

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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BLESSINGS IN CHRIST

There is a hymn which Sunday School children sing quite a lot, the words of which are guaranteed to cheer us when we are despondent or sad. "Count your blessings, name them one by one; Count your blessings, see what God hath done: Count your blessings, name them one by one: And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done." When we reckon that life is giving us a hard time we should, with great profit, count our blessings and be surprised at what the Lord hath done. I remember being carted off to hospital on one occasion and thought that I was in a really bad way. Later when I got to looking around the Ward and saw the many poor unfortunates I realised that I was not so bad after all and should be thankful, and should count my blessings. Just as a funeral pulls everybody up short and makes them consider their Maker, albeit for only a short period, so does a visit to a hospital make us realise how fortunate those are who have the inestimable blessings of health and strength.

God, of course, is the giver of all blessings. James says that, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow-of turning." In Matt. 5, Jesus, when instructing His disciples to love even those who were their enemies, explained that in doing so they would be emulating their Heavenly Father, for God is good not only to the righteous but also to the evil. Jesus further explained that they were to do good to those who despitefully used them so that they might ". . . be the children of their Father which is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." It is, therefore, not quite true to say that God shines His sun upon the righteous — He also shines it on the just, and on the evil.

If we can detach our minds away for a moment from the material and physical concepts of blessings, there is a special sense in which God dispenses very special and substantial spiritual blessings 'in Christ'. Paul expresses this truth in Eph. 1:3 where he says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Apparently such blessings are not, like the sun and the rain, for the just and unjust, but are for those who are 'in Christ'. Paul seems to be saying that All spiritual blessings are only to be had 'in Christ'. A short article such as this defies any comprehensive mention of the multitudes of spiritual blessings in Christ but perhaps we can mention briefly one or two:

New Creatures

Paul states (in 2 Cor. 5:17) "Therefore if any man be *in Christ*, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." Again we notice the stringent limitations Paul places on the recipients (IF any man be IN CHRIST) but the blessing itself is truly wonderful, i.e. New Creatures.

It is sometimes difficult to realise that followers of Christ are new creatures; we often don't look like it and very often we certainly don't act like it. "Newness of life" is certainly mentioned elsewhere in the N.T. and used in the context of baptism. Paul in referring to the fact that New Testament baptism is in effect a burial in water and also a resurrection says, "Therefore we are buried with Him (Christ) by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk *in newness of life*." (Rom. 6:4). He develops the theme of death and resurrection in the following verses by saying, "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." And at verse 11, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." From these passages we glean some insight into how men and women become dead and then alive — and not only alive again, but NEW CREATURES. New creatures not only with new life but with a new outlook on life; new purposes, new standards, new duties, new privileges, new obligations and new hope.

New Hope

I'm sure we much underrate the blessing of hope in Christ. Paul once referred to the plight of those who have no such hope and said to the disciples at Thessalonica, concerning the dead, that he trusted that they would not sorrow even as others *which have no hope*. "Blessed are the dead which die *in Christ* (or in the Lord)" (Rev. 14:13). And, of course, we Gentiles ought to remember that at one time we were without Christ, being aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, *having No Hope*, and without God in the world.

This hope, is once again, only to be found *in Christ*, and is obviously not a hope likely to be realised in this life for that which is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. (Rom. 8). Paul confirms his argument that our hope in Christ is beyond this sphere in his words to the Corinthians, "If in this life only we have hope *in Christ* we are of all men most miserable." (1 Cor. 15:18). And in Titus 1 Paul reveals the true magnitude and scope of our wonderful hope when he says that he acknowledges the truth . . . "in hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began." Our new hope is life eternal, no less, or the hope 'which is laid up for us in heaven'.

When Paul reminded the Gentiles of their destitute condition (Eph. 2) prior to obeying the gospel, i.e. without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world, he followed the bleak catalogue with these wonderful words, "But now *in Christ Jesus* ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh: by the blood of Christ." IN CHRIST they were made nigh by the blood of Jesus.

All that the apostle Paul said and did was with the grand aim of being at the last found IN CHRIST. He said so to the saints at Philippi, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found IN HIM, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of

God by faith. That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death. If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. (Phil 3:8).

In Christ

What then does it mean to be 'In Christ' and how do we get 'into Christ?' At the beginning of the article Eph. 1:3 was quoted which says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places *in Christ*." God's sun and rain are for the good and the bad, for the righteous and the evil, but God's spiritual blessings are for those *in Christ*. "If any man be *in Christ* he is a new creature. We can safely presuppose that if a man is *not* in Christ he is not a new creature.

'In Christ' is a very favourite expression of Paul's (and the Spirit's) in indicating the channel through which the great blessings of God are realised. Again baptism is the key ingredient. Paul says to the Corinthian Christians, referring to the unity of the body of Christ, "For by one spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Cor. 12:13). How do we get into the body of Christ? — We are *baptised into* the body of Christ.

