

The **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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VERSIONS OR PERVERSIONS?

Within the last few years there seems to have been an increasing use amongst the churches, certainly in Scotland, of what are known as 'modern translations' of the bible, and readings are given from these translations in the public worship. The King James Version, which has served the world well since 1611 has suddenly fallen into disfavour and apparently is presenting difficulty to modern readers, especially schoolchildren. Recently, the churches here in the Slamannan District of Scotland discussed the matter at one of their regular 'Mutual Benefit' Meetings, and versions in general were discussed. It occurred to me, at that meeting, that it might be of some value, especially to members young in the faith, to produce a brief article on the subject, referring to the need for translations and listing the main translations from N.T. times until the present — difficult to do in one article.

In the very early days of the church the New Testament was not in written form and was but unfolding history. At that time the only written scripture was the Old Testament. The Old Testament was, of course, written in Hebrew, and the N.T. in Greek. A good many of the O.T. books had, however, been translated into Greek in a version called the 'Septuagint,' so-called from the tradition that 70 learned Jews had prepared it beginning around 280 B.C., and this version of the O.T. would be used by apostles and evangelists in N.T. times — (accounting perhaps for the fact that when the apostles quote from the prophets the N.T. wording is not always identical with the verses in the O.T.). Historians say that the N.T. was not completed until about the year 120 A.D. Apparently there were also at that time, some Apocryphal Books (uninspired writings of some of the holy men of the church and containing valuable practical teaching). Once the N.T. books were completed they were copied not only into the same language but also into differing languages. The ORIGINAL manuscripts are no longer in existence and so all translations must be made from COPIES now available. God has not seen fit to perform any miracles to prevent human error creeping into translations but there have been no shortage of Godly men who have made it their life's work to eradicate errors from God's word by diligent search and correction. It goes without saying that when the original manuscripts of say, Paul's epistles, were copied many, many, times either into the same language or other languages the scribe might make an error (missing out a word or even a line) but ALL scribes would not miss out the same word or make the same error, and so the mistake could be later identified and corrected. There is also the question of what might be lost in translation. Any document translated into another language loses somewhat in translation; a suitable word in one language has not always got a perfect counterpart in the other language. For instance the subtle beauty of the poetry of Burns, the Scottish poet, is immediately lost when translated into English, which is perhaps why the English don't think much of his poetry. The Russians appreciate the poetry of Burns and one can only imagine at what is lost in translation when we translate Broad Scots into Russian. To compensate for anything lost in translation of the N.T. from Greek into English, bible students scurry to lexicons to study the

meaning of the Greek word used in the original. To appreciate the difficulty of preventing errors creeping into copies of the N.T. text one must remember that the printing press is only a relatively recent invention and that prior to that scribes wrote the words laboriously usually upon parchment, and because of the expense of say 1000 sheets of fine vellum they crammed as much into a line as possible. They strung all words together (no spaces between) and made the letters progressively smaller at the end of each line, sometimes dropping final syllables altogether, and abbreviating words appearing regularly, such as 'God' or 'Jesus'.

What sources of material, we might therefore ask, was available, or is available, to those who would produce a translation of the bible, (and particularly of the N.T.) given that the inspired original documents are no longer in existence? The material can be roughly classified into 3 sections, i.e. (1) MANUSCRIPTS (copies in the ORIGINAL LANGUAGE). (2) ANCIENT VERSIONS (copies into OTHER LANGUAGES). (3) WRITINGS of the early Christians (or early Christian Fathers). A very brief comment on each of these three sources may be helpful:—

MANUSCRIPTS — Translators search the very oldest of these manuscripts and compare as many as possible, verse by verse, on the principle that copyists would not all make the same mistake and a mistake in any one manuscript can be corrected by the other copies. There are some 1,500 of these manuscripts, and others are still being found from time to time, e.g. the three most important and oldest have been discovered comparatively recently, even since the King James Version was made, and show us the bible as it existed very soon after apostolic days (say about 300-450 A.D.). These three manuscripts have been named the Vatican, the Sinaitic and the Alexandrian manuscripts (or Codices) and obviously from what has been said already about mistakes being perpetuated, the oldest manuscripts are likely to be the best.

ANCIENT VERSIONS — are bibles of such antiquity that the parents of those using them probably actually saw the apostles, and being translations into other languages are valuable in determining the original text. For instance the old Syriac Scriptures were probably used only some 50 yrs. after the N.T. was written. There were also Egyptians and Armenian versions and an Ethiopic. Of great value also is the Latin (Vulgate) Version for when Eusebius (St. Jerome) produced his version he completed the N.T. about 385 A.D. which makes it about as old as the 3 Manuscripts mentioned above, and the material to which Eusebius had access must have stretched back, in time, to the apostles.

WRITINGS of Early Fathers — The writings of the early Christians in the form of a treatise or personal letter to others, on controversial doctrinal issues are most important because of the vast number of quotations of scripture in these writings. Indeed it is reckoned that if all other documents were to be destroyed a bible could still be produced from the quotations in the writings of the early Christians, or early 'Fathers'. Some of earliest of these men would include Clement, Irenaeus, Hermes, St. Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr etc.

And now a brief mention of the main translations and revisions since apostolic times:—
4th Century — **LATIN (Vulgate)**. This was the first major translation and it lasted 1000 years. It was made by Jerome and has influenced most subsequent translations — called Vulgate because 'in common use.'

9th Century — Around 450 A.D. Teutonic invaders introduced the Anglo-Saxon language into England. For centuries a latin bible had meant that only the rich or learned could read it. Attempts made by Caedmon; the venerable Bede and King Alfred the Great to translate the bible into Anglo-Saxon. In 1250 Cardinal Hugo divided the bible into chapters.

14th Century — John Wycliffe translated the bible into English (about 1350). Each copy took about 10 months to write and used Hugo's chapters.

16th Century — Printing had been invented in Europe in 1450 by Guttenberg and was introduced into England by Caxton in 1476. In 1516 a learned scholar in Greek, Erasmus, published in Basel a Greek N.T. direct from ancient manuscripts (a welcome change from the latin translations). In 1525 **WILLIAM TYNDALE**, a contemporary of Luther, made another English translation incorporating Erasmus' Greek version and was first to publish an English version in print. Some 15,000 copies were printed abroad and smuggled into England because of fierce Roman Catholic opposition. Catholics eventually strangled Tyndale and later burned him. In 1535 the whole bible (not just the N.T.) was printed for the first time by Miles Coverdale. There followed in fairly quick succession other printed versions, i.e. 'Matthew's' Bible

(1537); The Great Bible (so-called because of its size) (1539); The Geneva Bible (1557); The Bishop's Bible (1568) and the Douay Bible (1610). The Geneva Bible was the first in which italics were used to denote words not in the original, was the first whole bible divided into verses and the first to omit the Apocryphal books.

