

# *The* **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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## LIBERTY

'LIBERTY' is one of those soul inspiring words which means different things to different people depending upon where in the world we stay and from what political background we come. It is a grand word and books of "Quotations" are filled with references to it by anyone who was anybody, especially past Presidents of the U.S.A. In a very advanced and sophisticated world one would imagine that men would enjoy the very optimum of every kind of freedom, but this is far from the case and we find thousands upon thousands of men and women languishing and rotting in prisons all over the world, as political prisoners or captives of some kind. There are all kinds of restrictions on the liberty of the person, whether it be geographical boundary, frontier post, border check-point or even Customs & Excise Post. The Berlin Wall is probably the most glaring example but there are many others. Inside Russia Jews and Christians are imprisoned and persecuted and even native Russians are regularly imprisoned and deprived if they should presume to be critical of the Soviet Union's political set-up. Some foreign Diplomats were remarking in the press the other day in very glowing terms about the wonderful measures of complete freedom to be enjoyed in Britain and they went on to comment upon the 'quality of life' here notwithstanding our economic difficulties. Liberty is something for which men would, and have, given their very lives and indeed the history of even a small country as Scotland is punctuated with many gory battles so that men could go 'Scot-free'. Statues of liberty abound in all the major cities of the world and days of remembrance are set aside so that homage may be paid to those who won our freedom. Certainly in Britain we enjoy what must surely be the very maximum of every kind of liberty - freedom of the person: freedom of speech freedom of the press: freedom of worship: freedom of political persuasion and so on. Indeed when one sees the many protest marches, 'take-overs' sit-ins', with workers 'taking over' factories and students 'taking over' universities one often wonders if perhaps there is a little too much freedom - for liberty is not anarchy.

In a country, therefore, which enjoys such a wide range and degree of liberty we should try to avoid taking it all for granted and we should spare a thought and a prayer for the many thousands throughout the world incarcerated because of their religious or political views. Oftimes the small assembly in Haddington give thanks to God for the religious freedom we enjoy in this country and pray for the Queen and government that such peace to worship, and preach the gospel, may continue and indeed may be enjoyed by other countries over the seas. The apostle Paul thus exhorted in 1 Tim. 2:2 "I exhort therefore that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For Kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour. Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth".

The scriptures, naturally, have much to say about liberty and its antithesis, *bondage* and in Galatians 4-5 Paul uses the allegory of Hagar and Sarah (the bondwoman and the freewoman) as types of the Law of Moses (in contrast with the Gospel of Christ) and Jerusalem, which now is, contrasted with the Jerusalem which is above. To the Jews who would have had the Christians to be circumcised Paul climaxes his reasoned argument by these words, "So then, brethren we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not again entangled with the yoke of bondage" (the Jewish Law). Christ had disentangled mankind from the Mosaic law but there were those in abundance who would have dragged man back into it again – the Mosaic law had been nailed to the cross of Christ but there were those who would bring it back down again. The 'yoke of bondage' can take more forms than one and we must endeavour, as Paul demands, to "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free..." Christ liberates - it is men, and ourselves, who make us prisoners. Christ was more than conqueror yet it was prophesied many hundreds of years before His coming that He would be more of a *liberator* than a conqueror - the best known example being, probably, Isaiah 61:1 "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn". Luke tells us that Jesus read that scripture in the synagogue, one day, and said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears", and we know that Jesus was not given to exaggeration. Jesus came to, inter alia, proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. If any man is in any kind of spiritual bondage in these days it would certainly seem unnecessary and certainly remedial. Those of us old enough to remember the liberation of France and other European countries during the second world war will recall the frenzied scenes of delirious joy which swept along with the liberating armies and will note the virtual absence of such enthusiasm when the greatest Liberator stepped into the world. Then, as now, men resent the suggestion that they require to be saved or liberated from anything. Political tyranny they can concede, but no man believes that he must be saved from himself. Even with the Jews who believed on Him Jesus had trouble, as is illustrated in the conversation in John 8:31 when Jesus said "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" "They answered Him, we be Abraham's seed and were never in bondage to any man; how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free. Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin". We are servants to whomsoever we obey – either God or the devil. The world may not be aware that it lieth in bondage to Satan but it does. The world may not be aware that it requires to be liberated from that bondage but it does. And the task of making the world so aware lies with those who are the disciples of Christ.

