

# *The* **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

VOL.52 No.2

FEBRUARY 1984

## **HUMAN PROGRESS**

I suppose we all have our own ideas as to what constitutes human progress. Man has come a long way since the days of lurking around in caves, making flint arrow-heads and rubbing two sticks together to make fire. If we were to be asked what discovery or development we considered to have been the most telling in man's progress I suppose, we might all give differing replies. Some might think that space-travel has been man's crowning achievement, while others might think that the discovery of electricity; or radio waves; X-rays; anaesthetics; the telephone; discovery of bacteria; combustion engine; steam power; etc. etc. has been responsible for man's best good. Some might suggest items closer to their hearts, i.e. the abolition of the outside toilet; coal miners/might suggest "Pit Baths". In the middle-ages even royalty had a bath only two or three times a year. Truly up until this year of 1984 man has certainly 'pulled himself up by the bootstraps' in the realms of engineering, plumbing, architecture, medicine, agriculture and the general sciences.

However if we were to strip away man's advances in technology and science we would find, I suggest, that man, in himself, has made no progress at all. Man is still the same as he always was, with his propensity to good and his tendency to evil - both just as strong as ever they were. We still have the forces of good and evil at work in the world. The servants of God are still vastly outnumbered by the angels of darkness. Man finds ready access to Universities and other places of learning but we still have, in the world, men quick to swell the ranks of the I.R.A. and enjoy the carnage of innocent little children out Christmas shopping. We still have the Mafia, the Red Brigade, the Ku Klux Klan and assorted groups of like ilk. On a larger scale we still have wars and oppressions in nearly every part of the globe to say nothing of the attempted genocide of entire races and nations. We still have, in cities around the world, citizens who are scared to go out after dark, and we have people being 'mugged' in the streets, even in broad daylight. The prisons, in Britain at least, are all bulging at the seams. Things are such, in the world, that people of a nervous disposition should avoid watching even simple News Bulletins on T.V.

### **Solomon's View**

It would seem then, that any progress man has made has been largely of a technical nature, and that morally, and spiritually, man has made no true gains

at all. Instead of making any true advance, man has simply been travelling in circles. A child on a rocking-horse may create plenty of activity but never ever gets anywhere. Similarly a child on a merry-go-round covers many miles but likewise goes nowhere. This, perhaps, describes man's furious activities over the centuries - much agonising and much debate but no noticeable improvement in character. This was true of mankind even in Solomon's day. In fact, in the Book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon tried, I suggest, with all his great resources of wisdom, to grapple with the problem of man's apparent inability to set his feet on higher ground. We notice that Solomon takes a rather pessimistic view of life in the Ecclesiastes, and we constantly encounter his exclamation of "Vanity, vanity, all is Vanity". All activity seemed to be vain and pointless. There was a repetitiveness about man's daily, weekly and annual pursuits that resembled a going around in circles. In the opening verses of the Book Solomon reminds us of the regularity with which one generation rises as another fades away. Even the sun sets out each day but returns again to where it began. The rivers run to the sea, evaporate and return again to the hills as rain, in a great cycle. Each generation of men are captive within their own environment and age, and have little remembrance or affect upon generations past or those yet to come. Solomon thus speculates upon what gives man satisfaction, what 'makes him tick' and how man is likely to profit in any real sense. He postulates upon the merits of riches against poverty; wisdom against folly; ease against honest toil. Solomon was in a unique position to comment upon these because he was, himself, fabulously rich and extremely wise. He enumerates the various roads in life a man might take and the consequences thereof. Indeed Solomon embarked upon some of those roads himself; even the Epicurean pursuit of sensual pleasure. Man's capacity for such pleasure is insatiable, "For the eye is never satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing." Wisdom is preferable to foolishness but even with wisdom comes a proportionate measure of grief and anxiety - for only "ignorance is bliss". Perhaps suggests Solomon, true satisfaction is to be found alone in honest toil, in the humble artisan who stands back to admire the work of his own hands. Certainly creative people seem always to be happy. However, at the end of life's day, muses Solomon, man goes to his long home, whether rich or poor, whether wise or foolish. The grave is a great leveller. Man must leave behind his riches, or his wisdom, or his skill, or his knowledge. Such is the dilemma facing thoughtful men. What road should they take through life? Should they seek fame, or riches, or wisdom, or a reputation or skill? Has the human animal power within himself to make true progress? What are Solomon's conclusions? "Remember *now thy Creator in the days of thy youth . . . fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man*". (Ecc. 12:1-13).