17th Century — King James Version, (1611). Made under the patronage of King James I by 48 translators divided into 6 groups and working independently and together. The translators were eminent scholars in Greek and Hebrew and produced this 'Authorised' version in just over 2 years and it was described at the time by its critics as 'a modern translation.' The stature of this version is self-evident but some tried revisions of it even prior to the Revised Version.

19th Century — Revised Version (1881). Revision of the King James Version was advocated because some 200 words in this version had drastically changed their meaning: because scholarship had improved and because very important manuscripts had been discovered (e.g. Codex Vaticanus and Sinaiticus). 100 of the best scholars in Britain and America worked for 10 years to produce the N.T. In 1885 they produced the entire bible.

Historically these versions form the mainstream of bible translations in Britain but there were, or course, many others both here and in America. Currently on the bookshelves there is a bewildering array of 'modern translations' and publishers seem to be making a lot of money in encouraging the production of these versions. Some, if not most, of them are not translations at all but are merely a paraphrasing of some existing version. Often it is not difficult to see the doctrinal bias in these 'translations' of the person who has put the bible into his own words. Indeed what better way is there to advance a particular doctrinal viewpoint than to write one's own version of the bible or N.T.? Readers should therefore beware, and although some 'modern translations' may have some value others should go straight into the dustbin i.e. "The New World Translation of The Christian Greek Scriptures" produced by 'Jehovah Witnesses.' If one objects to the King James Version because of 'Shakespearian English' the Revised Version should fill the bill and where today is the scholarship in the world which could surpass that which was brought to bear in the production of the version of 1881?

Editor.

GLEANINGS

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

OUR DWELLING PLACE

"Oh! the goodness, the exuberant goodness, of our God! How much should we think ourselves obliged to a generous friend, who should build a stately edifice purely for our abode! But how greatly would the obligation be increased, if the hand that built should also furnish it! and not only furnish it with all that is commodious and comfortable, but ornament it also with whatever is splendid and delightful! This has our most indulgent Creator done in a manner infinitely surpassing all we could wish or imagine.

The earth is assigned us for a dwelling. The skies are stretched over us like a magnificent canopy, dyed in the purest azure; and beautified now with pictures of floating silver — now with colourings of reflected crimson. The grass is spread under us as a capacious carpet, wove with silken threads of green, and damasked with flowers of every hue. The sun, like a golden lamp, is hung out in the ethereal vault, and pours his effulgence all the day to enlighten our paths. When night approaches the moon takes up the friendly office, and the stars are kindled in twinkling myriads to cheer the darkness with their milder lustre, and not disturb our repose by too intense a glare. The clouds, besides the rich paintings they hand around the heavens, act the part of a shifting screen; and defend us, by their seasonable inter-position, from the scorching beams of summer. May we not also regard them as the great watering-pots of the globe, which, wafted on the wings of the wind, dispense their moisture evenly through the universal garden, and fructify with their showers, whatever our hand plants? The fields are our exhaustless granary. The ocean is our vast reservoir. The animals spend their strength to dispatch our business, resign their clothing to replenish our wardrobe, and surrender their lives to provide for our tables. In short, every element is a storehouse of conveniences; every season brings us the choicest productions; all nature is our caterer; and, which is a most endearing

recommendation of these favours, they are all as lovely as they are useful. You observe nothing mean or inelegant. All is clad in beauty's fairest robe, and regulated by proportion's nicest rule. The whole scene exhibits a fund of pleasure to the imagination, at the same time it more than supplies all our wants.

Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man! whosoever thou art, that rebellest against thy Maker. He surrounds thee with unnumbered benefits, and follows thee with an effusion of the richest, noblest gifts. He courts thy affections, he solicits thy gratitude by liberalities which are never intermitted — by a bounty which knows no limits. Most blessed Lord, let this thy goodness lead us to repentance. Win us to thyself, thou fountain of felicity, by these sweet inducements. Draw us to our duty, thou God of our salvation, by these "cords of love."

J. Hervey.

HOME A SACRED PLACE

"Oh, how sacred is that home where every word is kindness, and every look affection! Where the ills and sorrows of life are borne with mutual effort, and its pleasures are equally divided, and where each esteem the other more worthy. Where a holy emulation abounds to excel in offices of kindness and affectionate regard. Where, live-long day, the week, the month, the year, is a scene of cheerful and unwearied effort to swell the tide of domestic comfort, and overflow the heart with home-born enjoyments. That home may be the humblest hovel on earth; but there heart meets heart, in all the fondness of a full affliction. And wherever that spot is found, there is an exemplification of all that is lovely and of good report among men. It is heaven begun below."

WELCOME NEWS!

"What news so welcome to the prisoner, as that there is a hand stretched forth to break his chains? What intelligence so cheering to the sick, as that the physician has a remedy for the disease? And what tidings so delightful to the startled and trembling sinner, as that there is One who "shall save his people from their sins."

Articles this month taken from *The CHRISTIAN MESSENGER AND FAMILY MAGAZINE*. 1845. Selected by Leonard Morgan.

THE PEACE OFFERING (Part 2)

We have seen that each of the four animal sacrifices find their place in each of the four Gospels. We shall see how Luke is the Gospel of the Peace offering for we find in Luke the wonderful assurances of peace and reconciliation that we do not find in Matthew, Mark or John. For instance only Luke tells us of the first Christmas message from the Angels to the shepherds, "Glory to God in the highest; on earth, peace and goodwill to man"; the goodwill of Heaven to men that can bring peace to all. And there can only be peace on earth among men when men learn to give Glory to God in the Highest. Only Luke tells us of that grand old man, Simeon, who took the Baby Jesus in his arms and said, "Lettest now Thy servant depart in peace for my eyes have seen Thy salvation". And in chapter 4 Jesus said He had come to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim deliverance and restoration and liberty in the acceptable year of the Lord! What a message of Peace! Only Luke tells us of the woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee to whom Jesus said, "Thy sins are forgiven, thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace". Luke alone records in chapter 23 that Pilate and Herod were reconciled, verse 12. They had been at enmity with each other because of their professional jealousies, both being in command and in a position of authority but when they came into contact with Jesus, on the very same day, they were made friends and there was peace between them. And what peace must have come to the dying thief as he heard the words of the crucified Christ, "Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise". Only Luke records for us this story. Again, Luke does not record the cry of forsaking on the cross, because it is an offering, not so much for sin but for peace and reconciliation, of a sweet savour unto the Lord, that we might be brought into a new relationship with God, so making peace.