Jesus said that *the truth* shall make us all free. To stall for time men ask, like Pilate did so long ago, "But what is truth?" Well, the answer is in John 17:17 where Jesus says, .. "Thy word is truth". The Word of God is the only thing in this world which can truly liberate mankind. Sociologists search here and there and everywhere for the panacea for the ills of men and all the time it lies there in that book that's covered in dust on the shelf. The truth can make us free-free from what? It certainly frees us from the Mosaic law but also frees us from (if not the practice of sin) the guilt and penalty of sin and it freed us from the power of death and the grave. These are the basic freedoms, not inconsiderable in themselves, but there are countless other blessings which come as bye-products from the Word of God. The truth can make us free but *what do we do to the truth and what do we do with the truth?* In the scriptures we read of some who "speak the truth in love": of some "who have not a love of the truth": of some "who lie against the truth": of some "who believe not the truth?" of some "who acknowledge the truth"; of some "who from the heart obey the truth": of some "who do err from the truth?" of some who "resist the truth": of some "who turn from the truth" and of some "who rightly handle the word of truth". The entire world's population are in bondage to sin and satan in varying degrees depending upon their attitude and reaction to the Word of God – the truth that can make them free. Even in a 'free' country such as Britain it is possible to be in a prison of our own devising and certainly we are servants to whomsoever we obey. Whose servants then *are we?* What is *our attitude* to the Truth that can make men free?

EDITOR

# THE TREASURER'S REPORT 1977

AS the new year opens and we present our Balance Sheet for the past year, it is pleasant to report a healthy balance. This is now the twenty-first Statement of Accounts which I have prepared and the first where the balance carried forward is greater than the expenditure for the previous year. As a Christian undertaking this is no more than it should be every year. You will notice that we have only paid for eleven issues as far as printing is concerned. This would have reduced the nett balance by £70 to £80, but even so would have left us in a reasonably healthy state.

## BRETHREN KEEP IT UP!

Your SUBSCRIPTION (£1.50), as a Christian is a duty which you should not need reminding about. You KNOW, when the January issue lands on your mat, YOU ARE IN DEBT. "Owe no man anything, save to love one another". If you owe for only one month then you are doubly in debt; the money and the love you are failing to show. A clearing of my books by the end of February is what I am expecting from you. What do you think God expects?

Your GIFTS, please compare the amount received as gifts with the subscriptions. Only £40 difference and you did it without an appeal. How much better to DO IT without being asked. Begging is loathesome even when it is for someone or something other than self. Thank you for this year, especially.

## BRETHREN KEEP IT UP!

Paul Jones, Treasurer.

### THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD BALANCE SHEET 31st December 1976

Income		Expenditure	
Cash in hand 1.1.76	255:46	Printing 11 Issues	715:89
Cash in Bank 1.1.76	396:61	Printer's Postage	69:87
	652:07	Distribution Postage	108:15
			178:02
Subscriptions	678:57	Bound Volumes	56:00
Gifts	638:52	Address Labels	6:74
	1317:09	Secretary's Expenses	20:00
	1317:09	Total Expenditure	976:65
		Cash in Hand	62:22
		Cash at Barclays Bank	161:87
		Cash at Bank of Scotland	768:42
		Total Cash Balance	992:51
Grand Total	1969:16	Grand Total	1969:1

Audited and found correct. A. Dobbie. 12.

## ASK

SPEAK, Lord, in the stillness, While I wait on Thee;  
Hushed my heart to listen In expectancy.

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" Ephesians 3:20.

ASK ..... WHAT DO I ASK?

ASK ..... WHAT DO I ASK?

I have great pleasure to invite you to share with me a time of quiet, leaving the noisy, busy, distracting world, with all its problems, for a short period, so that we may seek the mind of our loving heavenly Father on this wonderful subject of PRAYER. Are you sitting comfortably, if so, let us say together, the verse quoted above:— "Speak, Lord, in the stillness, While I wait on Thee, Hushed my heart to listen In expectancy". We cannot emphasise enough the fact, that God today, speaks to man, through His word. God's final message is through His Son. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son". Hebrews 1:1-2. On the mount of trans-

figuration, God spoke to Peter, James and John, and through them to us, He said:— “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” Matthew 17:5. God has no other message, save the message given to us by the Lord Jesus, and through Him the message given to us by His chosen Apostles. Jesus prayed for them:— “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so hate I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth” John 17:17-19. Campbell Morgan said: “The word of God is given to man not that he may have a correct theory, but that he may have the truth. Truth is a sanctifying force, and a man holds the truth only when he is held by the truth, When truth possesses a man, all its glory and beauty are manifested through his life and character. The truth the Bible reveals is the Will of God for man. Sanctification by truth is the bringing of man into the will of God”. Shall we take the Word of God therefore, with a spirit of humility, and devotion, to seek out the Will of God, on this all important subject of Prayer.

Do I ask that God should interfere with “Man’s inhumanity to man, that makes countless thousands mourn”?

