

Hubbards

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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THE JEW AND THE ARAB

THE Camp David agreement in the U.S.A. between Israel and Egypt is but one further chapter in an apparently never ending saga. The perpetual talks and conferences between the Arab States and Israel (with U.S.A. and Britain as intermediaries) are proving tiresome, if not to the participants then certainly to the general public. I am a bit fed up with the continual reports of talks and stalemates. I notice that President Al-Assad of Syria now reckons that President Sadat of Egypt and Mr. Begin of Israel intend to jointly launch an offensive against Syria – and so it goes on. In actual fact the situation is virtually insoluble – something like the situation in Ireland, and the enmity between Jew and Arab goes back to the dawn of time. There is an unlikely tale that a mediaeval king once asked one of his bishops to prove the authenticity of the bible not in one sentence but in one word, to which the bishop replied “Jew”, your majesty. Whether that be true or not the Jews are a remarkable people and their beginnings, their present and their past certainly bear eloquent testimony to the veracity of the bible. Since the 6-day war when Israel was singularly victorious against the arab armies, vastly superior in number though the arabs were, prophesies of the Old Testament have again been dragged out and twisted to meet the present-day situation. Those who like to mess about with Old Testament prophesies have a field-day with each confrontation and development.

I'm no historian by any means, but my understanding of the situation is that the Jews, as a nation, were destroyed by the Romans (under Titus) around 70 A.D. and God has no plans for their resuscitation. When they crucified the Christ of God they shouted, “His blood be upon our heads and upon our children”, and since then (it may be coincidence) they have been persecuted in every century and in recent times lost six million of their number to Hitler. Documentary films trace the troubles between Jew and Arab back as far as the first world war but the pundits have been known to be wrong and the conflict surely goes back much further. I suppose we can really start counting from the time that the world was destroyed by the flood and the entire expanse was inhabited by merely eight souls. Noah had three sons Ham, Shem and Japheth, and all nations of the world sprang from these three. Ham had four sons and from these came the Egyptians, the Ethiopians, the Caananites, the Africans and Phoenicians. Japheth had seven sons from whom sprang the Gauls, Romans, Greeks, Britons, Russians, Germans, and others. Shem had five sons which included Arphaxad from whom came the Hebrews and in time the Persians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Armenians and Syrians. The Jews are presumably referred to as Semitic because they came from Shem. At this early time we know that the world (the whole earth) was of one language and one speech. They said, “Let us

build a tower to heaven, let us make a name lest we be scattered". (Gen 11:1-4). God said, "Let us go down and confound them and scatter them". "So the Lord-scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth". "And by these were the nations divided in the earth".

Jews or Arabs have not quite been heard of yet but all the nations begin to grow greatly in size after the Tower of Babel. About this time God calls Abram (a descendant of Shem) from Ur of the Chaldeas and said, "Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house unto a land that I will show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great and thou shalt be a blessing and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed". (Gen. 12). This declaration, made more than once, contained an immediate promise and a long-distance one. The immediate promise took the form of 'a land' (between the River of Egypt and the River Euphrates) and the long-distance promise was that 'in his seed' (singular) would all the families of the earth be blessed. The promise must have puzzled and perplexed Abraham many times as the years rolled by and Sarah, his wife, remained childless (indeed barren). Think of how often Abraham and Sarah must have discussed the matter, and wondered. Indeed through the impatience of Sarah, Abraham is persuaded to take to wife one of the women servants, Hagar an Egyptian, so that Abraham might have an offspring and the promise be realised. A son is born and is called Ishmael. "And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee, and God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed and thou shalt call his name Isaac and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed for ever. And as for Ishmael I have heard thee. Behold I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant I will establish with Isaac". Accordingly Sarah had a child in her very old age and called his name Isaac. When Isaac was born Ishmael would be about fourteen years of age and he mocked. Consequently Sarah asked Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away. Ishmael became a hunter and from him have the arab nations descended. At his birth the angel said, "And he will be a wild man, his hand will be against every man and every man's hand against him and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren". (Gen. 16:12). And so it may well be that the descendants of Ishmael still mock the progeny of Abraham and the gulf between the two is as wide today, as ever it has been. The long-term promise to Abraham that "In his seed would all nations of the earth be blessed" was reiterated to Isaac and thence to Jacob (Esau having sold his birthright). Jacob became known as Israel and had twelve sons. When they went into captivity in Egypt they were a mere three-score and ten in number, but became a vast nation so rapidly that they frightened the Egyptians into killing, at birth, all male Hebrew babies. This did not endear the Egyptians to the Hebrews. Later when the cream of Egyptian manhood was drowned in the Red Sea when trying to pursue the Hebrews, enmity between Jew and Egyptian was very firmly established and deeply rooted. And so for many centuries thereafter the animosity and discord between Arabs and Jews continued to fester like a sore that could not be healed and the promise to Abraham that 'in his seed' would all nations of the earth be blessed lay dormant awaiting the fulness of time.

