they were to lose Him. He had warned them many times. They were oppressed with fears. Even so they had still to be taught by word and by example the lesson of humility (John 13:1-20) for "There arose a contention among them" about position in the kingdom. Doubtless it was either at the table or after that He gave His farewell teaching as recorded by John (chapters 13 to 17) before leading them out towards Gethsemane (John 18:1). We have no record of details of the meal so far as celebration of the Passover was concerned. This would have no special significance to us but the meal was introduced with the sharing of a cup of "fruit of the vine", which I understand was customary, several cups being normally taken at different points in the meal.

Jesus assured them He would partake of the passover when it was fulfilled in the kingdom of God, and then instituted the Lord's Supper, the Lord's Table, the Breaking of Bread — three scriptural names (1 Cor. 11:20 & 21; Acts 20:7). "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7) so that when we gather to partake of loaf and cup, we are spiritually partaking of Him and He is with us according to His promise (Matt. 18:20). That we should do it in remembrance of Him is His command, and that the apostles appointed that it be done on the first day of the week is confirmed by scripture and by history. Some have attributed the appointment of the first day to Constantine, but he only so to speak gave way to what was already the established custom of the christians of his time. While we have no "Thou shalt", we have the obligation of love.

R. B. SCOTT

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### AN APPEAL

Mayfield, Easthouses:-

The church at Easthouses are purchasing a piece of land at Mayfield with the intention of building a meeting house in the future. We are a small congregation (32) but we have been saving hard. We still need a lot of money to realise this venture of ours and we shall be grateful for any loans or donations toward the cause. Mayfield is a large place and the portion of land we are purchasing is right in the middle of a prime site.

Join us in our prayers, brethren, that the Lord's work may be fruitful in this area and please help us if you possibly can. Send your gifts to Maurice Ferguson, 17 Lawfield Road, Mayfield, Dalkeith, Midlothian. M. Ferguson.

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### STAMP FUND

Please keep the above fund in mind and try and get some of the younger members involved in its support. The Sunday-school pupils at Haddington have sent a large parcel of stamps to sister Payne and have had a very appreciative letter of thanks in reply which states that no less than 400 bibles have gone to India and Africa from the sale of stamps. This is surely very commendable and the work of sisters Rose and E.C. Payne deserve our support and assistance.

Editor.

### THANKS

Sister A.K. Black, wife of the late James Black, Ulverston, (whose passing was reported in last month's issue of the 'S.S.') would like, through the columns of the 'S.S.' to thank all those good folk who sent her cards and letters of sympathy during her recent bereavement. She would also like to mention that she is now living at 54 Lawrie Park Gardens, Sydenham. S.E. 26..

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### WHAT ABOUT MY FATHER AND MOTHER?

Someone said, "Brother, I can't take the doctrine you preach that one must be baptized to be saved, because it damns my father and mother who were not baptized".

"Well, let us see. Do you think one must believe in Jesus Christ to be saved?"

"Oh yes", he answered. "Very well, I will just change my subject from baptism to faith in Christ. A Jew comes around and says, I can't accept the doctrine you preach, that faith in Jesus is necessary to salvation, because my father and mother died without believing in Christ. The Jew thinks as much of his father as you do of yours. By the same argument with which you eliminate baptism, because perchance, it damns some of your ancestors, he also eliminates faith in Christ. Then I preach that the knowledge of God is necessary to salvation, and a Chinaman comes around, and says, I can take the doctrine you preach, because it damns my poor father and mother who died without the knowledge of God — and there you see the whole plan of salvation is nullified by contingencies".

I suggest that we leave the matter of clemency to the judge ( a judge only has the power to clemency) and let us observe the law. We have no authority to preach clemency — we must preach what God commands men to do to be saved.

From Christian Messenger.