Now whereas the burnt offering was wholly for God, we find in the other offerings that part was for God and part for us. God accepts that which satisfies Him and we receive that which meets our need and satisfies us. But the inner glories of Christ are only revealed as we open up the sacrifice, as we gaze upon and handle internal things. Jesus could say to His disciples, "Blessed are your eyes for they see" and they saw those hidden glories revealed in their eyes of association with Him which were hidden from the eyes of the world, the bowels of mercies and compassions as it is sometimes translated in the New Testament. The inwards of the animal, the digestive system, that which absorbs the nutriment from our food causing us to grow and develop. It could be said of the Lord Jesus "His delight was in the law of the Lord and in His law He meditated day and night". "He wakeneth Mine ear morning by morning and hath given Me the tongue of the learned". How true this was of Him and so it should be of us for we only become like that upon which we feed.

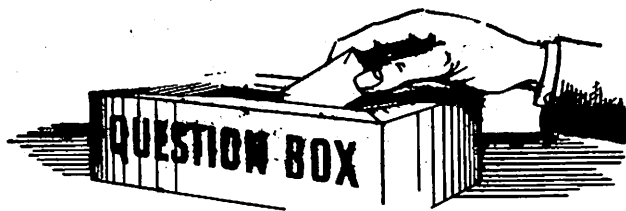
Observe, now, that part of the peace offering which is for us, the wave breast and the heave shoulder. The breast, the place of affection and the shoulder, the place of strength and security. But there is something deeply significant in the heaving and the waving. To heave something up and down forms the perpendicular; to wave something to and fro forms the horizontal. Put them both together and it forms a CROSS! Do it with one hand and you will see what I mean. I was staggered when this thought struck me. Here was God, not only telling me about the death of His Son, but actually forming the very cross on which He would die, by the heaving and the waving. God here is hinting at the very means of His death, anticipating the rise of the Roman Empire centuries later, whose mode of execution was death by crucifixion. In the mean while Empires rose and fell but when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, at the exact moment, so that from the very command of Augustus Caesar, which led to the birth in Bethlehem, right on to the cross, God had every step planned for the Lord Jesus. It had to be the death on the cross otherwise many of the Old Testament scriptures would never have been fulfilled. And when His hour was come, why was it that they were instant with loud voices demanding that He be crucified?

When at His trial, Pilate put the ball into their court and said, "Take Him and judge Him according to your law", why didn't they take Him out and stone Him to death as they later did with Stephen? Pilate hated these crafty Jews and do you think he cared if they destroyed each other? They stoned Stephen and yet demanded that Jesus be crucified and as Paul reminded them, they fulfilled the voices of the prophets in condemning Him as they did to the death of the cross. This was the Divine plan and the ultimate purpose that dated back before the foundation of the world and nothing could change it — it had to be the death of the cross. And here it is prefigured for us in the wave and the heave offering of the peace offering. And this is the basis of our fellowship with God, having peace through the blood of His Cross and being brought into the sanctuary to feed upon Him as we share together with God the precious things of the Lord Jesus.

But as we enjoy all these great truths relevant to Himself, have we noticed the warning given in the law of the peace offering in chapter 7? That the soul that eats thereof, having his uncleanness upon Him, shall be cut off from among his people? Does it not remind us of the exhortation of 1 Cor. 11, 'Let a man examine himself and so let him eat'. True it was in those far off days, under the law, God was very severe in His judgements, but those things were written for our learning. Could we suggest that today, God is more tolerant because of the exceedingly superior sacrifice of His dear Son and because of its infinite worth, has the greater patience with us? We are so wrong at times in our attitudes to each other and that which is represented by the leaven, as we have seen, the old nature, the flesh, is sometimes very evident. We need this self-examination before we eat, said the Apostle, lest we eat and drink unworthily, with our uncleanness upon us, eating and drinking judgement to ourselves, as our conscience excuses or accuses us. We need to pray as the Psalmist, 'Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting' Psalm 139 vs. 23-24.

May we then appreciate more fully the meaning and passage of the Peace Offering of the Lord Jesus, reconciling us to God and living in peace with each other and the God of Peace fill our hearts with joy and peace in believing through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

John D. Hartburn.



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

"John 14:12 states, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.' What would the greater works mentioned here be?"

When we first look at this scripture we cannot remotely understand how we could possibly do any *greater* works than those done by Jesus. Indeed, I think we all understand that the work of Salvation as accomplished by Jesus could not have been accomplished by anyone else; as Peter stated concerning this work, "This is the stone (Jesus) which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4: 10-12). So the work of Jesus as regards salvation was and is quite exclusive.

However, there is a categoric statement by Jesus that the person who believes on Him should do similar works to those which He, Jesus did, and should also be capable of *greater* works. What we need to do is to determine the sort of works which Jesus did and to find out if any or all of these works were repeated by those who believed on Him, and also to explore what is meant by the greater works.

THE WORKS OF JESUS

Jesus said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work" (John 9:4). Here the Lord seems to be saying that the works which he did were not his own, but God's. If you recall, he said this to his disciples when they came upon the man who had been blind from birth. They had asked Jesus if it was the blind man or his parents who had sinned, because they obviously equated the blindness with someones sinful condition. Jesus answered, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him" (John 9:3). As we read on we know that Jesus cured this man of his blindness, and in doing so he worked a miracle, a supernatural manifestation; therefore, Jesus was instrumental in displaying the supreme power of God. I believe that a grasp of this fundamental fact is crucial to our understanding of the question. You will remember, no doubt, that when Nicodemus came to Jesus by night he said, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou does, *except God be with him*" (John 3:2). Keep that in mind, because we shall see later that Jesus gives us a clue as to why the *greater* works will be able to be done.

Prior to this event, Jesus had encountered the impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda and had healed him. In trying to condemn Jesus, the Jews rebuked the man who had been cured for carrying his bed on the Sabbath day; by inference, of course, they were also rebuking Jesus for *healing* on the Sabbath. In his defence before the Jews a little later, Jesus said, "I have done one work, and ye all marvel" (John 7:21). These events, and others, prove to us that some of the works of Jesus were of supernatural origin.