Our hearts are sad with the knowledge that millions of men and women, and children have died and will die through starvation, in a world of plenty. Millions we are told have died in concentration camps, no doubt through the lust for power and greed of certain individuals. Millions of lives have been lost through war, the bullet, the shell, the bomb. Houses and property have been blasted out of all recognition. Would it be true to say that the numbers of men and women, cannot be counted, who have lost their faith in God, because He has not answered their prayers? They have called ... and ever so earnestly ... they have asked, in all probability with crying and tears, but have not received an answer, and God is blamed for His inaction. Let us realize that we are not just puppets on a string, God has given us freedom of choice, we can either choose the good or the evil, we can either accept His way of life or reject it. This mad, mad, world is the result of men turning away from the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, they have said No to His way of life, hence all the suffering caused through the influence of the Devil. Men have listened to the wiles of Satan, and followed his way, and what a mess they have made. Man’s inhumanity to man, has made countless thousands mourn. Picture in your mind what the difference would have been if the perfect Will of God had been followed:— “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image, of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth, And God said, behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day” Genesis 1:26-31. The perfect will of God, was manifested in the life of the Lord Jesus, and if we neglect to accept His way of life, we do so at our own peril. The Lord Jesus said:— “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” John 10:10. The choice for the world is Christ or Chaos, the choice for the nation – Christ or Chaos, may the world-the nation, and we ourselves choose wisely.

ASK ..... WHAT SHALL I ASK?

ASK..... WHAT SHALL I ASK?

Tennyson says, “Our wills are ours, we know not how;  
Our wills are ours to make them Thine.”

Milton says “Many there be that complain of Divine Providence for suffer – Adam to transgress. Foolish tongues! When God gave him reason, He gave him freedom to choose, for reason is but choosing: else he had been a mere artificial Adam as he is in the motions (puppet-shows). We ourselves esteen not that obedience or love, or gift which is of force. God, therefore, left him free, set before him a provoking object even almost in his eyes. Herein consisted his

merit, herein the right of his reward, the praise of his abstinence. Wherefore did he create passions within us, pleasures round about us, but that these, rightly tempered, are the ingredients of virtue”.

How well John A. Hutton puts it when he says:- “For men like ourselves the darkness and tragedy of the world have no power to unsettle our ultimate confidence. Our faith in God does not rest upon the aspect of transitory things. Our faith is our loyalty to Jesus Christ. It is the acceptance by us not only of His moral rule, but also of His insight, of His report, of His interpretation and point of view. Our faith is our approach to His faith, And it was His faith that this world, though it was permitted to crush him, was all the while God’s world; and that, though men nailed Him to the Cross, and though there were found amongst them those who mocked Him in the agony of death, it was still our high calling to live greatly, to face and overcome the darkness in things in the power of His perfect confidence in the Heavenly Father’s blameless will. Grant us this grace, we beseech Thee, O Lord!” Be assured my brother, my sister, my friend, God is still on the throne, the Lord Jesus won the victory at “The place called Calvary”, and whilst we cannot understand all things, we must hold on to a deep and abiding Faith, knowing full well one with God is a majority. We would do well to follow the advice of C. H. Spurgeon, he said “When I cannot understand anything, it seems to me as though God had set a chair there for me to kneel down and worship. The mysteries are intended to be altars of devotion.

“I worship Thee, sweet Will of God

And all Thy ways adore;

And every day I live, I seem

To love Thee more and more.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Man’s weakness, waiting upon God,  
Its end can never miss,  
For men on earth no work can do  
More angel-like than this.

Ride on, ride on triumphantly,  
Thou glorious Will, ride on!  
Faith’s pilgrim sons behind Thee take  
The road that Thou hast gone.

ASK ..... WHAT DO I ASK?

“Ep-a-phas, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God” Col. 4:12. His prayer is mine. And may the Lord’s richest blessing be your portion.

“He always wins who sides with God,  
To him no chance is lost;  
God’s will is sweetest to him when  
It triumphs at his cost.

ILL that He blesses, is our good,  
And unblest good is ill;  
And all is right that seem most wrong  
If it be His sweet Will” F.W. FABER

ASK ..... WHAT DO I ASK?

LEONARD MORGAN

## TALKS ON THE TABERNACLE

### No. 8 The Day of Atonement

IN that inspired commentary on the Old Covenant and its services, the Epistle to the Hebrews, we read: But into the second (the most holy place) went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people’ (Hebrews 9:7). Thus he made ‘an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year’ (Lev. 16:34). On that great day, the high priest laid aside his robes for ‘glory and beauty’ and wore only the linen garments of the ordinary priests. Our High Priest being ‘originally in the form of God’. emptied Himself, ‘stripped, divested himself of his divine glory, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men’ (Phil. 2:6-7).