It lay dormant that is, until a certain babe was born in Bethlehem, for 'the healing of the nations'. His own people (the Jews) received Him not, but put Him to a cruel death. God however, was not likely to let man extinguish His long-standing promise to faithful Abraham and so raised Jesus from the dead. The apostle Peter sums it up well in Acts 3:25 "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up His son Jesus, sent Him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities". Jesus, in claiming to be the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham had to be a direct descendant of Abraham. If we look at Matthew Chap. 1 or Luke Chap. 3 we shall see that Jesus could certainly survive the most severe examination of his pedigree for in those chapters is fully documented proof that He was the son of David and Abraham, and indeed Shem, right back to Adam. If we do not think that that is a wonderful achievement we should try

tracing our own ancestry and see how far back we can get. Record House in Edinburgh is one of the most advanced places in Europe where one can try and trace one's ancestry, compulsory registration having begun in 1854, but it's tough going back even two or three generations. Paul in his epistle to the Galatians points out that the word 'seed' can be singular or plural and that, contrary to popular belief amongst the Jews, it was used in the singular sense in God's promise to Abraham, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds as of many; but as of one, 'And to thy seed which is Christ'. (Gal. 3:16). And so Jesus was the fulfilment of this promise, and so the gospel was preached, even before Pentecost, for Paul says, "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would Justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying 'In thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed". (Gal. 3:8). Isn't it such a pity that Jew and Arab will not desist in their clamour long enough to hear these words - 'In thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed'. Jesus is the only hope for a reconciliation between Jew and Arab - indeed, Jesus is the only hope for the entire world. The scuffle over parts of Palestine are not really too important. God's promise concerning geographical parts of the world's surface are now historical, and Jesus said, concerning the future, "I go to prepare a place for you" and He was certainly not talking about this terrestrial ball. Christ's gospel likewise discounts the nationality, colour or caste of any man, does it not, and demands that all class wars, tribal feuds and racial hatreds should evaporate immediately. "There is, (in the church) neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male or female". (Gal. 3:28). The doctrine of Christ instantaneously cancels the enmity and hatred built up over centuries Mr Begin of Israel, is of the seed of Abraham and is of the children of the prophets, but seems deaf to the words of the Jews' most illustrious Son. Jew, Arab or Egyptian are unlikely to forge peace at Camp David - they must all meet on common ground at Calvary.

EDITOR.

ARE YOU SAVED?

THE question of 'Being Saved' is far more complex than many people appreciate. There is a strong tendency to over simplify the subject and the pseudo-religious bandy the name of Jesus about without the least knowledge of Him through His word. There is a growing faction which encourage all manner of disgraceful acts and associate these with the Name of our Saviour. Let all our young people beware and avoid these licentious and sinful associations.

The title we have chosen automatically suggests the question of time, for it is in the past tense. If, then, we seek to commence our consideration of the subject with the 'When', we will soon realise that there is no single answer. A true understanding of Acts 2:47; and 1 Cor. 1:18; will reveal 'being saved' is a continuing process. A house which is 'being' built is in course of construction; a ship which is being' loaded is receiving aboard its cargo. Just as 'perishing' in the latter text is that which is taking place, so 'being saved' is in progress toward completion. These two terms are used in perfect contrast of the only two classes of people that are in the world. Not 'the saved' and 'the lost', but 'those who are being saved' and 'those who are being lost'. Jesus speaks of the Broad Way which 'leads to' destruction in contrast with The Strait and Narrow Way which 'leads to' life.