Shortly after his discourse with the woman at the well of Sychar, Jesus was exhorted by his disciples to take food. Jesus answered, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." His disciples thought someone had brought him food, but Jesus went on, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:31-34). What was this work of God that Jesus had to finish? Well, Jesus explains to them that they were fellow-labourers with him in the harvesting of souls of God. We have to understand that the mission of Jesus was as he stated it, "For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost" (Matt. 18:11).

The miracles, signs and wonders which he wrought were incidental to his main task and also attested to the fact that the main purpose in God sending his Son was to save people from perishing in sin.

Without tracing every specific work of Jesus I believe what he did can be summarised as follows:

1. The works that Jesus did were God's works.
2. Many of the works were supernatural, e.g. miracles and signs.
3. He did these to substantiate his relationship with God; "Believe me for the very works sake."
4. He did many works which ideally expressed his faith and love, "He went about doing good."
5. His great work was as Saviour, and I believe all his other works testified to this.

HAVE THE WORKS OF JESUS BEEN REPEATED?

Remember, he said to his disciples, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also." I think we have already disposed of the idea that anyone else could have been the Saviour, so that particular work, as we explained is both unique and exclusive. In the economy of God it was necessary to have a Saviour and Jesus was that Saviour. But once the door of Salvation had been opened by Christ Jesus, the great task of carrying the saving message, the gospel, had to be undertaken by others, and I believe it is true to say that when a person receives Christ he also receives the essence of the gospel in his life. Therefore, even though a believer could never have died for the sins of mankind, I believe he can and should be as intimately involved in the promotion of the gospel as Christ was. In this sense, the believer is repeating in his own life that work of God for the salvation of souls with which Jesus was intimately concerned, and for which he ultimately died. In the mainstream of Salvation, both the Saviour and the saved, although offering in what they could achieve, are nonetheless driving toward the same objectives.

I do not believe that the power to work miracles devolves on anyone in this age; the substantiation of the claims of Christ now rest on the solid ground of the gospel. But when we read our New Testament we can see that for the establishment of Christianity in the world, the power to work miracles was passed on to some of the disciples by Jesus. Furthermore, the expression of faith in their lives outworked itself in such a way that love, compassion, goodness and mercy, which had been so much in evidence in the life of Christ, now become apparent in the lives of those who believed in him.

Yes, I believe that many of the things that Christ showed us and taught us have been repeated in the lives of those who love him, and have we Christians ever really plumbed the depths of what John teaches? "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." In the mainstream of the current of God's love the Christian has to swim strongly, not tread water.

THE GREATER WORKS

I said earlier that I believed that Jesus gave us a clue why greater works could be done, and I believe the clue lies in the words, "because I go to my Father" It is quite evident to the thinking Christian that the ultimate power rests with God. Jesus knew this, and he also knew that in order for that power to be unleashed the total involvement of the Godhead had to be complete; I believe this is why he said to his sorrowing disciples "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you" (John 16:7). Later in that particular discourse with his disciples he said, "All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you" (16:15). This is delegation of the Holy Spirit by Jesus into the lives of his disciples. The ultimate power of God made available to Christians!

It seems to me that many people today are trying to misappropriate the power of God. Those who believe in the direct action of the Holy Spirit are looking only for speaking in tongues and gifts of healing; I believe they will look in vain. Why do people want to speak in tongues and heal? Are they Christocentric or egocentric? We should heed the words of Paul, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." (Gal. 5:25, 26).

The most effective witness has come from Christians who have allowed the Holy Spirit to operate in their lives and produce His own fruit; love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith. Such Christians took the Gospel to the world, that Gospel which is the 'diamond' of God. They turned the world upside down. With joy they assaulted the citadel of sin.

They saw and helped to bring into being that glorious church which he promised and died for. They went out without fear, adding living stones to that church. These, I believe, are the greater works that Jesus foresaw His children doing, but His children could only do them 'because I go to my Father.'

Oh, if only people would stop trying to make the Holy Spirit into the Grand Master of the Magic Circle and realise that all the resources of heaven — the Power of God, the Advocacy of Jesus, the gracious in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit — can be channelled through the 'earthen vessels,' so that they, being partakers of the divine nature, may extend the great work and power of the Godhead through the gospel. This can be greater work. Lord, lift our eyes so that we may see the fields white unto harvest. Lord, fill our lives with the glory and grandeur of your Church.

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

TRUTH VERSUS TRADITION

"We must obey God, rather than men." Acts 5. 29.

When Peter and the Apostles made this profound statement their Truth was conflicting with the Traditions of men. Those who held to their traditions in preference to Truth were attempting to use the fear of pain and death to compel the Apostles to abandon Truth and follow traditions.

The Jewish leaders also exhibited a very strong reluctance to examine this New Doctrine or to allow their traditions to be tested along side of it. A very serious weakness of position is shown by refusal to consider something new and blindly cling to contrary doctrine simply because it is generally accepted. Refusal to test teaching or practice by the Truth is evidence of grave doubt of the veracity of such teachings and practices.

Most readers will hold up their hands in horror at the action of the High Priest and his supporters but I wonder, how precious are our traditions, how bound are we by them, how willing are we to learn the truth and hold to it even if to do so requires us to leave aside our traditions?

The dictionary informs us: "Tradition; The handing down of opinions, practices, customs, etc., from ancestors to posterity, especially by oral communication. (Theologically) A doctrine believed to have Divine Authority but not found in the Bible. As, the oral law given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai or the oral teaching of Jesus not recorded in the New Testament.

Cassell's New English Dictionary.

Much of the tradition in the Denominations has come from the Church of Rome. This organisation claims to be the custodian of the oral laws mentioned in the dictionary quotation. By imposing this claim, dogmas have been taught and over the centuries have become ingrained into all Christian thought. So embedded are these traditions that we, who claim to speak only where the Bible speaks and to be silent where it is silent, often fail to recognise Tradition and Truth even when these are in conflict. To all teachers and preachers the maxim must be, only propound that which you personally have proved to be the truth.

In order to illustrate how imperative this matter is to all who want to speak only the Truth of God's Word I propose to look closely at the recorded visit of the Magi. By the use of this extremely well known historical event we hope to show how widely apart are some traditions and the truth.