Again, referring back to Rom. 6:3, 4, Paul says to the Christians at Rome, "Know ye not, that *so many* of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into His death. Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Paul had to say "Know ye not" at the beginning of the quotation because a large number of the readers of his epistle would be entirely ignorant of the truth of what he had to say. We have no such excuse today — nevertheless the religious world is full of those quite ignorant that we are *baptised into Christ*; we are baptised *into His body* (the church): we are baptised *into His death*, where thus identifying ourselves with His death we rise (from the waters of baptism) to walk in newness of life. How we can do this while at the same time we deny baptism is a mystery to me, but men do it all the time. There are those who claim to very religious men; who claim to be led by the scriptures; who deny the truth of what Paul says.

The final quotation I would care to present on this matter is Paul's words to the Christians at Galatia, where he was at some pains to convince the Judaizers that we are justified by faith and not by the Mosaic law, (in Chap. 3:26-27) which reads, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. **FOR as many of you** as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ..." It is clear that Paul viewed their baptism as an affirmation of their faith, the end result of which was their translation into Christ. But Paul goes further: he says, that their baptism was the means of their **PUTTING ON** of Christ. We know what it means to put on a coat or a robe, or to put on humility, or to put on the whole armour of God. Thus we should know what is meant by putting on Christ and Paul says that *only as many* as have been baptised into Christ 'have put Christ on'. By voluntarily offering themselves to be baptised into Christ the Galatian Christians were consciously obeying the instructions of Jesus and were manifesting their desire and resolve to attach themselves to Christ's discipleship and service, and to be thenceforth identified with Christ's redeemed; expecting at His hand Spiritual blessings in this life and Life Eternal in the world to come.

Conclusion

The conclusion is short and simple. If all Spiritual blessings in heavenly places are to be received and enjoyed by those who are 'In Christ', and Paul says so in Eph. 1:3, then should not we exercise our minds on the question as to whether we are, in

fact, "In Christ". Have we been baptised into Christ? Have we been baptised into His body. (the church)? Have we 'Put On' Christ in baptism as did the saints at Galatia?

"Therefore, if any man *be in Christ*, he is a new creature . . ."

LOVE — THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD

No. 2 THE ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT

I Cor. 13:1-3

It is always best to clearly define a subject before trying to show its worth or influence, so let us set forth exactly what we mean by 'LOVE.' Throughout these five articles the word 'love' is confined to the Greek work 'AGAPE.' Not 'Philio' which is brotherly love; or love of family; the close attachment of husband and wife; parents and child; brother and sister. Neither is it 'Eros,' which refers to the physical, sensual passions; so commonly termed 'love' in these loose days.

The love of which Paul writes is not dependent on family ties, neither does it require word-of-mouth to announce its existence. Even as John writes, "Little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue but in deed and truth." The word which Paul uses here and which we have taken for our subject can succinctly be defined as: "Unselfish action, performed at the sole cost to the doer, to the sole benefit of the recipient and irrespective of the manner of its reception!" This is the 'LOVE' of John 3:16. Who but God paid the price of Salvation, who but mankind (the world) received the benefit, and did God hold back because He knew many would spurn His love?

This, then, is the LOVE of which we say it is

The Essential Ingredient

Every facet and form, every thought and profession of Christianity is waste and void without it. A noble Lady once replied to her husband's enquiry as to the amount she loved him by saying, "As much as meat loves salt." He was displeased and considered she had slighted him. The Lady had every grain of salt removed from the house. The banquet that night vindicated her statement. Love is the essential ingredient to bring out the flavour of our Christianity. It is the one command which Jesus made, "This is My commandment, that ye LOVE one another." Without love

Christianity is vanity. Love is the

ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT.

In our text, Paul paints three pictures of great men:

(i) The Great Preacher

Preaching features so prominently in God's plan of Salvation that it must be considered the principal necessity to Christianity: "Go ye into all the world and preach: was the kernal of the great commission. Its scope is the whole world. Preaching was the all-consuming passion of the Apostle to the Gentiles. "For, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." No need to wonder why Paul felt like this about preaching for he wrote to the Corinthians, "It was God's good pleasure, through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Preaching is the Prime Necessity because God chose it as the vehicle of His message of Salvation.

To enable men to preach to all nations God gave the gift of tongues. How needful was this fulfilment of the promise Jesus made (Mk. 16:17). In itself an irrefutable sign of divine grace (Acts 2: 6-8). It seems quite natural that the Apostle to the Gentiles should be able to claim, "I speak with tongues more than ye all." Thus he

says as he paints his picture of The Great Preacher; 'Although I speak with the tongues of men. The human voice emanating from a full store of the knowledge of God's plan of Salvation in intelligent language, such as all could hear and understand. "Though I speak with the tongues of men!"

Paul then proceeds to raise the Great Preacher to even greater heights. "Though I speak with the tongues of angels." The original word translated angels literally means messenger. The translators used the word 'angel' at their own discretion to indicate a heavenly messenger. Here Paul is not concerned with Beings from Heaven as in Luke 2: 8-15, but as the preacher who brings heaven's message to men. We might reasonably paraphrase the sentence, Though I speak heaven's message and speak it in a way which all can hear and understand:

BUT HAVE NOT LOVE

Please note, Paul does not detract from the potency of the message nor from the beneficence to the hearer, BUT, though I am the greatest and most effective preacher of all, but have not LOVE; without the Essential Ingredient, I! I am but sounding brass. In reality I am just a Clanger. I am become a tinkling cymbal; just a mere sound.

Love is the same in any language because it needs no verbal expression. Love is the purest Gospel, so brethren;

LEARN TO LOVE.