Having said this much on the point of 'When' it is necessary to also ask 'How?' It is just as false to say "We are saved by baptism", as it is to contend, "We are saved by belief", if by the use of either of these phrases we imply the omission of any of the myriad other agencies which contribute to our salvation.

Every use of the word 'Saved' implies a peril avoided and it is essential to recognize the peril before we can satisfactorily determine the 'How' or the 'When' Much of the Denominational error in the land to-day is due to the failure of men to rightly divide these subjects. John Bunyan taught the truth in his 'Pilgrims Progress', much more clearly than many of his admirers do in their preaching.

It is most necessary to realise that a person is not saved from all the various perils in the same way, nor at the same time. The primary peril, the first 'What', from which those who are perishing must be saved is the accumulation of sin gathered during their time on the Broad Way. The 'How' in this case, is totally different from the 'How' as applicable to christians, those who are under law to the Christ.

Christians do succumb to temptation and commit sin, the 'How' for their salvation is totally different from the 'How' for those who are still 'in their sins'. Immediately this fact is grasped it will be seen how foolish it is to attempt to put every condition and salvation for each under the one heading.

To divide the question under three subjects will help.

- 1 The Initial Burden
- 2 Sin of those under law to the Christ.
- 3 Sinful Nature – unto eternal bliss.

The Initial Burden

It may be by slothful or wilful ignorance of the will of God, or by sheer stiff-necked opposition to Him, but every contravention of His will is SIN, The burden of sin thus gathered must first be removed before a person can start upon the path which leads to eternal bliss. There are those who would tell us that when Jesus died He took this sin away? How wonderfully true, but, will everyone be saved? If, the fact that Jesus died, assures all people of unconditional salvation, why have there been martyrs for the cause of the Christ from Stephen until the present day? Why, if the death of Jesus automatically saves, did He send out His Apostles to preach the gospel and why did He impose a dual condition upon that preaching? To all honest seekers of salvation it will be obvious that all aspects of salvation are inseparable from the death of Jesus, and equally so all aspects are dependent on personal obedience.

It may be simplified by listing personal obedience as:— Belief and living confession that Jesus is the Christ; repentance, (without which all will perish) and baptism, (Immersion in water), typical of death to sin and burial of the dead. From the grave of water the penitent rises a new creature in Christ Jesus and is now by personal submission under the law of King Jesus. The total burden of sins which have accrued are obliterated. We can thus bring together the first 'What' – 'How' – 'When'. We are saved from our initial burden of sin by the death of Jesus and personal obedience when we rise from the water of baptism.

The Sin of Those Under Law to the Christ

This section is most lucidly explained by John in his first letter, verses eight and nine. He writes, "If we say we have no sin (have not a sinful nature) – etc. If we confess our sins, (God) is just and righteous to forgive. Not again must we submit to immersion, but with true repentance, confess to God those things which we have done contrary to His will. God will wipe out these sins in the death of Jesus. We have become united with Jesus in His death by our immersion and now, upon confession, God can accept the price which Jesus paid as the cost of forgiveness to those who are thus united with Him. Here again the 'What' – 'How' – 'When' are obvious. We are saved day by day from the sins committed after placing ourselves under the Rule of Jesus, by His death, upon the penitent confession of those sins to God.

Our Sinful Nature – unto Eternal Bliss.

This is the ultimate Salvation and that which once attained will never be forfeited. It is spoken of in so many ways in the scriptures. There was none greater than the Apostle Paul in teaching the absolute joy of this final state and none so strong in urging to constant effort to avoid sin in all its forms. A constant growth in grace till a fit state for glory is reached. A perpetual war against sin, the fleshly lusts, and the world, knowing that these can and will (if allowed) finally rob us of Eternal bliss; At the end of his illustrious life, as the day of his martyrdom came on, this wonderful teacher wrote, "I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith, I have finished the course, Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness". His constant contention against his sinful nature was to be rewarded. The Apostle Paul

is now **SAVED**, irrovakable and for all eternity, Saved. Thus the final What – How – When; is salvation from the sinful nature inherited from Adam, through the death of Jesus, and by constant endeavour to be well-pleasing to God; when Jesus shall say, "Come thou blessed of my Father, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord".

ARE YOU SAVED?

PAUL JONES, Birmingham.