The whole account of the Birth of Jesus has been so greatly distorted that nowadays it is like a nursery rhyme turned into a pantomime. Characters and incidents are introduced which have no existence in the original. Clearly stated facts are blatantly ignored and sentimentality flows like syrup over the whole story.

We are acquainted with some of the errors put forward and always explain, when relating the facts, that the Wise Men came to the house and not the stable. We do not know how many Magi made the journey. Only the shepherds came to the stable and they did not see the star. Even with all this careful correction it is possible that we have still missed one very significant point which adds greatly to the wonder of the events and enhances to miraculous workings of God.

From the costly nature of the gifts which the Wise Men brought and the possibility that this is a fulfilment of Psalm 72. 10-11, also the expense incurred by such a journey we conclude that these Wise Men were very rich and wealthy people. They are called 'Magi' in the Greek, this tells us that they were Astrologers. Men who studied the stars and were able to read their messages. Such people are spoken of in the Books of Esther and Daniel. Astrology was a widely used art in Persia and Babylon. These men lived away to the east of Palestine, possibly even as far away as China. It certainly appears they had made a very long journey.

These men found a new star and from its brilliance and position they realised a very notable person had been born. It is possible to imagine their excitement and determination, how ever far away it was, to see this person. To visit the Mighty Ruler who had been born.

Now one baby is very much the same as another to anyone not directly concerned and there was no great stir recorded among the many travellers and inhabitants of Bethlehem that night. A young couple had trudged from their home in Nazareth to the City of their patriarchal ancestor, King David, in order to comply with the Roman Emperor's command. Apparently, the very night they arrive the baby is born. Not that anyone noticed the occurrence. There is no record of anyone assisting in the birth, in fact Luke clearly states, Mary, the one who gave birth, wrapped the baby in its swaddling bands. No 'halo' shone around the child's head, no great light filled the public stable where the birth took place. Shortly after the birth some shepherds came. They had received direct intimation of the happenings from God and by means of Heavenly Messengers and they came to see the wonderful baby. They talked much of their experiences but no one appears to have paid much heed to the things spoken by the shepherds.

It must be remembered the keeping of the Law was of prime importance, in every aspect of the life of the One who was to be the Messiah, the Saviour. From the outset the Mosaic Law must be considered in assessing the actions of the Mother and her devout and devoted husband. Leviticus 12. 2-4. has considerable bearing of the actions of this young couple. The mother must remain in virtual quarantine for a set period. When the child is eight days old he must be circumcised, (Luke bears record to this taking place) and the mother must keep apart from holy things for another thirty-three days. At the end of this period, the child (now about six weeks old) must be brought to the Sanctuary; the Temple in Jerusalem. The parents must also bring a present for the Lord God and a sin offering. A lamb for the present, as a burnt offering, and a pigeon as the sin offering. Notice in Leviticus 12. 8. how graciously God makes provision for the poor people. Instead of a lamb they may bring a second pigeon and (let this fact register in all our minds) Mary and Joseph, the parents of Jesus were poor. They did not own a donkey, nor did they own a lamb nor the means to buy one. So, when Jesus was forty days old they took Him and two turtle-doves as their burnt offering and sin offering and travelled the five miles into Jerusalem, to the temple.

Still more wonderful things happened in the Temple. An aged man, a true servant of God who had studied the Scriptures and was genuine in his earnest anticipation of the coming Messiah, came to them. This man had been promised by God that he should not die before he had seen the One who was to be the Saviour of Israel. He took the baby in his arms and praised God for all that this baby should become. Following this, a woman of great age also came and added her part to the store of wonders which Mary was storing up in her heart.

When all the formalities of the sacrifices had been completed and the Law has been obeyed, they should have gone home. But where was home? Certainly not the stable in Bethlehem, and however inhumane we may now consider it, there is no evidence at all that Mary was allowed into any accommodation, while they waited to journey at the appointed time to Jerusalem. Any friends or relations who had come to Bethlehem at the same time for the enrolment had long since returned home. So Luke tells us, "When they had performed all things according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own City, Nazareth." Luke 2. 39.

Matthew now takes up the record of events. He leaves to his reader's imagination the journey and its trials and simply announces the arrival of the Wise Men at Herod's Palace in Jerusalem. Tradition tells us these men were led to Jerusalem by the star; thus showing God as either careless or deceitful. Truth shows they came to the Capital City of the Jews by their own council and logical deductions. From the star they realised that a ruler of the Jews had been born and as such they expected him to be in the palace. This is understood by their initial question, the question which had brought them from their own land, "Where is He, that is born King of the Jews?"

Up to this time the Palace at Jerusalem had been unaware of any special, royal or unusual birth. If any of the incidents recorded by Luke had been reported, these had been quickly forgotten. In great consternation Herod called together the Jewish scholars, who tell him, or remind him of the prophecy of Micah regarding Bethlehem. Armed with this knowledge Herod has an audience with the Wise Men and probes deeply to find out all he can about this disturbing phenomenon. He learns that the child is about two years old and is destined to be the absolute and supreme ruler. Herod passes on his own understanding of the prophecy of such a birth taking place at Bethlehem and despatched the Wise Men thither with the request that they return and tell where the boy is to be found. When the Wise Men left the Palace they were intent upon the short journey south to Bethlehem but to their great joy the star appeared again to them and this time (an even greater miracle) it moved in front of them and guided them, not to Bethlehem, but in the opposite direction. It led them to the north, to Nazareth, some forty miles away, and actually indicated the very house where they found the One who was the object of their journey.

We are aware of the rest of the historic events, how the Magi returned home without visiting Herod and how Herod vented his spite and rage so mistakenly on the inhabitants of Bethlehem in his vain attempt to destroy the King of the Jews.

Do you ask why I suggest that it is important to study and understand that the Wise Men found Jesus in Nazareth and not Bethlehem? Certainly not that this particular event will have any direct bearing on the soul's salvation, but the underlying principle. If men can be so universally led astray by tradition in something so simple and clearly stated (when we consider all aspects and records) we must realise that in really important matters, which concern our obedience to the Lord's commands, we must study to sift the traditions from the truth. To refuse, means we are ~~not concerned~~; To ~~obey~~ God rather than men.

Paul Jones, Birmingham.

WONDERFUL FRIEND

Proverbs 18:24 "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly; and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

"The dearest love this world has e'er known,
Is found in Jesus our Saviour alone,
While we were sinners his blood did atone,
Oh, He's a wonderful friend."