### Atonement and Remission

On the day of atonement, two goats were selected, one for a sin offering, the other was the scape-goat. One goat was slain, and its blood taken into the most holy place by the high priest, and sprinkled upon and before the mercy-seat. This act seemed to say: ‘We ought to have died, our sins deserved death; but Thou hast appointed “blood to be an atonement for the soul” : do Thou be pleased to accept the blood of this innocent victim as our substitute, in our stead’.

According to His promise God appeared in shekinah glory, manifesting His presence and approval. 'There will I meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory'.

When the high priest came out of the most holy place he laid his hands upon the head of the live goat, confessed 'all the iniquities of the children of Israel', and the goat was sent by the hand of a fit (chosen) man into the wilderness, 'And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited, and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness' (Lev. 16:21-22). This was typical of the remission of sins, a sending away, letting go, into a land of forgetfulness to be remembered no more. Our High Priest, not 'by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us'. 'For Christ is not entered into the holy place made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us' (Heb. 9:12-24). After the Lord's Ascension, He was seen in heaven as 'a lamb as it had been slain'.

The Lord commissioned His ambassadors to preach repentance and remission of sins in His name, 'beginning at Jerusalem'. At the first proclamation, on the day of Pentecost, anxious enquirers cried, 'Men and brethren What shall we do? They were given heavens' terms of pardon, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'. Then, without any waiting, three thousand surrendered to King Jesus and received his free and gracious pardon' (Acts 2).

#### Our High Priest is in heaven now

Stephen, the martyr, said, 'I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God'. Saul saw and heard Him when on the Damascus road. John, from the lonely isle of Patmos, to which he was banished for his loyalty to the Lord and His word, saw the risen glorified Christ, and our souls are thrilled by his description, telling of the Head once crowned with thorns now crowned with glory and honour.

#### He is the forerunner

The Christian hope is 'as an anchor of the soul both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered: even Jesus, made a high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec' (Heb. 6:19-20). That means others are to follow Him, otherwise He would not be a forerunner. His presence in heaven is the pledge and earnest that He will bring many to share His glory. He prayed for His own disciples, 'Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world' (John 17:14). 'We shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is'. He said: 'I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also' (John 14:3).

#### We must prepare for that now

That is the object of discipleship. The plan of King Jesus, stated in His great commission is: 'All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth, Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptising them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world' (Matt. 28:18-20, R.V.).

The Lord was evidently thinking of the Church as the school where His disciples (scholars) were to be trained, prepared for fellowship with Him in the most holy place, heaven. If as scholars in His school we learn to observe what He has commanded: if as the Israelites waited for the high priest coming out of the Holiest of All, we wait, as those looking for our Lord, with loins girt and lamps burning, we shall be received into the eternal tabernacle, the everlasting habitation.

'Soon present shadows shall have fled,  
And Jesus we shall see;  
And in the Holiest of All,  
With Him shall ever be'.

W. CROSTHWAITE.

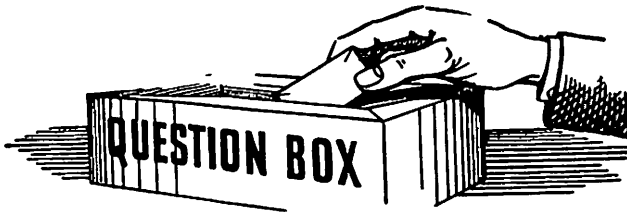
# CORRESPONDENCE CLASSES

## THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES or THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

### Chapter 8

- 1 Write what you know concerning Philip.
- 2 Describe Samaria and the Samaritans.
- 3 Why did the Apostles at Jerusalem send Peter and John to Samaria?
- 4 After their belief, the Samaritans were baptized into the Lord Jesus. Had they received the gift of the Holy Spirit promised by Peter to those who repent and are baptized (Acts 2:38)?
- 5 Write in your own words Luke's description of the events leading up to the conversion of the Ethiopian.
- 6 What passage of Scripture was the Eunuch reading?
- 7 **OPTIONAL.** You are asked to give a Gospel address, and it is suggested you should use that passage as your starting-off point. Give an outline of your address.
- 8 Build up an argument against the 'Rantizers' (Sprinklers), based on vv. 36-39.

Answers, which should be written on one side of the paper only, should be returned to:  
E. JESS, 34 Charles Street, Penicuik.




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Conducted by  
Alf Marsden

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"WE all agree that disunity amongst brethren is sinful but is disunity not inevitable when men introduce into the church that which God has not sanctioned? I would like two questions answered, please. [1] 'When instrumental music was introduced into the churches who caused the resulting division - those who brought in the instrument, or those who would have nothing to do with it? [2] 'Should those who resisted, and still resist, the introduction of the instrument now accept it in the interests of unity?'"