ASK

"More of Thyself, O show me hour by hour.
More of Thy Glory, O my God and Lord!
More of Thyself, in all Thy grace and power;
More of Thy love and truth, Incarnate Word".

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

ASK? WHAT DO I ASK? FOR "THE POWER THAT WORKETH IN US".
The message given in God's most precious Word over and over again is that the child of God, can have a power working within him.

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word". Psalm 1:9:9.

"Thy word have I had in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee". Psalm 119:11.

"Thy word is a lump unto my feet, and a light unto my path". Psalm 119:105.

"But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it" Deuteronomy 30:14.

"But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience". Luke 8:15.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom". Colossians 3:16.

"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe". 1 Thessalonians 2:13.

"Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies and envies and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby". 1 Peter 2:1,2

Be assured of this glorious fact beloved brothers and sisters, the Written Word of God is alive—quick and powerful. We dare not neglect the teaching, if we desire to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said: "If ye abide in My word, then are ye truly My disciples, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" John 8:31, 32 (RV)

ASK? WHAT DO I ASK? FOR "THE POWER THAT WORKETH IN US".

"Now unto him that is able to do".

"EXCEEDING ABUNDANTLY"

A Ask, and it shall be given you;

S Seek, and ye shall find;

K Knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Matthew 7:7.

ABUNDANT GRACE

"But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound?" Rom. 5:20

"And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 1 Timothy 1:14.

ABUNDANT PARDON

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy

upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon". Isaiah 55:7.

ABUNDANT
SATISFACTION

"They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures". Psalm 36:8.

ABUNDANT PEACE

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus". Philippians 4:7
"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid". John 14:27.

ABUNDANT LIFE

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly". John 10:10.

ABUNDANT JOY

"That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again". Philippians 1:26.

ABUNDANT POWER

"Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness". Colossians 1:11

ASK? WHAT DO I ASK? FOR "THE POWER THAT WORKETH IN US".
The power that worketh in you - can supply the things that matter ... Grace ... Pardon ... Satisfaction ... Peace ... Life ... Joy ... Power.

The poet wrote:-

"More things are wrought by Prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain, flowing night and day:
For what are men better than sheep or goats,
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer,
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round world is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God".

So beloved let us not forget to pray, C.H. Spurgeon wrote:- "We do not forget to eat: we do not forget to take the shop shutters down: we do not forget to be diligent in business: we do not forget to go to our beds to rest: but we often do forget to wrestle with God in prayer, and to spend, as we ought to spend, long periods in consecrated fellowship with our Father and our God. With too many professors the ledger is so bulky that you cannot move it, and the Bible, representing their devotion, is so small that you might almost put it in your waistcoat pocket. Hours for the world! Moments for Christ! The world has the best, and our closet the parings of our time. We give strength and freshness to the ways of mammon, and our fatigue and languor to the ways of God. Hence it is that we need to be commanded to attend to that very act which it ought to be our greatest happiness, as it is our highest privilege to perform, viz. to meet with our God. "Call upon me," saith he, for he knows that we are apt to forget to call upon God, "What meanest thou, oh, sleeper? arise and call upon thy God", is an exhortation which is needed by us as well as by Jonah in the storm".

Alexander Whyte wrote some words that we would do well to consider:- "We pray sometimes, or we pretend to pray; but do we ever set ourselves to prepare our hearts for the mercy-seat by strenuous meditation on who and what we are; on who and what He is to whom we pretend to pray; and on what it is we are to say, and do, and ask, and receive?"

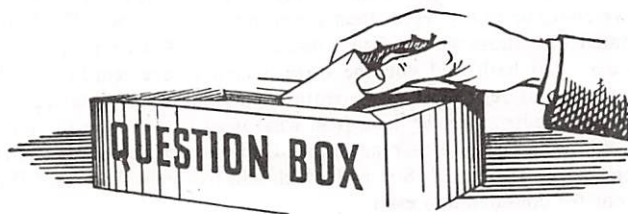
"The more I pray", said Andrew Murray, "the more I feel my need of the Word. The more I read God's Word, the more I have to pray, and the more power I have in prayer". Dawson Trotman said, "Nothing pays greater dividends for the time invested than writing God's Word on the tables of the heart."