We all long for friendship of one sort or another. How lonely is the lot of those who are without friends. To have friends one must be friendly. It is not always easy to do this. Sometimes we have to go out of our way to preserve friendship.

One of the greatest examples amongst men is that of David and Jonathan. The Bible tells us that "the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David". On occasions Jonathan dared the wrath of his father in order to safeguard the life of his friend. Of Jonathan David said, "Thy love to me was wonderful surpassing even the love of women."

Naomi and Ruth are wonderful examples amongst women. Ruth's words have been remembered through many generations. "Suffer me not to leave thee nor from following after thee. Where thou goest I will go; where thou lodgest I will lodge; Thy people shall be my people and Thy God my God".

O! for friends like these.

Yet we have a more wonderful friend in Jesus. He is true at all times. His love never varies or wanes. He is ever ready to help, to support and encourage the one who is His friend.

"On Calvary's hill His own life He gave
To save from sin and from death and the grave,
There was none other, He only can save,
Oh, He's a wonderful friend."

"Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends". The love of Jesus exceeds this for He laid down His life that His *enemies* might become His friends. By this He has won the many to Himself.

We are the happier for this friendship because we know that our sins are forgiven for His sake and they will be remembered no more. We are the richer for this friendship for God's treasure house is at our disposal. God's precious word, the jewel of truth, is for our spiritual guidance that we might be priceless gems in God's sight.

"In future days He's promised to me,
That where He is there I ever shall be,
Sharing His friendship through Eternity,
Yes He's a wonderful friend.

Whatever earthly friends can supply, Jesus can super-abundantly exceed. For the friendships of this world last but for a time but His goes on when time is no more. We shall share His friendship *eternally*.

Of course we share it now, but then in a more exciting way. Faith in one who is invisible will be changed to the sight of the one whom we love. Our hope in Him will be satisfied when we awake in His likeness and dwell in His presence. Love will not diminish but will go on and on, ever increasing in its intensity and warmth.

If in sincerity and truth we have sung on earth that "there's not a friend like the lowly Jesus", what shall be our song then?

Let us put all our trust in such a wonderful friend and enjoy to the full His wonderful friendship.

"Wonderful, wonderful friend,
He'll stay with you right to the end,
On his love we can depend,
For He's a wonderful friend.

TOM KEMP, Wigan.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

DECEMBER 1979

2	Exodus 18, 10-27	Acts 20, 17-38
9	Jeremiah 13, 1-19	Acts 21, 1-19
16	Numbers 6, 1-21	Acts 21, 20-40
23	Isaiah 6	Acts 22
30	Exodus 22, 20-31	Acts 23, 1-15

FAREWELL TO EPHESUS

A CALL at Ephesus would have meant delay, hence the call to the bishops there to Miletus. We do not know that he accomplished his wish (20, 16). The presence of Jews from Asia in the Temple seems to argue that he did so. It was under an inward urge that he went, and we remember he had a special ministry to fulfil from the Gentile churches. He was amply warned by God and man that trouble awaited him but it made no difference. It

made him feel he would not see Ephesus again. As far as we can tell he did so upon his release from the first trial. However, what a wealth of detail the account gives us. The example he set of earnest unremitting toil must have made an indelible mark on the minds of his hearers. Yet they must have needed the reminder. A deep solemnity pervades the address. It was no light-hearted message. As tears had been often shed during the work among them, so the warnings of danger of apostasy warranted the same. The thought of losing the personal touch with Paul elicited manifestation of the deepest affection. Not one of those men thought to be unfaithful — did Judas ever think of betrayal — the approach to apostasy is subtle. We can picture the scene as the ship sailed away, and one so dear was lost to sight — not for ever, oh no!

THE FATEFUL JOURNEY

The contrast between modern and ancient travel can hardly be realised — though there are "the boat people" of Vietnam with perhaps comparable size vessels. Eight per-

sons travelled with Paul if we are right in assuming this from 20, 4-6. What an encouragement and joy it must have been at Tyre (seven days) and at Ptolemais (one day)! The prayer parting on the beach is a lovely thing. All the folk knew the danger Paul was facing and naturally begged him to stop away from the dangerous city. In spite of all appeals and demonstration the decision remained firm — like that surely of Jesus when He set His face stedfastly towards the same place with "long foreknowledge of the dreadful tree". How interesting the meeting between Paul and Philip, and the four inspired daughters. Whatever form their work for Jesus took, it is certain they would receive much encouragement from Paul.

It would seem Philip has stayed at Caesarea from the earliest days, perhaps a justification for the located evangelist! The Christians at Caesarea would have constant touch with Jerusalem and it appears Manaen was appointed to help and met the party with that intention — I wonder if he had transport for the "carriages" (A.V.), "baggage" (R:V). He may have been at Jerusalem at Pentecost and was one who shared his belongings then and since.

RECEPTION AT HEADQUARTERS

We sometimes need to be reminded that the basis of the church was her Jewish members. Then the contrast between law and gospel had not developed because the basic law of Moses is "Thou shalt love . . ." and the teaching of Jesus put the greatest emphasis on that very thing. It would be quite natural for the new faith to congregate daily in the Temple. The apostles were Jews and greatly venerated Moses. The two faiths had a common "war" with heathens and the Temple stood uncompromisingly for ONE GOD, THE ALMIGHTY CREATOR. They must clash ultimately by acceptance or rejection of the Christ. There might indeed be an inconsistency in offering sacrifices even just for the Nazarite vow, but how could this be overcome while the Temple and all its ceremonial was still in action. Time had to be allowed for development of the complete break. Thus the Elders counselled Paul and he acceded to their suggestion without argument. We rejoice in any case that there was a warm reception for Paul, and he was in a wonderful position to bring news so fully which may have just so to speak drifted in through slow com-

munications. "Beginning at Jerusalem" was the divine order, and for many years the chief authority was there. We have a saying "Charity begins at home but it cannot end there". So it was — Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria and the uttermost parts.

THE DEVELOPING CRISIS

Wherever Paul had success in the Gentile world he began with the Jews, and often the opposition began with them. National prejudice and Zeal for outward observances could not bear the truth any more than the Scribes and Pharisees could stomach the rebukes and the perfect life and character of Jesus. Hence those Jews who came to the appointed feasts from foreign parts became fiercer in their enmity to Paul than the natives of Palestine themselves. Recognising Paul and hating him as they did for his great success among the Gentiles in the province of Asia centred at Ephesus, their immediate reaction was to raise every possible hostility against him. A rumour of desecration was enough to raise a riot at any time, and the further appeal to national zeal was an incitement to murder. The Sanctuary could not be used for this but only the prompt action of the soldiery saved Paul from immediate death.