### Can Man Direct His Own Steps?

Man has, of a long time, tried to control himself through Law and Order. Law, however, can but define sin and crime, it can in no wise reform the lawbreaker. Even the Mosaic Law had this inherent limitation. Few observe God's basic law, "To love God and to love our neighbours as ourselves". There is no shortage of legal prohibitions but neither is there any reduction in our crime waves. Notwithstanding dire warnings from Ecologists the pollution of the atmosphere and rivers goes unabated, as does the constant destruction of jungle rain-forests; as does the killing of animals (like whales and elephants) to the point of total extinction. *Human greed* takes scant regard of what will be left to future generations. Man can not legislate his own moral improvement. He can be

changed only by some power well outwith himself. We must be changed - we must be 'born again'.

Neither will man be changed fundamentally by any *political initiative*, of whatever colour. Man's circumstances and living conditions might well be changed, but man will remain basically the same. Revolution and social upheaval have been resorted to in every century (and we had another bloodless coup only the other day in Nigeria) but the continual necessity for such drastic measures *merely proves* that man changes not. The Russian peasants were, perhaps, rescued from the cruel and indifferent Tsars by the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, but they are, perhaps, presently subjected to just as real an oppression at the hands of those who killed the Tsars. A change of government is very often just a change of tyranny. Over the centuries endless millions have been slaughtered in the name of Social and Political Reform, and to what end? Think, too, of the millions who died only a few years ago because Hitler's Germany considered itself the 'Master Race' and attempted the genocide of not only the Jews but other cultures. The world will always need 'Freedom Fighters' because it regularly produces tyrants. Man is not aware that "The Truth" can make him free (John 8:32) and can make him "Free indeed".

Jeremiah, a long time ago, summed it all up for us when he said, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jer. 10:23).

#### Clean hands — Purified hearts

2,000 years ago Jesus said, "Out of the heart proceed all evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these things come from within and defile a man." (Mark 7:21) Here, in one comprehensive and succinct statement Jesus puts his finger on the spot. *The heart* of man is the fountainhead of all evil - *the heart* of man is his stumblingblock to any moral, or spiritual progress. His heart must be changed, it must be renewed. The only physician who can accomplish this great renewal is the Great Physician, through the gospel, by His word, and by His Spirit. Such a change is not thrust upon us - man must take the initiative. James says that men (even Christians) must not only '*cleanse their hands*' but also '*purify their hearts*' (James 4:8). First man must be '*cut to the heart*' (as at Pentecost) by the realisation of his own wretchedness, and then he must '*obey from the heart*' that form of doctrine (the gospel) delivered unto him (by Christ's apostles) (Rom. 6:17). This is the only long term hope for sad humanity. Man must "Trust in the Lord *with all his heart*, and lean not unto his own understanding." "Create in me *a clean heart*, O God; and renew a right spirit within me," was the prayer of the Psalmist and it must also be the earnest desire of all of mankind before we can ever hope for a better world. Jesus brought revolution to the world (without bloodshed) and his doctrine has turned the world 'upside down' or perhaps 'right way up'. The best Social Reformers (indeed nearly all Social Reformers) have been prompted and motivated by Christian principles.

We are inclined always to look at man's problems in a global context and think of progress in terms of large numbers; but Jesus spent much time in speaking to individuals, and before *the world* can improve *individuals* in the world must improve. The gospel is not aimed at groups, but at individuals. Jesus knows that if individuals improve, the world will improve. Even *congregations of the Lord's church* are only as good as the individual members. Thus, any reform, any improvement in the world at large, or in the church in particular, must begin

with individuals. In short it must begin with YOU, and with me. What then, during 1984, will be YOUR CONTRIBUTION to a better world, and to a stronger church? What will mine be?