(ii) The Great Stalwart

Down through the ages the church has been carried along by its stalwarts. Those men who have stood out from the crowd because they have excelled in some section of the Christian Life. Maybe in the forth-telling of God's Will and Word, or their diligent study of the Bible and their ability to teach others. There have been those who have lived like Job, enduring pain, hardship and adversity with implicit faith in God. Never questioning or rebuking God for their circumstances. Living a life based only on doing that which they believe to be right. Paul pictures such a man who has all these attributes. "Though I have the gift of prophesy and know all mysteries and have all knowledge and have all faith. Is not this an idle dream? What man can reach such a height of perfection? Paul uses the person pronoun and, whilst we do not suggest that he was claiming this distinction to himself, we can review his life and appreciate how applicable the description is to himself. Even so he says, with all this wonderful Christian elevation, but without LOVE, what am I? NOTHING: A NOBODY: A NON-ENTITY.

However great he is in his own eyes or in the estimation of his compatriots, The Great Stalwart WITHOUT LOVE is nothing but a bag of wind. Again, the Apostle takes nothing away from all these wonderful characteristics but says the lack of the Essential Ingredient makes the others void.

(iii) The Great Philanthropist

Here is a picture of charity at its very best. In accord with Jesus' exhortation to the Rich Young Ruler, Go, Sell, Give, Come. "Though I bestow all my goods," ALL my goods. Not like Ananias and Sapphira, who sought the eulogy of the church through fraud. Though I BESTOW ALL my goods. Jesus said, Lay not up for yourselves treasure upon the earth etc. (Matt. 6: 19-21) and this is obviously in Paul's mind for only by the use of our treasure upon the earth in a philanthropic manner do we transfer the credit to Heaven's bank. Paul pictures one who is prepared to exchange his wealth for poverty to benefit the needy and who goes beyond mere worldly possessions to include his own body, his very self. "Though I give my body to be burned." The idea of martyrdom is self-evident but more in keeping with the text is the idea of burning up one's body in service. 'Go, labour on, spend and be spent.' Though I give all my worldly goods and then spend also all my physical and mental strength and ability to serving the needy.

BUT HAVE NOT LOVE!

No Profit to me, No deposit in Heaven for me. All this sacrifice without love is like an old-time miner slaving all the week and then squandering his hard-earned wages. **IT PROFITETH ME NOTHING.**

Is it possible to have charity without love, oh yes! "You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving." (FCD).

LOVE! THE ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT: AT WORK

(i) In Preaching the Gospel. God's Love for man is the Gospel. So, most clearly do we preach when we do it by example. Actions speak louder than words.

(ii) In a Life of Faith. In prophecy, knowledge and faith there must be the tempering influence of love.

(iii) In Charity. 'Charity' without love is like soldèr without flux; like a cake without sweetening. It is cold and unkind.

LOVE! That most wonderful act is the fulfilment of every law, so **LEARN TO LOVE.**

It is the **ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT** in all things.

PAUL JONES

GLEANINGS

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

THE MAN WHO IS SURE OF GOD

"The man who is sure of God can afford to hold very lightly the things of this world, for in having God he has all. Happy is the man who, having the right of choice, hands the decision back to God saying "Thou shalt choose my inheritance for me." — F. B. Meyer.

"I feel and grieve, but, by the grace of God, I fret at nothing." — John Wesley.

THINK AND THANK

"Come and see the victories of the cross. Christ's wounds are thy healing; His agonies are thy repose; His conflicts thy conquests; His groans thy songs; His pains thy ease; His shame thy glory; His death thy life; His sufferings thy salvation." — Matthew Henry.

TRY AGAIN

"It is wise to forget past errors. There is a kind of temperament which, when indulged, greatly hinders growth in real godliness. It is that rueful, repentent, self-accusing temper, which is always looking back, and microscopically observing how that which is done might have been better done. Something of this we ought to have. A Christian ought to feel always that he has partially failed, but that ought not to be the only feeling. Faith ought never to be a sanguine, cheerful thing; and perhaps in practical life we could not give a better account of faith than by saying, that it is, amidst much failure, having the heart to try again. Our best deeds are marked by imperfection; but if they really were our best, "forget the things that are behind" — we shall do better next time." — F. W. Robertson.

HAVE NO ANXIETY FOR THE MORROW

Years ago, a penniless philosopher was wandering through a stony country where the people had a hard time making a living. One day a crowd gathered about him on a hill, and he gave what is probably the most-quoted speech ever delivered anywhere at any time. This speech contains twenty-six words that have gone ringing down across the centuries: "Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Many men have rejected those words of Jesus: "Take no thought for the morrow."

They have rejected those words as a counsel of perfection, as a bit of Oriental mysticism. "I must take thought for the morrow," they say. "I must take out insurance to protect my family. I must lay aside money for my old age. I must plan and prepare to get ahead."

Right! Of course you must. The truth is that those words of Jesus, translated over three hundred years ago, don't mean today what they meant during the reign of King James. Three hundred years ago the word thought frequently meant anxiety. Modern versions of the Bible quote Jesus more accurately as saying: "Have no anxiety for the tomorrow."