IT is perfectly clear to me, and I suppose to almost everyone else, that when the fundamental truths concerning salvation are specifically, clearly, and unmistakably taught in the Bible then there is no disunity amongst brethren. We all accept the authority of God's Word; we know that we have to believe, repent, confess, the name of Christ, and be baptised in order to be saved. There are sufficient examples given to show us the mode of baptism. We know that the first day of the week is the day we remember the Lord in the breaking of the bread, and that giving of our substance is a very necessary part of fellowship. All these things, and many others besides, we all believe and practice. The areas in which we agree and are united far exceed those areas in which we say we are disunited. Why do we not stress the unity and try to resolve those things which trouble us? The point I am making is that when the Word is clear and unmistakable then we have unity of purpose and practice; conversely, when there is not unity of purpose and practice then we must argue that the Word is not as clear and unmistakable as it is in the cases we have mentioned previously. This point needed to be made, I think, so that we can proceed further with our question.

### The Inevitability of Disunity

The questioner asks, "is not disunity inevitable when men introduce into the church that which God has not sanctioned?" Before we can comment on the inevitability of disunity we must ask ourselves, (a) is there unity only when there is uniformity of practice, and (b) do all of the things which God has not sanctioned cause disunity, or only some of them?

With regard to (a) I think everyone would agree that uniformity in all practices is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. Take an assembly who has the Breaking of Bread service in the morning and then holds another one after the gospel meeting in the evening; does this constitute a cause for disunity and so introduce a sinful state? Or what about those congregations who will not avail themselves of normal commercial and banking facilities; is disunity caused by those congregations who will and do avail themselves of such facilities; and so we could go on. I think we can say that disunity would not necessarily follow because all practices were not exactly uniform.

Furthermore, what do we say about (b). Who determines precisely what God has sanctioned, and if He hasn't sanctioned something does this necessarily make disunity inevitable? I can think of a number of things which are practised by churches which God has not sanctioned, if sanctioned means to be found in the Bible with terminological exactitude. For instance I bring to mind bible schools, anniversaries, women's meetings, governments other than elders and deacons, youth groups, printed literature; none of these God has specifically sanctioned. But someone may say, "These things are expedients; they are ancillary to the main purpose of preaching the gospel". Agreed, but God has not sanctioned them. I ask again, "Do all of the things which God has not sanctioned bring disunity, or only some of them, and who decided which issues constitute disunity if the scripture is less than clear and unmistakable in all instances?" The trouble arises when there is a real and sincere difference of opinion on certain practices, and someone takes a stance which says, 'My viewpoint is right, and if you think and practice differently then you are not united with me and therefore in a sinful state: So who has decided that instrumental music constitutes disunity and sin?

#### Who caused the Division?

I was a new convert when the question of instrumental music was raging. I don't know if the instrument is sinful, but I do know that the bitterness and hate which was engendered because of it was distinctly sinful and should never have emanated from christians; (this has also been the case with other so-called 'burning' issues). I would like to think that many congregations dispensed with the instrument because they were fully convinced from the scripture that instrumental music was sinful, but I do not think that this was the case. I think some dispensed with it because they saw others doing the same, not wishing to offend their brethren.

Personally, I have never considered that there is a clear, unmistakable, and textually strong case in the New Testament for the non-use of an instrument (this may seem like heresy to some, but I am quite prepared to argue it logically with anyone who cares to); certainly not strong enough to cause disunity and dis-fellowship. The passage of scripture most frequently used is Eph. 5:19-20, but the condemnation of the use of instrumental music from this passage is based surely, on inferential reasoning. To argue the case from the Old Testament is like insisting that the terms of a long since abrogated treaty has the same relevance in a newly negotiated one, especially if the terms are not specifically spelled out in the new treaty. Having said that, I want to make it perfectly clear that I am not contending for the use of an instrument in worship. We are better off without it. What I am asking is that we make a critical examination of what the text actually says before we take rigid and inflexible attitudes on what we think it says.

Who caused the division, Well, both contending parties did. You can't have a fight unless your opponent is prepared to fight. Jesus demonstrated this quite clearly. When he was reviled, he reviled not again. In the Garden there was no fight because Jesus determined that there should not be. But you will say to me. "Well what do you do if people are trying to bring unscriptural practice into the church. Do you not oppose them?" I would answer, "Yes, by all means oppose them, but don't fight them to the point of dis-fellowship". Before you do anything, you must be absolutely certain that the practices are, in fact, unscriptural. Your ground is the text of the Word, not someone else's opinions about it.