Campbell Morgan tells of the importance of the words of God:— "What then, are the words of God? They are the words that reveal His thinking, His will, His purpose, His method. Man lives by the discovery of the thought of God, the will of God, the purpose of God, the method of God, and by his response to that discovery. The underlying sigh, and surge, and sob of the soul is answered by what God says". Yea, the sob of the soul is answered, further words from Joseph Parker encourages those who love this sacred Book:— "If I had the faintest scruple as to estimating the Bible as the word of God it would be dissolved by the fact that the Bible constantly seeks me in God's name, offers me God's love, welcomes me to God's pardon, and constrains me to obedience to God's will. So large, so tender, is the Spirit of this wondrous Book!"

ASK WHAT DO I ASK? FOR "THE POWER THAT WORKETH IN US".

And may the Lord's richest blessing be your portion.

(DV) we shall conclude this series of articles next month. LEONARD MORGAN.



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

"Mormon missionaries tell us that we should pray to God to ask Him to tell us if the Book of Mormon is true. Is this any way of establishing truth from error?"

I WOULD imagine that when a Mormon missionary tells someone to check with God as to the authenticity of the Book of Mormon that the listener would be likely to think in bewilderment, "Well, we have the Bible; why do we need the Book of-Mormon also?" The true answer would be, although the Mormon missionary would not give it, that the Book of Mormon is necessary to bolster the doctrine of the Mormon church; it has nothing whatsoever to contribute to the Christian faith as revealed in God's word, the Bible. Indeed, when we consider the ancient manuscripts from which the canonical books of the Bible have been derived, and when we realise how lovingly and painstakingly these were copied from the original manuscripts so that God's word to us could be kept intact, then we must marvel at the audacity and the temerity of those people who try to raise false doctrines under the guise of so-called inspired revelation which they fondly hope will compete with the Bible. It seems to me that prayer would be the only avenue left to them, because informed scholarship would utterly reject such claims. As the questioner suggests, God is not the author of confusion, and He has provided a better way of establishing truth from error so that we need not be led away from the truth by pernicious doctrines unleashed on us by misguided people, who for reasons best known to themselves are attempting to pervert the truth as God has revealed it. Let us, then, explore quite logically how God has already signified what truth is, and how we can establish it to ourselves.

Ultimate Truth

It was Jesus Himself who said to Thomas, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me". When Philip asked to see the Father Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:5-10). So Jesus was set forth as the personification of the truth of God; as Paul said to the brethren at Colosse, "For it pleased the Father that in him (Jesus) should all fulness dwell" (Col. 1:19).

Not only was it God's intention that Jesus should be seen, but that he should also be heard. God set the divine seal of approval on the teaching of Jesus when He said on the

Mount of Transfiguration, "This is my beloved Son: hear him" (Mark 9:7). Later on, under divine inspiration, Peter was to say, "For Moses truly said unto the Father, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you, And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people" Acts 3:22-23.

It seems to me that all people, including Mormon missionaries, should be seeking to obey the truth of God as expressed in Christ Jesus His Son. That truth is revealed and recorded in the Bible, the only revelation that God will approve. Throw away the Book of Mormon and any other book that purports to be an additional revelation from God. Give me the Bible and the Bible only: every word, every line a pertinent message from God, containing as it does the truth of God's Holy Word to us. Let the Bible speak about truth.

We can know the truth

To the Jews who believed Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). From this statement we deduce that Jesus recognised that for the people of his day knowledge of the truth was possible. Jesus knew full well what he was talking about when he equated discipleship with adherence to the truth; he even revealed where the truth was resident, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed". (John 8:31). When he was confronted with those who said that he had a devil, Jesus replied, "But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God" (John 8:40). So on the testimony of Jesus he had the truth from God; he told that to the people and their acceptance and obedience made them free, what need have we then to pray with Mormon missionaries, or any one else for that matter, for God to reveal to us a different kind of truth to that which He revealed to His Son and which will free men from sin? The whole idea is too preposterous for consideration even.

Furthermore, it has always been God's intention that men should know the truth. Paul wrote to Timothy, "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:3,4). So that there will be no misunderstanding of the origin and availability of such truth, Paul goes on, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus: Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time". (1 Tim. 2:5,6).

In view of what we have said, we are left with the inescapable thought that if the Book of Mormon embodies God's truth then God has been a capricious God in not revealing His complete truth to the people who lived before the Book of Mormon was written. Such an idea is unthinkable.