By all means take thought for the tomorrow, yes, careful thought and planning and preparation. But have no anxiety." — Dale Carnegie.

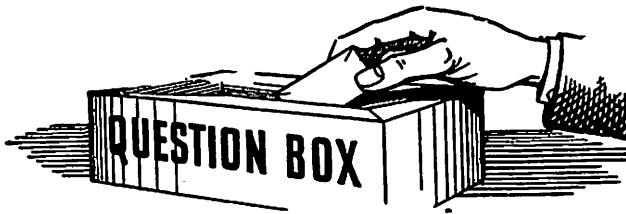
WHY A COW LOOKS OVER THE WALL

A man was talking to John Wesley, and saying that he did not know what he could do with his perplexities. The two were passing a meadow bounded by a stone fence, over which a cow was looking. 'Do you know,' asked Wesley, 'why that cow looks over that wall?' 'No.' 'I will tell you: it is because she cannot look through it. And that is just what you must do with your troubles; look over and above them' "

THE MECHANIC'S STORY

"If one man came telling us that the morning paper had been produced by the compositors without intention, that they had simply thrown up the type and it dropped down by necessity or chance into leaders, articles and locals; and another told you that it had all been carefully planned beforehand, the articles lucidly written, and the type carefully set, which would you believe? I think the latter — the mechanic's story. So when we consider that this planet is much more wonderfully arranged than a newspaper, I think the same process of reasoning must be accepted in regard to its production." — Isaac Selby.

Selected by Leonard Morgan.



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

"What was meant by a heretic in New Testament times?"

This question is written in the past tense and the implication at first sight is that a heretic in N.T. times would be different in some way from a heretic in the present time. I do not say that the questioner would necessarily have had this in mind, but nevertheless that possibility must be examined. We can only establish the facts concerning this by exploring the meaning of the word as it was used, and by measuring the actions and conduct of people today in order to see if the original definition can be applied to them.

What is a Heretic?

Paul says to Titus, "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject: Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself" (Titus 3:10, 11). A heretic by definition, is one who practices heresy, and heresy is that which comes by self-choice of the individual, and hence, is an opinion, especially a self-willed opinion. This self-opinionated approach tends to be substituted for the truth, and if persisted in may lead to strife, division, and the forma-

tion of sects; it is the fertile soil in which breed factions and the party spirit.

As the Titus passage is the only one in which the word 'heretic' is found, it might help us if we looked at some versions and translations, other than the King James Version, in order to draw out the full meaning. "Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time" (N.I.B.). "As for a man who is factious, after admonishing him once or twice, have nothing more to do with him" (R.S.V.). "If a man disputes what you teach, then after a first and second warning, have no more to do with him" (Jerusalem Bible). "If a man is self-opinionated, warn him. But after the second warning you should reject him" (Phillips). "If anyone is causing divisions among you, he should be given a first and second warning" (Living Bible). So we see that a heretic is a person who is self-opinionated, factious, divisive, a disputer of sound doctrine.

The New Testament Evidence

There is conclusive evidence in the N.T. as to how harmful heresies can be to the saints; as a matter of fact, Peter says that they can be destructive, "But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them — bringing swift destruction to themselves" (2 Pet. 2:1). Peter then goes on to indicate the extent of the defection, "Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute" (v2). There is even a revelation of the way that these false teachers will operate, "In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up." (v3).

The fact that the party spirit infiltrated the Church should cause us no great surprise, because the people were familiar with sects and parties; Luke reminds us of this in Acts of Apostles. "Then the high priest and all of his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy" (Acts 5:17). "Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said ..." (Acts 15:5). The Jews brought a charge against Paul and before Felix and said, "He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect" (24:5) Paul in his defence said, "I admit that I worship the God of our fathers, as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect" (25:14). When he was before Agrippa, Paul said, "They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that according to the strictest sect of our religion, I lived as a Pharisee" (26:5). So it is plain that the party and the sect were well known features of religious life even before and during the lifetime of our Lord.

Paul even identifies the source from which the heretic will operate. Speaking to the assembled elders from Ephesus he says, "I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from *your own number* men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard" (Acts 20: 29, 30). Then, as if to underline the pervasive powers of subversion, and the importance of 'guarding the deposit' as he called it, the apostle said, "Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears" (v 31).

In his first letter to the saints in Corinth, Paul returns to the theme of divisions in the Church. He exhorts them to speak the same things and not to foster the party spirit. He emphasises the unity which should embellish the preaching of Christ, and he condemns the divisive attitudes which were tending to subvert the truth and harm the Body of Christ (Read 1 Cor. 1:10-17).

How did it Happen?

Quite easily. There are some men (and women) who are so self-opinionated and who state their opinions so forcefully and fervently, that they draw away disciples unto themselves. They even appeal to the truth which they are subverting in order to make that truth appear to support the opinions they are expounding. Never underestimate the power of the skilled and fervent orator to draw disciples unto himself.

Then there are those who see the Church as the vehicle for realising their own ambitions. Paul warns Timothy against those who used the Church for financial gain, but I am persuaded that there are those who see the Church as the gateway to promotion in their jobs, etc. Such abuse is quite cynical and should not be tolerated if it is known to exist. (Read 1 Tim. 6:3-8).