What I would like to appeal for is a proper dialogue when we discuss teaching which causes us problems. In our discussions of the past we have entered those discussions defending the ground we already hold rather than studying quite seriously all of the ideas put forward, This is not what I term proper dialogue. It is pointless, fruitless, and does nothing except make



pre-determined positions more firmly entrenched, Has our capacity to reason left us. Must we always bleed from self-in-flicted wounds?

#### What should we do?

The questioner asks, "Should those who resisted, and still resist, the introduction of the instrument, now accept it in the interests of unity". The answer must be an unqualified NO. We may as well say that we should accept all that dénominalism practices simply because we want to be united with them. No, the only basis of unity must be the Word. This is why I say that we must be absolutely sure about what it is saying.

I do not know of many assemblies in the British Isles who still have an instrument. If it is a problem in the assembly to which the questioner belongs then I can only suggest the lines along which I would operate. Search the scriptures; not for a day, or a week, but for a year or more if necessary. You must be fully convinced from the Word. Then if, like me, you are not fully persuaded that the use of an instrument is absolutely sinful, then, as I do, apply a very fundamental principle of scripture. If the use of an instrument offends my brethren, then I will not use an instrument or cause one to be used.

But please, let us resist this heady brew of Satan of wanting to be dis-fellowshipped from our brethren if they don't agree exactly with what we are doing. That way leads to disaster and we have followed it too long. Let us all devote ourselves to the word. Perhaps we shall be surprised at the results.

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

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

### MARCH 1977

6—Psalm 49	Matthew 16:21 to 17:13
13—Exodus 30:1-16	Matthew 17:14-28
20—Ezekiel 34:1-19	Matthew 18:1-20
27—1 Samuel 26	Matthew 18:21-35

### THE WAY OF THE CROSS

THE confession of Jesus as Son of God by His apostles was private. They were forbidden to tell the truth which they had been preaching "the kingdom of God is at hand", and which John Baptist had lived and died for. His message was 'The Messiah is here, I am his herald'. Even he developed doubt on the question because Jesus did not fit his expectations. Jesus now is telling His disciples of the suffering, death and resurrection He is to accomplish. The last point they never believed until it had happened. Referring to John Jesus had said "Blessed is he whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in Me" (Matt. 11:6). Indeed Peter needed this blessing. Perhaps we all do still. It was his preconceived notions of messiahship which made him rebuke his Master. What impudence it seems to us, and yet the prophecies do justify expectations of a mighty conqueror. The disciples too had seen evidence of divine power in Jesus' hands. His work as

the Lamb of God had to be revealed to them. He was preparing them for a staggering shock. His figure of "taking up the cross" is a truly gruesome one - yet so literally true for some of them, if not all. Never did Jesus minimise the cost of discipleship. He did with it present the ultimate judgement and the rewards, the vital need for the right choice and willingness to pay the price. The estimated value of the soul transcends every other consideration. Is any person justified in being careless of his own eternal welfare?

### Publicity

But why would Jesus wish his disciples not to say that He was the Son of God? We think humbly that such a claim broadcast at that time would have produced among the multitudes that thronged around Him even when far from 'base', such an enthusiasm for rebellion, for the assertion of national rights as to sweep Jesus into the false position of a political agitator. This would have led to violence and the devilish spirit of hatred and resentment. Jesus calmly and designedly retired to comparative seclusion beyond Jordan until the time was ripe for the final attack through the raising of Lazarus in the most unquestionable and well-attested miracle (John 11:19). The attack is upon the citadel of the heart to give opportunity at the last for repentance. Did some of those sophisticated men draw back? We do not know. We know the chief actors in this saddest of dramas did not. (John 11:47).

### The Transfiguration

We must remember Jesus was just a man to those He lived with - certainly a very special man but without halo or angelic outward mark. Heaven did open when the angels spoke to the shepherds at His birth (Luke 2:8-14). The house at Bethlehem was indicated to the wise men by a totally miraculous star (Matt. 2:9,10). John Baptist and possible others heard the voice from heaven at His baptism (John 1:28-34). On one occasion at Jerusalem God spoke to Jesus from heaven. Some said it thundered, others knew God had spoken (John 12:28). However a vision of heavenly realities was granted to three specially honoured men - who most needed it. Signs from heaven were refused to an adulterous generation but the glory of heaven broke through to the human consciousness of these three with irresistible force. It passed quickly, and then no one was left but the man Jesus (Matt. 17:8). They knew the spiritual presences were there. They saw Jesus in glory with Moses and Elijah and heard them speaking together. When all seems dark and heaven tightly closed, Jesus and His saints are close by. This consciousness never left the three, and they testified to others accordingly. The early christians had this consciousness. Death and heaven were next door. Perhaps now in the regions where it is dangerous to confess Christ, the vision is present. Peter records his impression in his last letter (2 Peter 1:16-19). The conversation of the transfigured persons was about the 'Departure' of Jesus - His exodus (this is the word used). The Jews escaped from Egypt. Jesus ensured our escape from sin.