We must obey the truth

The doctrine of complete obedience, as we have said before, is not a very palatable one, but it is both scriptural and necessary. When Paul wrote his letter to Rome he said, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (ROM. 6:17,18). Now according to the teaching of Jesus in John's gospel, the truth was to make men free. The Christians in Rome, according to Paul, had obeyed (not just received) that form of doctrine which had freed them from sin, therefore, that form of doctrine which had been delivered to and obeyed by the Roman Christians must have been the truth of God. Indeed, we know and accept that this truth is the gospel of Christ, enshrined for ever in God's Holy word, the Bible.

Dear reader, we must always beware of those who pervert the word of God. Paul had the same problem in his day, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been set forth, crucified among you?" (Gal. 3:1). Again, the apostle asks, "Who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" (Gal. 5:7). Let us keep this cardinal thought before our minds and tell it to all that we meet: it is at the point of obedience that the truth of God makes us free, there must be no retraction from that position.

The Bible must be defended

We have emphasised that the truth of God is the word of God which is the Bible; therefore, when we defend the Bible we defend the truth. We must never forget that when we stand four-square behind the Bible we are defending that which reveals God's truth; that which reveals the rock of our salvation, Christ Jesus the Lord, and the church which is built on that rock (Math. 16:16-18). As Paul reminded Timothy, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).

We are also urged to "contend for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). Furthermore, Peter teaches that we must "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason for the hope that is within us" (1 Peter 3:15). It is comparatively easy to stand for the truth when we are among friends who believe as we do, but are we courageous enough to stand for the truth when attacks are made on the Bible? Let us never give place to error no matter how plausibly presented, but let us stand for God's truth, the Bible, and hold it aloft as the revealer of God's will in Christ Jesus His Son. We must never depart from that truth.

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

SCRIPTURE READINGS

DECEMBER 1978

3—Isaiah 53	John 12:37-50
10—Psalm 51	John 13:1-20
17—Job 19	John 13:21-28
24—Exodus 33:7-23	John 14
31—Isaiah 5:1-10	John 15:1-11

FINAL REJECTION

We read (12:37-43) John's sad reflection upon conditions of opinion about Jesus developing on the third day (our Tuesday) in the week of crucifixion. The miracles (or rather "signs") so publicly exhibited in Jerusalem and of course elsewhere over three years or more had not resulted in real belief in Him. People did not believe He was the Christ. There were however among the rulers whom we assume were the most intelligent and enlightened Jews, a conviction of this truth without any commitment. What ought they to have done about it? Isaiah saw their predicament beforehand, and the hand of God in their rejection whether open or in cowardice. Incontrovertible evidence does not change the heart with a callous.

Last Words

It seems probable that the last public utterance of Jesus is in 12:44-50. The reports we have of His subsequent teaching relate only

to the disciples. Here He makes His statement of His work and words, especially of His WORDS. His claim is absolute. His words are His Father's. His person is His Father's. Acceptance of Him is acceptance of His Father. Rejection of Him is rejection of His Father. Without Him is darkness but with Him is eternal life. When we realise the importance of all His words we will be anxious to know them, and knowing them to avoid the awful error of His contemporaries — their hardness of heart.

Humility Personified

We try to enter that sacred upper room in spirit with the twelve who had kept close to Jesus through His ministry, and to share their feelings of fear, respect and love. They know that a crisis is nigh. They cannot believe that He Who stilled the storm, and raised the dead could be humiliated before His foes though He has repeatedly told them this. Anyway they are going to be faithful to Him. They will die with Him if opportunity offers although they have only two swords for twelve! They have been discussing who should be the leader, and we suppose Peter has so far taken the position, or James, or John, the 'sons of thunder' (Luke 22:24). The road from Bethany was dusty and it is probable a pitcher of water was in the room — "the goodman" had placed it there for "the Master" (Luke 22:10-13). But they did not even think to wash their Master's feet, having forgotten their own in the foreboding and the discussion.