We should also beware of cliques in the Church. They have been and still are potentially dangerous. Someone once remarked to me concerning a particular family, 'Prick one of them, and they all bleed'; this can be true in the nature of cliques. If someone in a clique is spreading sedition and is rebuked for it, then the other members of the clique will invariably rise in defence, not of the truth, but of the clique.

Could there be Heretics today?

In view of the true appreciation of what a heretic is, I think the answer must be an unqualified yes. I think the really important point for us to understand is that the heretic is not one who *attempts* to form a party or sect in the first instance, but one who insists in promoting *his own* opinions, irrespective of whether or not those opinions conform to the truth. Those opinions, if persisted in, can *then* lead to the formation of a party.

What is the remedy? There is only one; a correct understanding of, and a fervent desire to uphold at all cost, the truth. We need to keep before our eyes always the injunction given by Paul to Timothy, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (All questions, please to Alf Marsden, 377 Billinge Road, Highfield, Wigan).

THE DEITY OF CHRIST

(John Chap. 1)

Revealed as the word of God

How similar the opening verses of Genesis and John are, both start at the same point, "In the beginning" and continued by unveiling the infinite source of all creation — GOD. The latter book adds a new dimension to the old story; the WORD. Another besides the Father, who shares with God and is God. Not a god as some contend, but the one creating Elohim of Genesis chapter one. "All things came into being through Him; and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being" Jn 1:3. (Read also Col 1:15-17 and Heb 1:3). To think of our Saviour in these terms has the most profound implications for Him and as a direct result for us also, and like firecrackers soaring heaven-ward leaving in its trail sparks of colourful emotions and a thousand particles of light, so these thoughts dazzle and delight the Christian. That 'the Word' is Jesus cannot be doubted, verse fourteen says "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." As the prophet had foretold, Matt 1:23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call Him Immanuel, which translated means, God with us." Stop and think about that for a while, Deity embodied in the flesh. Yet in such perfect harmony that He was both "Son of God" and "Son of Man" at the same time! No, not a story from mythology but a definite historical event, the reality of which can be measured by any orthodox historical criteria.

Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

Revealed as the light of God

Life and light are primal qualities of Godhood, the absence of which would disqualify any claimant. For Jesus these qualities had been (are) personal attributes, eternal possessions, "In Him was life." Humans like John the Baptist can only witness of the light, but Jesus is the true light which, coming into the world,

enlightens every man. Little did John and Andrew realise the full implication of calling Jesus, "Rabbi," (verse 38). Nathanael seems to have had better insight "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel" (verse 49). Rightly did Jesus say "For One is your Teacher" (Matt 23:8). The reason being "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him" (Jn 1:18). Uniquely qualified, Jesus irradiated the glory of God through His life. That life of grace and truth was to be for all time, "The light of men" (verse 4).

Notice the stark contrast between the heavenly light of Jesus, and the earthly darkness of humanity. "And the light shines in the darkness; and the darkness did not comprehend it," (see also chapter 3:19-21). Our Saviour was no mere human groping in the darkness of sin. He was the One who, in the beginning, flooded the darkness with light, (Gen 1:3,) repeating on the moral plane, through His incarnation, the same astronomical act.

He not only possesses life and light but He dispenses them as well. "But as many as received Him, to them *He gave the right* to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name; who were born not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (Jn 1:12-13). "I am the light of the world" Jesus says in Jn 8:12, "he who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." To Him be the glory forever. Amen!

Revealed as the Lamb of God

John the Baptist's witness, plays an important part in the life story of Jesus. To accept John's testimony was vital in recognising Jesus' authority and mission. Jesus Himself stressed this point, (Lk 20:1-8). Here is what John claims, "And I did not recognise Him, but in order that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptising in water." "He who sent me to baptise in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit'" (Jn 1:29-33). On the strength of that sign John the Baptist points to Jesus as the "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." The first introduction to Him as a sacrifice. Not alone was He to be the sacrifice but the saviour also. Andrew told Peter his brother, "We have found the Messiah" verse 41. True God and true man, sacrifice and saviour, Jesus was the antitype of Jacob's ladder. He spanned the gulf between heaven and earth. He once again opened communications between men and God, verse 51. "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honour and glory and dominion forever and ever."

Revealed as the Son of God

The disciples of John the Baptist no doubt heard him exclaim "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me'" (Jn 1:15). When Nathanael first encountered the Lord he was so awestruck that he acknowledged Him to be the Son of God immediately, verse 49. Jesus is often referred as the "only begotten Son" as for instance in (Jn 1:18). Some translations have "only begotten God" but properly understood will be seen to amount to the same thing. C.S. Lewis in his book, "Beyond Personality" elucidates on the word "begotten." He masterfully re-introduces us to its meaning and implications. "We don't use the word begetting or begotten much in modern English, but everyone still knows what they mean. To beget is to become the father of; to create is to make. And the difference is just this. When you beget, you beget something of the same kind as yourself.

A man begets human babies, a beaver begets little beavers and a bird begets eggs which turn into little birds. But when you make, you something of a different kind from yourself. A bird makes a nest, a beaver builds a dam, a man makes a wireless set — or he makes something more like himself than a wireless set: say a statue. If he is a clever enough carver he may make a statue which is very like a man indeed. But

of course it's not a real man; it only looks like one. It can't breathe or think. It's not alive. Now that's the first thing to get clear. What God begets is God; just as what man begets is man" page 12. So applying this conclusion to Jesus, He as the "only begotten Son" is the "only begotten God."