### Greatness in the Kingdom

All the parts of chapter 18 are closely related. It begins with a question from the disciples. From other passages we know there was a measure of rivalry among the twelve Jesus chose, and we can understand the others developing jealousy of Peter, James and John because of their special intimacy with Jesus. His answer was with the illustration of the child in the midst. How can His disciples get down to this humility involving selflessness? Jesus has Himself given us the supreme example as set out in Phil. 2:5-11. In face of what He did is any humiliation too complete for us? How hard is it for us to accept any humiliation at all? A christian must never take offence. The Son of God is mocked and spat upon - are His

servants to resent ill treatment. We sometimes even resent other people being treated better than ourselves, and some preachers take offence at criticism or correction. Jesus chose a most terrifying figure, unquenchable eternal fire, to impress with the lesson not to stumble or to be a cause of it. It must be confessed that from time to time taking offence causes trouble and disagreement in the church. It is so easy to take personal umbrage instead of meeting bad treatment with humble and loving entreaty. 'We must have this mind in us which was also in Christ Jesus'. Greatness never troubled the apostles after Pentecost. Service filled their lives. They did not despise anyone. Everyone was precious in their sight as in their Master's - the smallest child, the most humble person. It must be with us too.

### Forgiveness

It would appear that Peter felt there must be a limit to forgiveness, and we are so glad he did raise the question. There is a sense in which forgiveness must depend upon repentance, but there is also a sense in which it must be always the sentiment in the heart. We read our Lord's instructions recorded in Luke 17 and there repentance is a condition of pardon. The need of rebuke and repentance is there set out very much in line with our passage in Matthew 18:15-17. The removal of the grievance is the object but if efforts fail the offender loses fellowship, but the plaintiff has offered and remains ready to forgive formally but cannot retain an unforgiving spirit, or he would fall under condemnation as did the man in the parable who, forgiven himself, did not offer forgiveness to his fellow who owed much less. Thus every christian who retains an unforgiving spirit regardless of the offender's attitude is in danger of God's condemnation as his sins have been forgiven through the cleansing blood of Jesus. Here is surely a reconciliation between forgiveness as in 'the Lord's Prayer', and forgiveness received through faith, repentance and obedience. How important it is that we should never allow a grudge to poison any relationship. Differences must not be swept under the mat but brought into the open and settled by negotiation.

R. B. SCOTT

Brother and Sister Scott wish to say again how much they have appreciated the kind interest of their brethren, and to report that the broken limb is recovering normally at present. The Lord has graciously permitted this.

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Buckie, Scotland:** During the month of Oct. the Church has had the services of Bro. Paul Jones. We have been greatly blessed by his teaching and Gospel messages. The Meetings were well attended and we believe that the word sown will bring fruit in due season. May God Bless our Brother as he labours amongst the Churches. John Geddes

**Longshoot, Scholes, Wigan:** It is with great joy that we report another addition to the Lord's church. On Sunday December 26th 1976 Gary McMahon obeyed his Master in baptism. We praise God for Gary's decision, and pray that he may prove to be a faithful servant of Jesus and worker in the Church. D. Melling.

## OBITUARY

**Francis Richard Jones:** On 1st October 1976, Brother Frank Jones passed away. For eighteen months he had lived happily at The William Simpson Home, Plean in Stirlingshire. Before that for eighteen months with his Son in Slamannan.

He was born in Birmingham on 1st Sept. 1897 and was a member of the church in Summer Lane, Aston. He became a bishop in that church and served faithfully until ill-health made it impossible for him to attend. He will be remembered by many who live in Wollaston. Stourbridge, for he worked, after his retirement from the West Midlands Gas Board, as the School gardener in this village. Bro. John Baird of Wallacestone conducted the service at the graveside and his son, Paul, led brethren and friends from the Home, in remembrance and final respects in the Rest Parlour. He leaves a widow and son and two daughters. His mortal remains were laid to rest in Bannockburn Cemetery. Sincere thanks are expressed to all who turned out to support his son in that difficult time.

We would apologise for the delay in submitting this notice. P. Jones

**Buckie, Scotland:** With a deep sense of loss we record the passing on November 6th of Bro. Alex Reid on his 89th Birthday. Bro.

Reid obeyed the gospel when a young man, and has been a faithful supporter of the truth. Since his wife died a few years ago our Bro. has lived between London and Inverness with his sons, but always maintaining the interests of the Church he loved. The Burial took place from the Meeting Hall on Tuesday 9th, and was conducted by Bro. Andrew Gardiner. We extend to his Family at this time our deepest sympathy. John Geddes

(The editor apologises for the late inclusion of this notice).