Let us try to be always "courteous" (1 Peter 3:8). What an opportunity this provided for the supreme TEACHER! So, obeying the commandment of the Father (see 12:50), He put off His outer garments, took basin and towel, and surely to their astonishment and shame, proceeded to wash their feet. No wonder Peter protested. Did not all of them feel like him but failed to express themselves? By this time perhaps Judas was past thinking rightly. We do not know how far the washing had gone or if Peter were the first. John looking back on this scene puts emphasis on the greatness of Jesus, and His love, "He came forth from and goeth to God" and "loved to the uttermost" (vv. 1 & 3). Every menial task done in the same spirit is indeed sanctified by this action of Jesus. The lesson went home and must have been among "all things whatsoever I said unto you" (14:26). There was never any slightest "jockeying for place" among the apostles. They were set forth "a spectacle unto the world, and angels and men" (1 Cor. 4:9), united in the greatest service of all. What a tragedy would their behaving otherwise have been when the church of Jesus was in its infancy! We suppose this lesson is greatly needed today in church and world, and always will be among humankind. The divine condescension can never be matched, but finally what a joy to submit to it!

The Traitor

There must have been many cases of ingratitude among those who received blessings at the hand of Jesus. We assume the case of the Samaritan leper who returned to give thanks could provide a percentage figure for real gratitude. We hope it was much more but surely Jesus must have been deeply grieved by the reception given to His healing work. Human hearts of the normal kind have been broken by ingratitude, but can we measure what is hidden in the words "He was troubled in spirit" (13:21)? Not only was this ingratitude but Jesus said "It were better for that man if he had not been born" (Mark 14:21). Love such as that of Jesus for sinners suffers the deepest grief. It seems strange that the disciples did not realise what Judas had gone out for, and John indicates that he and Peter were allowed to know. It has been suggested that Judas thought his action would compel the Saviour to take violent action. This is mere speculation

and hardly modifies the nature of the crime. We have also the information that he embezzled, and this seems to give a low motive developed possibly by disappointment. The awful nature of the betrayal came home to him alas as so much sin does, after the event.

Thomas and Philip

So much could be written about our Saviour's consolatory words, and has been, that we leave the main purpose of chapter 14 and consider the reactions of these two apostles. We know nothing of Thomas's calling apart from the inclusion of his name in the several lists, but we have interesting and enlightening information about his character. He may have grasped more vividly the future foretold by Jesus many times, and so anticipated a move towards Jerusalem as a move into trouble, more fully than the others. His love for and loyalty to Jesus is expressed in the words "Let us go that we may die with Him" (11:16). He was facing up to what eventually he himself had to suffer. His question as to the Saviour's destiny elicited the startling truth that Jesus Himself is the way (14:6), to find Jesus is to find the way to God. Thomas here expresses the bewilderment of the disciples about the immediate future. They must cling to Him and their future is sure. Then for thoughtful and sceptical Thomas there must be convincing evidence. That being provided, he is the convinced and steadfast believer with a realisation of the absolute supremacy of Jesus — his God, (20:28). Philip is a different character. Jesus deliberately found him and called him. He knew the call would result in action. Philip knew and fetched Nathanael, whom we presume to be called also Bartholomew, and he was a man of truly good life. Philip treated his scepticism in the wise way. There was no argument about Nazareth, only a practical suggestion (John 1:46). We glimpse appreciation of practical points in Jesus choosing to ask him how the multitude could be fed (John 6:5-7). Philip estimated at once the impossible need, afterwards all the more wonderfully provided. It would seem his connection with Bethsaida made him familiar with Gentile folk. Hence Gnetiles wanting to "see" Jesus approached him rather than the other disciples. His approach first to Andrew indicates his thought that Gentiles had less right to interview Israel's Messiah, and might not be welcome. However

this revealed in advance what Philip afterwards learnt fully, the universality of the gospel. We see again the practical side of Philip's character in his request for a sight of "the Father". What measureless comfort the answer brings! To see Jesus is enough to satisfy the seeking soul.

The Life-giving Vine

Here as so often Jesus teaches from the common things of everyday life. The figure was used by the prophets of old, and in it we see Jesus as the life-giving sap enabling the vine to bring forth its fruit, and to do so much better through the skilful hand of the husband man. The story of the ignorant man's despair when the pruning work was done must be matched by the faith of the christian when life brings its trials and sorrows (James 1:2).

R.B. SCOTT.

SCRIPTURE STANDARD FOR SEPTEMBER
p. 105 - second column 19th line delete the word "not" of course!