THE SPEECH OF A WISE MAN

It was remarkable that permission was given. It was a great opportunity and Paul knew how to take advantage of it. His use of their own language inspired stillness and if any were open to persuasion — and some may have been — the truth could not have been better suited to the mind. The Lord did subsequently say to Paul (23,11) "as thou hast testified of Me at Jerusalem" — testifying indeed! Of course the final word from God had to be confessed with emphasis, and that was the point at which all effort to reason became impossible. Insensate rage took possession of the mob. It was quite impossible for the captain to understand though he may indeed have understood the speech. Only the fact of his Roman citizenship saved Paul from the fearful torture of scourging, and as on a previous occasion those in authority feared the consequences of their treatment. The Captain's immediate instruction brought further testifying for Paul — before the authority he himself had shared.

THE SANHEDRIN

Here it seems Paul spoke harsh words against an injustice. He was justified in fact but did apologise. He had apparently not realised the High Priest had given the order, either a question of actual sight or misunderstanding. Perhaps he thought of this (24,21) when before Felix, or was it more than tactful inciting division in the Council, which had the effect of ending any sensible consideration of his case. The same kind of policy was suggested to them as they had before exercised with Jesus through Judas. The opportunity was presented to them by those who bound themselves under a great curse to murder Paul at whatever cost. We have to conclude on this sad note of human depravity so often exercised in connection with religious fanaticism.

R. B. Scott.

HAVE MINI-SKIRTS ANYTHING TO DO WITH THESE SAYINGS OF JESUS?

“Woe to the world because of occasions of stumbling! for it must needs be that the occasions come; but woe to that man (or woman) through whom the occasion cometh! Every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thine eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire.”

(Matt. 18:7,9, 5:28, R.V.).

We are told in the Bible that when Lot lived among the people of Sodom, he, “in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds” (2 Pet. 2:8). Despite the enactment of the Homosexual Bill, it is not quite the same here, but there are other things that vex.

Last summer, I was invited to attend a prayer meeting in an Evangelical church. As I entered the room, it looked as if I had blundered into a harem by mistake. A group of people were sat round on chairs in a small room, semi-circular fashion, and glamorous female legs could be seen everywhere.

The older women were dressed modestly, as “becometh women professing godliness (1 Tim. 2:10), and as they did not seem to be unduly incommoded by their longer dresses, I

failed to see any necessity for the others to be different.

In their unguarded moments, worldly people can be far more honest about sex than can some Christians, who are never honest about it in any of their moments.

A good woman would prefer men to look at her face, and not seek to invite their attention to the upper parts of her legs, however beautiful she might think them to be.

But this is the astounding thing: the members of this church believe that if a poor, weak male infringes Christ’s rule, and “looks on a woman to lust after her” (Matt. 5:28), he will be cast into hell-fire; yet, if such a one goes to their prayer meeting in search of spiritual strength and uplift, they have no compunction whatever about placing temptation before him to sin in this very way!

It is much easier for young women to lengthen their skirts than for a man to pluck out his eye, so why don’t they do it? It is because when the world claps its hands, they dance to its tune, and God’s appeal to them is unheeded:-

“Love not the world, neither the things in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lusts thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:15-17).

A prayer meeting should be a place of refuge, where Christian men can escape for a while from the world’s constant fleshly assault on their senses. It is only in the crucified life that we can expect God to meet with us there.

Instead of women bringing the world’s revealing fashions into the prayer meeting, to the embarrassment of Christian men; the leaders there should be praying for, and encouraging their womenfolk to go out and administer a silent rebuke to the world by wearing the “modest apparel” enjoined by Christ.

It is difficult to go contrary to the crowd; but seeing that a climate of public opinion has been created so that clergymen can wear with composure a garb that Christ has NOT enjoined them to wear, the clergy should now be sparing no effort to extend this climate, so that Christian women can wear with equal composure the “modest apparel” which Christ HAS enjoined, albeit by the mouth of Paul (1 Tim. 2:9). This would make the difficulty, less.

Arthur Carrington.

SHARE IT

JAMES D. BALES

It is thought that one sentence in the writings of Origen gave Bishop Butler the idea for his book against the Deists, the *Analogy of Religion* (1736). Butler wrote in the Introduction as follows:

Hence, namely from analogical reasoning, Origen has with singular sagacity observed that "he who believes the Scripture to have proceeded from him who is the Author of Nature, may well expect to find the same sort of difficulties in it, as are found in the constitution of Nature. And in a like way of reflection, it may be added, that he who denies the Scripture to have been from God, upon account of these difficulties, may, for the very same reason, deny the world to have been formed by him. On the other hand, if there be any analogy, or likeness, between that system of things and dispensation of Providence, which revelation informs us of, and that system of things and dispensation of Providence, which experience, together with reason, informs us of, that is, the known course of nature; this is a presumption, that they have both the same author and cause; at least so far as to answer objections against the former being from God, drawn from anything which is analogical or similar to what is in the latter, which is acknowledged to be from him; for an Author of nature is here supposed (Bishop Butler's, *Analogy of Religion*, N.Y.: Harper and Brothers, 1859, p. 86).

A brief statement may start someone on a tremendous train of thought. An idea dropped into certain prepared minds may become the unifying theme to a mass of material. This was just the idea needed to bring them together. It may be the key which opens the door to a treasure house. What a shame if the ideas never reached these minds.

No one reads as widely in every field as some people do in one field. Each may run across gems which would be of great value to others. Share these gems that you come across. Sometimes they can be made into a brief article and this becomes the means of passing it on to others. Something you run across may be the very thing for which someone has long been searching. It may be an idea which meets his needs though he was not searching for it. It may be the "missing link" in an entire chain of thoughts.

From: "Firm Foundation"

THE BIBLE ... A MIRACLE

The Bible itself is a standing and astonishing miracle. Written, fragment by fragment, throughout the course of fifteen centuries, under different states of society, and in different languages, by persons of the most opposite tempers, talents and conditions, learned and unlearned, prince and peasant, bond and free; cast into every form of instructive composition and good writing, history, prophecy, poetry, allegory, emblematic representation, judicious interpretation, literal statement, precept, example, proverbs, disquisition, epistle, sermon, prayer — in short, all rational shapes of human discourse; and treating, moreover, of subjects not obvious, but most difficult. Its authors are not found, like other writers, contradicting one another upon the most ordinary matters of fact and opinion, but are at harmony upon the whole of their sublime and momentous scheme.