## MY PROPITIATION

Justice has sheathed her sword;  
 The ransom price is paid.  
 The death that I so well deserved  
 Was on my Saviour laid.  
 My heart in prison lay  
 Fast bound by chains of sin;  
 The dungeon doors were double locked;  
 No ray of Light shone in.  
 But Calvary's earthquake shock  
 Tore those strong walls apart;  
 The chains that bound me fell away—  
 And Love had freed my Heart.  
 No condemnation now—  
 By Faith I'm justified.  
 The spotless Lamb of Calvary  
 The Law has satisfied.

Bro. J.J. Smith,  
 Belmont, Durham.

## TWO BROTHERS

Two Brothers once lived down this way  
 And one was Do and the other Say.  
 If streets were dirty, taxes high,  
 Or schools were crowded, Say would cry:

"My what a town" But Brother Do  
 Would set to work and make things new.  
 And while Do worked, Say would cry:  
 "He does it wrong — I know that I

Could do it right". So all the day  
 Was heard the clank of Brother Say.  
 But this one fact from none was hid—  
 Say always talked. Do always did.  
 Unknown.

NEWS FROM  
THE CHURCHES

**Bedminster, Bristol:** It is with much joy that the church report the baptism of a young man Ron Shergold who was contacted by a bible correspondence course. It says much for his zeal in that he has to travel about 30 miles to meet with his brethren. We seek your prayers that he may be kept faithful. L. DANIELL

## OBITUARY

**Canada:** My father, Mr Francis Kimberley, passed away last Monday, Feb. 3rd, after a long illness. He was in his 83rd year and formerly of Bournville, Birmingham, he came to Canada (with mother who passed away in 1970) in 1950. Some of the readers of the 'S.S.' will still remember him, proved by the fact that I have received several letters following the appearance of some of his articles in the 'S.S.'. Mrs. Gladys Yoxall, 1334 Cawthra Road, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada.  
 (We thank Mrs Yoxall for her letter and on behalf of all readers of the 'S.S.' offer her our sincere condolences. Editor.)

**Hindley:** It is with a deep sense of loss that we report the passing of Sister Emma Winstanley, wife of our late Bro. Stephen Winstanley, on Friday January 17th, aged 72 years.

We pay tribute to her loyalty and faithfulness to the cause of Jesus Christ. Her acts of kindness are too numerous to catalogue. Until she herself took sick, she was a ready visitor to the aged and infirm, and was ever ready "to speak a word in season, as from Thee, to weary ones in needful hour". Her attendance at the meetings was an example to the brethren, a sister who could be relied upon to be present to worship her Lord, and support the preaching brethren.

We commend her sorrowing loved ones to the care of our heavenly Father, who is well able to comfort those whose hearts are filled with grief, and whose eyes are wet with tears.

We rejoice that her heart belonged to Jesus and anticipate that great day when Jesus will come more bringing our dear ones with Him. Bro. John Breakell and Bro. Leonard Morgan conducted the service.

**Longshoot, Scholes, Wigan:** Once again the church has been saddened by the loss of another of its members. On Tuesday 11th Feb.; Bro. Jim Parker was found dead at his home where he lived alone. He was laid to rest on Monday 17th February, Bro. Alf Marsden conducting the funeral service.

We commend his children and their families to the loving care of Jesus in their loss.

D. Melling

## ARTICLES WANTED

As readers can appreciate there is always a need for articles, reasonable in length, for the 'S.S.' Those who have already contributed may want to do so again and I will be pleased if they will. Those who have not yet sent any material, but writing an article is within their compass, are urged to commit their thoughts to paper and post them off to our little paper. Most readers will agree that the brethren who participated so far have provided us with some good thought provoking stuff and would want me to thank them for their help and assistance. Lets have more..

EDITOR

THE DEVIL does not care how much we plan to do, provided we do not do it today. The church does not grow because of what we plan to do; it grows because of what we do. "Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding your own selves.

WHEN a man sings his own praises he usually pitches the tune too high.

Ponca City Bulletin

HUNT for the good points in the other fellow - he has to do the same in your case.

Christian Chronicle.

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