"But these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, *the Son of God*; and that believing you may have life in His name" Jn 20:31. My Lord and my God!!

Steve Kearney,
253 Woodlawn Park,
Firhouse, Co. Dublin.

MAN'S FAILURE IN THE HOME

Little difficulty is experienced in thinking of outstanding Bible women in the home: Hannah, Mary, Elizabeth, Jochebed, Eunice. Efforts to think of a comparable list of men, however, are not easy, for many of the great men of the Bible were failures in their homes: David, Lot, Eli, Samuel, Jacob, etc. A look at the causes of their failure might help our male readers to avoid their mistakes.

1. **Immorality.** David's adultery with Bathsheba and subsequent murder of her husband, Uriah, resulted in the ruin of David's home. Noah's drunkenness, after his success in bringing up his sons to fear the Lord in a society of unparalleled wickedness, contributed to trouble within his family. Men today, if they live in drunkenness, adultery, and other forms of immorality, cannot hope to be successes in their homes.

2. **Lack of discipline.** Destruction came upon Eli and his family because "his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not" (1 Sam. 3:13). The Bible says: "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying" (Prov. 19:18).

3. **Greed.** "Lot lifted up his eyes and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where . . . even as the garden of the Lord" (Gen. 13:10) and, apparently motivated by a desire for material abundance, moved his family into Sodom. The consequences of this sad mistake are well known to our readers. Many Christians today are making the same mistake as they sacrifice their children on the altar of greed, being willing to move their children anywhere for the sake of a promotion or more money.

4. **Partiality.** This often committed mistake brought trouble to the homes of Isaac and Jacob.

What can men do to avoid failure in the home? They can develop greater worthiness of their place of headship in the home through increased strength of character and conviction. They can become more thoughtful of wife and children. They can turn their attention away from the T.V., and spend time with their family. They can lead the family in prayer, Bible reading, and devotion. They can pray without ceasing for the Lord's help.

We are reminded of the little boy who turned to his dad after hearing a preacher's description of a **Christian**, and asked, "Dad, have I ever seen one?" Does **YOUR** child see a Christian when he sees you?

— Bill Hall.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

JUNE 1981

Deut. 6, 1-15	7	Mark 12, 28-44
Daniel 12	14	Mark 13, 1-23
Ezek. 3, 15-27	21	Mark 13, 24-37
II Kings, 4, 1-17	28	Mark 14, 1-11

TWO FINAL QUESTIONS

There is generally a minority in discussions, and no doubt some scribes and Pharisees listened with care and respect to Jesus. We are assured somewhat abruptly in the narrative that "the common people heard Him gladly". Perhaps they even enjoyed the discomfiture of "their betters" seeing they were regarded with contempt — "This multitude which knoweth not the law are accursed" (John 7,49). We assume the scribe had in mind the innumerable points in the Mosaic system which might be compared for relative importance, but Jesus gave at once the basic principles, and they were accepted either as a sudden enlightenment, or as already appreciated. At least the acknowledgment was immediate, and their relationship to the sacrificial enactments clearly stated. How far astray were the Jews of the time, and how far can the christian religion travel the same path of outward observance not being matched by daily sanctification? The commendation of Jesus is striking, and His whole earthly life an illustration of it. Those who "knew the Law" then received a test question of their knowledge, and could not meet it — unless they acknowledged Jesus. The powers exercised by Jesus proved Him greater than David! His teaching was uniquely authoritative, and His works equally so — and they knew it, and dared ask no more questions. Their exposure is stated by Mark in few words but Matthew gives the fuller account in chapter 23, to which we have referred before.

THE CONTRIBUTION

Every Jew looked to Jerusalem as the centre of his religious life. A portion of his money must be given for the upkeep of the Temple, which is reckoned to have been one of the seven wonders of the world of its time. It was natural that there should be a place where money offerings were provided for in public. There were in fact thirteen brazen chests called "trumpets" on account of their shape. They stood in the "court of the Women". Nine were for the temple tribute and money in place of actual sacrifices, and four for freewill offerings to provide such things as wood, incense, temple decorations and burnt offerings. Jesus was evidently sitting in the temple courts from which He would see the folk passing by and dropping their contributions into the "trumpets". Some would do so ostentatiously if it were large, and some modestly if it were small. We do not like open plates for collections in view particularly of the Saviour's words about giving (Matt. 6,2). What Jesus saw and what He said on this occasion can well be a lesson for us. Getting money — fund raising — for this, that and the other has become a characteristic of denominational christianity. We have I hope consistently refused to take money from any but committed christians as the church should certainly be self-supporting. I suppose we may excuse the widely varying charities for using all kinds of inducements for their purpose, and in these modern days the public in view of the welfare state should be ready to help the causes, seeing most of them are specialised. We do remember that many young dedicated people are working unselfishly for the good of others, and all this whether so acknowledged or not is motivated by the life and teaching of our Saviour. We think of the darkness of this world and its apparent hopelessness from moral and religious standpoints, and yet there is a lighter and better side, which we have forgotten was non-existent before Jesus came. Briefly — in giving, the amount does not matter,

the spirit and sacrifice is the measure in God's sight. The widow put in the last coins she had, relying upon God for her future needs.