**Buckie Scotland:** The Church has sustained a further loss in the passing of Brother George Reid on Tuesday 4th January 1977 in his eighty seventh year.

Baptised early in life, our brother is the last of the older brethren, whose hearts were saddened by the digressions which crept into the congregations of the N.E. of Scotland, and also saw the need for a firm stand for the Truth of Gods word.

He served as an Elder for many years, and was an able preacher of the Gospel. Of late he was unable to attend the meetings through illness, but always alert to the word of God. The burial took place from the Meeting Hall on Friday 7th, and was conducted by Bro. Andrew Gardiner, and at the graveside by Bro. John Geddes.

We commend Sis. Reid and the family to the grace of God praying that they will find consolation that in Christ is the resurrection to eternal life. John Geddes

**Tranent:** The Church suffered the loss of an elder sister, Mrs Mary Thompson, on December 18th. Although unable to attend services for some years past she was in close contact with the church through regular visitation. Our sister will be remembered for her cheerful nature by all who knew her.

We commend her family and friends to our Heavenly Father who is able to sustain us in our time of Loss. Bro. D. Colgan conducted the funeral service at the home and at the graveside.

**ARE YOU A GIANT OR A GRASSHOPPER?**  
Numbers 13:33

YOU will remember that Moses was instructed by God to send 12 men to search out the land of Canaan. Moses told them to be of good

courage and bring of the fruit of the land. They did so, and returned after 40 days. They said "We came to the land and SURELY IT FLOWETH WITH MILK AND HONEY; but all the people we saw in it were Giants, and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers! (What a lack of courage).

However, Joshua and Caleb said, "Let us go up at once and possess Canaan for we are well able to overcome it. If the Lord delights in us, he will bring us into it. Do not be afraid of these people - the Lord is WITH US".

Alas, the children of Israel did not believe the Lord was with them and how sad the result was. - The 10 men who brought back the evil report died, with many others, and the children of Israel were made to wander 40 years in the wilderness, as a punishment, and only two of the original number (Joshua and Caleb) were allowed to see the land flowing with milk and honey. (The New Testament says "They entered not in, because of UNBELIEF").

Joshua and Caleb were men of courage. We are told Caleb "had another spirit with him and WHOLLY FOLLOWED THE LORD" (as did Joshua). What wonderful GIANTS these two men were: they believed God. Let us all strive to WHOLLY FOLLOW THE LORD and become GIANTS in his kingdom.

"BE STRONG AND OF GOOD COURAGE".

Miss PAYNE, Reading

#### From "THE TOOL CHEST"

I HAVE always been troubled by the fact that so many of our brethren seem to have such little knowledge of the leaders of what has been called "the radical reformation", that is the Anabaptist movement. Most of us have some concept of the work of Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, and their associates, but know little indeed about Conrad Grebel, George Blaurock, Hans Denck, and other "Stepchildren of the Reformation" whose opposition to in-

fant baptism brought persecution, and even death at the hands of the Reformation leaders.

You can fill in the void in your historical perspective by reading the revised edition of *The Anabaptist Story* by William R. Estep, Professor of Church History at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. The 250-page volume, produced by William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., at \$3.95. was scheduled for release on the 450th anniversary of the Anabaptist movement which began on 21 January, 1525, when a dozen or so men had trudged through the snow to the home of Felix Manz in Zurich.

The Large Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren describes what happened: "After the prayer, George of the House of Jacob stood up and besought Conrad Grebel for God's sake to baptize him with the true Christian Baptism upon his faith and knowledge, And when he knelt down with such a request and desire, Conrad baptized him, since at that time there was no ordained minister to perform such work".

The struggle of these men to arrive at the truth contained in God's revelation is a fascinating proof of the power of that truth to cut through tradition and to remove the rubbish accumulated through ignorance. Even though these pioneers died for their firm confidence that "believer's baptism" was the will of God, many never came to see that immersion was the primitive baptism, but they prepared the way for the rest of us to see it.

From CHRISTIAN STANDARD

#### COMING EVENTS

**Kirkcaldy Social:** The church in Kirkcaldy are pleased to announce that they intend holding (God willing) their annual social on the 23rd April, 1977, and that brother John Morgan, Hindley, has agreed to be the speaker. The meeting will commence at 4 p.m. and all brethren and friends will be made welcome.

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**DISTRIBUTION AGENT & TREASURER:** PAUL JONES 3 St. Laurence Crescent, Slamannan, Falkirk, FK1 3HY, Tel. Slamannan (032 485) 200 to whom change of address should be sent.

**EDITOR:** JAMES R. GARDINER, 88 Davidson Terrace, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland.

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