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Hayfield Road, Kirkcaldy: On Sunday 8th October, Mrs. Salmona was received into fellowship. Mrs. Salmona, despite physical disabilities, had been attending our Gospel meetings for some time and we wish her a happy life with us in Church activities.

Bro. Bob Eckman, Ilkeston, was the speaker at our mission from 8th to 13th Oct. and impressed everyone with his powerful addresses. We are, indeed grateful for his services and pray that we shall reap the reward of his labours. It was a good mission with an average attendance of 68. A. Roberts, Sec.

OBITUARY

We regret to note the passing of sister Lurline Hudson, widow of John Allen Hudson who visited this country first in 1937 and again in

1947. She married T.W. Phillips, Rosemead, California, who kindly wrote to brother R.B. Scott to advise him of her passing. We offer our brother our sympathy and condolences at this time of his great loss. Ed.

Burns Street, Ilkeston: The church here mourns the passing of one of their oldest members, Sister Sarah Gregory, wife of elder Reuben Gregory, who died on Friday 18th August, aged 83 years. Sister Gregory was a diligent Christian and faithfully served her Lord for over 60 years. She was a true helpmate to her husband and helped him, in sharing the burdens that any elder has to carry. For 20 years she was a leader in the Primary School where she delighted in her work among the children. Singing the Lords praises was an area where she excelled, possessing a rich contralto voice which she used to His glory. She was rarely absent from the Lord's Table except in times of illness and in spite of the weakness of the flesh in recent months she attended whenever possible. She will be missed by all her brethren and sisters at Ilkeston and we commend her loved ones to the kind mercies of our Heavenly Father, "Underneath are the everlasting arms". Our sister was laid to rest on Wednesday, 23rd August, the service in the chapel and at the graveside being conducted by the writer.

On behalf of the church, Tom Woodhouse

Dalmellington, Scotland: It is with sorrow that we record the great loss in the passing away of our dearly beloved brother in Christ, Tom McGinn, senior, on the 14th September, aged 80 years, a faithful and loyal member in the church here which began in 1935.

Always ready and prepared to serve the church, leading us in songs of praise and exhortation. Our brother was seldom absent from the meetings, his joy and desire to meet with the brethren to worship the Lord whom he loved and served so well. Our loss is heaven's gain, and we rejoice that he is free from pain and sorrow, to join the great company of the faithful about whom he spoke so much.

We commend our sister McGinn and all the family to our loving heavenly Father, the God of all comfort and consolation.

Wm. Black.

CHANGE OF SECRETARY

Haddington, Scotland. The secretary of the Haddington congregation is now brother A. Broad, 'Hadden House', Lodge Street, Haddington, East Lothian.

EVANGELIST WANTED

The Slamannan District Churches of Christ require an evangelist and all interested brethren should apply in writing to the District Secretary: Hugh Davidson, 21 Glen Lyon, St. Leonards, East Kilbride, G74 2JJ.

OLD ISSUES OF 'MISSION MESSENGER'

A Canadian reader has asked me to try and secure any old issues of the 'Mission Messenger' (a paper sadly missed by many readers in this country since it went out of production). This reader is interested in acquiring any copies prior to 1956. Please don't send any papers to me just yet, but if you have any for disposal (prior to 1956) I can put you in touch with the sister making the request. ED.

CHANGE OF SECRETARY

Dennyloanhead, Scotland. The secretary of the Dennyloanhead Church is now Joseph F. Malcolm, whose address is 11 Duncan Street, Bonnybride, Stirlingshire, FK4 1DP.

EVANGELIST WANTED

The church which meets at Seymour Road, Eastwood, Notts., require a brother to work full-time with them in evangelistic work for a period. Will any brother interested in the work please contact the secretary: G. E. Bullock, 74 Station Road, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 5LG.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Roy Renshaw 'Kelston', 61 Tawd, Road, Skelmersdale, Lancs. WN8 6BP.
Telephone (0695) 31598.

PARADOXES IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST

HE who is the Bread of Life began His ministry hungering.

He who is the Water of Life began His ministry thirsting.

He who was weary is our true rest.

He who paid tribute is the King of kings.

He prayed, yet hears our prayers. He wept but dries our tears.

He was sold for thirty pieces of silver, yet redeemed the world.

He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, yet is the Good Shepherd.

He died, and by dying destroyed death for all who believe.

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