"WHAT MANNER OF STONES"

The anti-god communists value STONES. There are more than fifty preserved church buildings within the area of Moscow. Jesus was looking at the BUILDING which represented the only true religion on earth, but He had wept over it and had had to cleanse its courts from commercialism. His disciples must have been shocked to hear His declaration that it was doomed to destruction within that present generation and with so dreadful a fate as to be totally flattened. STONES DO speak of what? We reminded an American sister that she had not seen St. Paul's Cathedral. She said "I do not want to see that monument of apostasy", and was she not right? God ordained the Tabernacle, and Solomon was appointed and privileged to build the Temple, and God's presence was made visible there (I Kings 8,10 & 11). This was destroyed and rebuilt later by Zerubbabel, and on it Herod with prodigal expenditure built a larger and more magnificent centre of worship. Alas! The glory had departed — The Lord had come suddenly to His Temple (Mal. 3,1) — and was being rejected. The Saviour's words on this subject are enshrined in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. The prophecy of doom included plain instructions to believers to leave the city as soon as obvious signs of siege were evident, and the flight must be immediate. We understand that many christians did in fact do this and find refuge at a place named Pella. The Saviour was also speaking of the end of the ages, and we anticipate absolutely without a date that Jesus is returning to collect His people. There is difficulty in exactly separating some of the signs as we cannot think those relating to the heavens have taken place. To spiritualize "gathering His Saints from one end of heaven to the other" (Mark 13,24-27) or to claim that this was done

at or immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem seems to the writer to be a mistake. Apparent inconsistency must in some way be reconcilable but so far I have not been able to reconcile the prediction with verse 30. The message for us is abundantly clear however, simply that we must be always ready "for in an hour that ye think not the Son of Man cometh". To the disciples nothing could appear more permanent than the STONES and it must have continued for some years just as apparently permanent but we feel sure as the condition of the Jewish people in Jerusalem deteriorated, the sectarian strife and the evil plotting of one faction against another with riots and tumults against Rome getting more and more violent, the church in that city must have recognised the approaching demise of the old covenant. We suppose the abomination of desolation became obvious to all honest God-fearing Jews even if they did not accept the gospel.

A SAD BUT MOVING TRIBUTE OF LOVE

There can hardly be a doubt that the house of Simon the leper was the household to which Jesus resorted when He left the city and went towards Bethany on the evenings of that last week. We read Luke 10,38-42 and know that Martha was in charge of the household, that Jesus resorted there on occasions we know not how many. He must have been many times in Jerusalem and Bethany would be "en route" or conveniently near. It reminds us of the "great woman of Shunem" (2 Kings 4,8). In that household was a godly woman whose heart responded readily to the teaching of Jesus so much so that when He was present nothing else mattered. There are times when we should feel this supremacy through and above the immediate circumstances. It must have been clear to Mary as to the close disciples of Jesus that danger was closing in upon Him, and thus she deliberately and against all custom and precedent chose to pay her tribute of

love by anointing over head and feet the most expensive thing in her possession — the alabaster cruse with all its contents! With her woman's glory she wiped His sacred feet at which she had sat to listen to His word. What lovely **EXTRAVAGANCE!!** Some present only saw extravagance, and into one heart jealousy or covetousness made the final decision for hell. So often are good and evil close together!

R. B. Scott.

LETTER AND SPIRIT

(2 Corinthians 3:5, 6)

Much confusion is caused by the cool assumption that the letter is not of God while the spirit is. Nowhere did Jesus more definitely meet the question than in what He said of Pharisees who tithed mint, anise and cummin and neglected weightier matters; and even in that case He said, "*These ye ought to have done,*" as well as warned "*and not left the other undone.*" Both letter and spirit may be of God.

The essential point is that in observing the letter we must not lose the spirit of God. We must not make good intentions or general benevolent spirit a substitute for sincere alertness to follow the letter of God's will.

Fundamental to all of this is that God, being Spirit, wants us, not our gifts only, not our forms only. The forms are of value only as they enrich our spiritual approach to God. This they were intended to be in the Old Testament and this they are to be in the New Testament.

HABIT

The only way to get rid of a bad habit is to stop it at once. If you try tapering off, this is the result. You drop the "H" and you still have

A BIT

You think you're getting over it by dropping a little bit of the evil thing, so you go and drop the "A" but you still are

BIT

That is to say, you are not getting on at all. You are deceiving yourself. You

are just where you were. You are still bit by the evil thing. However, you think you are progressing and so you drop the "B". But you are no further on; you still have

IT

And "it" is the sting of habit. "It" has been the trouble all along. You are where you started. Even when you drop the "I" you still have,

T

Which stands for temptation. And temptation is a longer word to get rid of than habit. Better do the thing "wholesale" and drop all the letters at once.

— The Reminder.

SEVEN GREAT THINGS

Acts 2.

1. Great day Pentecost.
2. Great place Jerusalem.
3. Great crowd Seventeen nations.
4. Great sermon Salvation from sin.
5. Great question What must we do?
6. Great answer Repent and be baptised . . . in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
7. Great result Three thousand saved.