THE LORD'S DAY

THE LORD'S DAY is my tower of strength. It is the day for soul refreshment. In my moments of quiet meditation, I have often asked myself, "How long would strength remain in my heart, if it were not for soul-rewarding worship of the Lord's Day?" How wise my heavenly Father was to provide this day for his children.

As the Lord's Day dawns and the hour of worship approaches, my hungry soul grows eager with anticipation. It is this time that God has especially planned and provided spiritual food for my hungry soul. This hour is too important to be consumed with the trivial non essential. It is not the time for entertainment.

I want to hear a life-giving and soul saving message from God. I want instruction on how to overcome temptation, reassurance of God's love and providence, and a brief glimpse again of the glory of the Father's house. I do not ask that the message be easy, only that it be true. Let God's man point my way to duty, and let me be wise enough to follow it. Let the message lay bare my sins, and let me be humble enough to repent. And Oh, my God, grant that thy messenger may never lose the courage to faithfully rebuke my sins, or otherwise it may destroy me for ever. If there is sin in my life, may he know that he has not been true to my eternal interest until he had discovered it for me and has helped me to find cleansing.

Selected 20th Century
Christian.

An injurious truth has no merit over an injurious lie.

WATCH YOURSELF GO BY

Just stand aside and watch yourself go by;
Think of yourself as "he" instead of "I".

Note closely as in other men you note
The bag-kneed trousers and the seedy coat.
Pick flaws; find fault; forget the man is you,
And strive to make your estimate ring true.
Confront yourself and look you in the eye —
Just stand aside and watch yourself go by.

Interpret all your motives just as though
You looked on one whose aims you did not know.

Let undisguised contempt surge thro you when

You see you shirk, O commonest of men!
Despise you cowardice; condemn what're
You note of falseness in you anywhere.

Defend not one defect that shares your eye —
Just stand aside and watch yourself go by.

And then, with eyes unveiled to what you loathe,

To sins that with sweet charity you'd clothe,
Back to your self-walled tenement you'll go
With tolerance for all who dwell below.

The faults of others then will dwarf and shrink,
Love's chain grows stronger by one mighty link,

When you, with "he" as substitute for "I,"
Have stood aside and watched yourself go by.

— Strickland Gillilan

NEIGHBOUR — What is meant by our neighbour we cannot doubt. It is every one with whom we are brought into contact. First of all, he is literally our neighbour who is next to us in our own family and household — husband to wife, wife to husband, parent to child, brother to sister, master to servant, servant to master. Then it is he who is close to us in our neighbourhood, in our own town, in our own parish, in our own street, With these all true charity begins. To love and be kind to these is the very beginning of true religion. But beside these, as our Lord teaches, it is every one who is thrown across our path by the changes and chances of life; he or she, whosoever it be, whom we have any means of helping.— the unfortunate stranger whom we may meet in travelling, the deserted friend whom no one else cares to look after.

QUOTES — on Brotherhood

I sought my soul
But my soul I could not see
I sought my God
But my God eluded me
I sought my brother
And found all three

Anonymous

Afflictions sons are brothers in distress
A brother to relieve, how exquisite the bliss
Robert Burns

Of a truth men are mystically united; a
mysterious bond of brotherhood makes all
men one.

Thomas Carlyle.

The world is too dangerous for anything but
the truth, too small for anything but
brotherhood.

A. Powell Davies.

There is no brotherhood of man without the
Fatherhood of God.

Henry M. Fields.

We must love men ere they seem worthy of
our love.

William Shakespeare.

And when in grief see your brother stray
Or in a night of error lose his way

Direct his wandering and restore the
day . . .

Leave to Avenging Heaven his stubborn will
For, O, remember, he's your brother still

Jonathan Swift.

OBITUARY

Newtongrange, Midlothian. It is with deep regret we report the passing of our Sister Morris in her 85th year. 5th October, 1979. Sister Morris was a member of long standing in the church and a devoted wife and mother. In her latter years she was confined to her home, but never failed to show love and deep interest in all who visited her.

Bro. E. Jess conducted the funeral service within Sister Morris' house as was her wish. A large number gathered to pay their respects. Sister Morris was laid to rest at Dalkeith cemetery.

The church pays tribute to the memory of our dear sister and offers its deepest sympathy and love to the family left.

"Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord."

A. P. Sharp. Sec.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES — 1980

It has become necessary to review the cost of the Scripture Standard for next year. The charges we make are based upon the cost of printing and postage and are adequate to cover our costs to the end of the year.

We have increased the size of the magazine from twelve pages to sixteen pages from August of this year. This of course increased our printing costs considerably. In addition to this we have an increase in the basic cost of printing and also the increased postal rates.

The new subscription rates are printed on the back page. We are sorry that we have had to increase them by this amount but feel sure that the increased size of the magazine will be appreciated.

Due to the increased size and weight of the magazine the additional cost of Air Mail delivery has also increased considerably. Would readers please use the new rates and charges when renewing their subscriptions.

It should be noted that our dependence on gifts has decreased considerably over the last few years. The rates we now charge relate much more closely to our actual costs. We are, however, grateful to those readers who make gifts which enable us to send out free copies to needy brethren, particularly in Africa.

We are sorry for the late delivery of your Scripture Standards. They are mailed out as soon as they arrive from the printer. We are trying to arrange for delivery early in the month and hope to provide a better service in the future.

Reading Cards for 1980 will be available later in the year. Please let me have your orders for Scripture Standards and Reading Cards in good time.

Thank you.

John Kneller.

THANKS

Thanks to all those brethren from far and near who have helped to sustain us with prayers, visits, offers of help, cards and enquiries during my recent surgery in hospital. Lily and I have been overwhelmed with your love and kindness and have been made to realise again how good it is to belong to God's great family here upon earth. Thank you all again and may God bless your labours for Him.

Mick Mannion,

Albert Street,
Wigan.

READING CARDS

Brother Scott has again accomplished the very arduous task of compiling "Suggested Scripture Readings" for the year 1980. These have been sent to the printers and we hope to have the cards early in December.

Please send a note of your requirements to brother John Kneller once we have established the cost.

Readers will want me to once again thank brother Scott for this invaluable service to the churches.

Ed.

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