— Bible Briefs.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Cape Town, R.S.A. Now this is the news up to date: "In the "S.S." January issue in my news item, I had mentioned that with the interest exhibited by visitors who attend our regular services including the cottage meetings, and Wednesday evenings Bible study, said "we were prayerfully and hopefully looking forward to many more precious souls being baptized" (after having mentioned about the eight precious souls

baptized since April 1979 to August 1980).

Well I can now convey the "joyful news" it was on the 25th February 1981, a young man was baptized, then on the 1st March his lady friend (whose mother is a member of the cong. at Bokmakierie, Athlone where I am labouring) was also baptized, then on the 23rd March 1981, two elderly ladies were baptized too. Then on the 5th April a Special Gospel service was organised at Bokmakierie, the theme "The Message of Choice"? topics "Jesus AS Authority", "Come Thou With Us, to the Home of Eternity", I was the speaker.

The morning service at 10.30 a.m. to 12 noon, evening service 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. which on the handbills distributed to advertise the meeting, words placed were "A Worthwhile 2½ hours, can be Spent and enjoyed". The attendance at the morning service was 32, evening service there were 89, which included members of other congregations and visitors, and ourselves. However, after the final hymn was sung, a lady came forward requesting to be baptized, she was the wife of the man I baptized in August 1980. What a wonderful "union". So to the praise of God, we can see that the "prayerful and hopeful looking forward to of more precious souls being baptized became one of a reality."

What a wonderful start for 1981, 5 precious souls, beginning a new life, with a new future, with new desires and potentials, to serve and live for Christ, and as we share in our prayers for you, whoever and where you may be, that your humble labours shall bring about "great rejoicing", as we ask you to pray and think of us."

T. W. Hartle,

11 Kilarny Mansions,
Gorge Road, Oranjezicht.

Kirkcaldy, Scotland. I am happy to write that another soul has come to the Lord. Joe McCallum (husband of our late sister McCallum) put on his Lord in

baptism on 17th March. May God richly bless him in his new life in Christ.

R. Hughes.

Manchester. Again we have reason to rejoice this time in the baptism of Denise Chaffe, on Monday, 2nd March, 1981, in the meeting-place at Argyle Street, Hindley. We are grateful to the church at Hindley for their assistance, and pray that our new sister will remain faithful to her new Master.

A. Ashurst.

New Wellington Street, Blackburn. Rejoice with us brethren in another answer to prayer and the preaching of the gospel. On Sunday, March 22nd Mrs. Jane Foster put on her Lord in baptism. Sister Janie (as she likes to be known) is a spritely 81 year old and has been attending the gospel meetings for quite a number of years. We had begun to despair of her but the remembrance of the Lord's statement that His word would not return unto Him void has again given us a lesson to press on and preach Jesus. Sister Janie was received into fellowship on 29-3-81, and has given us great joy and encouragement.

Harry Holden.

Reading. A Mission was held from 5th to 8th March, when four brethren from Corby knocked on doors and showed Fact & Faith films. There were 12 visitors to the films and bible study and several other good contacts made. The church has 15 members at present.

R. M. Payne (Miss).

St. David's, Newtongrange, Scotland. On Wednesday last, i.e., the 25th March, 1981 a good number of brethren and friends met for a time of fellowship. The meeting comprised of a coloured slide show, depicting the travels of Bro. J. H. Currie. Throughout the programme Bro. Currie interjected with appropriate dialogue relating to a recent visit of the U.S.S.R.

Tea was provided by the ladies. It is hoped that such varied meetings may continue in the future.

A. P. Sharp sec.

COMING EVENTS

Buckie, Scotland
SOCIAL

6th June, God Willing
3 p.m.

Speaker: Tom Nisbet (Tranent)
ALL WELCOME

EVANGELIST WANTED

The Slamannan District of Churches require an evangelist and all interested brethren should apply in writing to the District Secretary, Hugh Davidson, 21 Glen Lyon, St. Leonards, East Kilbride, Scotland GT4 2JJ.

LETTER FROM AMERICA

The following letter was received from brother Mike Willis, who is Editor of the "Guardian Of Truth Magazine" and who can be contacted at 3579 Ruthridge Court, Dayton, Ohio 45432.

March 12th, 1981.

Dear brother Gardiner,

I noticed in the December 1980 issue of the Scripture Standard an appeal written by a brother Allan Ashurst which appealed for churches to pay to financially support a Carole Ashurst as

she went to India to work as a nurse. I am wondering, would someone associated with your paper please take the time to give us book, chapter and verse for the church to be involved in financing a hospital or supporting its staff. I know of no place in my Bible in which the Bible authorises the church to be involved in the building and maintenance of hospitals. Unless someone can give us book, chapter and verse for this, work in these areas stand outside the revelation of God and condemned just as certainly as infant baptism would be.

With a desire that more light can be shed on this subject, I submit this request for a public reply.

Brotherly,
Mike Willis.

I thank our brother Willis for his letter and for taking the trouble to write to us and I hope some brother will be willing to produce the information our brother seeks. As our brother wishes a Public reply I shall be happy to print the reply in the columns of the "S.S." If some brother will be so kind as to offer his services in this connection I shall be most grateful if he will drop me a line.

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