EDITOR

## APPARENT DISCREPANCIES RECONCILED

THE-THREE SYNOPTISTS (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) agree in telling us that Jesus and the Apostles celebrated the last Passover at the proper time required by the Law (Compare Matt. 26:17, Mark 14:12, Luke 22:7). At first sight this seems to conflict with the statements of John 18:28, 19:14, 31. In the first of these we are told, that those who led Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate "entered not into the palace, that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover"; and 19:14 tells us "it was THE PREPARATION OF THE PASSOVER" when Jesus was sentenced by Pilate. But a closer examination of all the Four Gospel accounts reveals agreement on these two points: (1) That the last Passover was observed at the appointed time; (2) That Christ was crucified on the Preparation. First, a careful reading of John 13, and comparison with the Synoptic accounts of the Passover, show that the occasion was the same. Though John says nothing of the institution of the Lord's Supper, he records much that transpired which is not given by the others; the washing of the disciples' feet; the giving of the new commandment; the farewell discourse (14-16); and the great Intercession (17). Then he says: "When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Kidron, where was a garden" etc. Here the betrayal took place, as all four writers agree (See John 18:1-12). In the second place, John is not alone in telling us that the Lord was crucified on "THE PREPARATION". Matthew speaks of the following day as "the day after THE PREPARATION" (27:62). Mark distinctly speaks of it as "THE PREPARATION, that is, the day before the Sabbath" (15:42). Luke is equally explicit (23:54). So that here again there is perfect agreement between the four writers. This really narrows the difficulty to an inquiry respecting the meaning to be attached to the phrase "THE PREPARATION", and the use of the term "SABBATH". Mark gives us the explanatory phrase, "that is, THE DAY BEFORE THE SABBATH", whilst John calls it "THE PREPARATION OF THE PASSOVER", and tells us that the Jewish rulers refrained from entering the palace, "that they might not be defiled, BUT MIGHT EAT THE PASSOVER". Now, if John meant the Preparation for the Paschal Supper on the 14th of Abib, and Mark the ordinary weekly Sabbath, the conflict would be hopeless. But, though strictly speaking "THE PASSOVER" was on the 14th, followed by "THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD", lasting a week, yet in N.T. usage the former designation is employed as covering both. Luke says: "And his parents went every year to Jerusalem at THE FEAST OF THE PASSOVER. And when he was twelve years old, they went up after the custom of the feast; and when they had FULFILLED THE DAYS", etc. (2:41-43). Here "the feast of the Passover" is made to cover all the days of unleavened bread. Again, the same historian observes: "Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, WHICH IS CALLED THE PASSOVER" (22:1). This puts it beyond question that in N.T. times the designation "THE PASSOVER" was applied to the whole week's observances. In view of this and keeping in mind the extra sacrifices ordained to be offered during the feast; and that they were the chief priests, who, though their feet were swift to shed innocent blood were yet so punctilious in

avoiding defilement that they might eat the Passover, the difficulty - respecting the use of the phrase "THE PASSOVER" is overcome. Respecting Mark's words, "the Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath," we learn from Leviticus 23 that besides the weekly Sabbath the day following the Passover (Abib 15) was a Sabbath, and the 21st as well (whatever days of the week they fell upon); as were also the day of Pentecost and the day of Atonement - the 10th of the seventh month - and other days. Verse 32 settles that such were reckoned from evening to evening. Bearing this in mind, we see that the Passover lamb was eaten on what we would reckon the evening of the 13th, but which the Hebrews reckoned the beginning of the 14th; the seizure, trials, condemnation and crucifixion, taking place during the night and the succeeding day (still the 14th). We read of no "Preparation" day for the weekly Sabbath but there was in connection with these extra Sabbaths (See Exod. 12:15). That the Sabbath which immediately followed the crucifixion was not an ordinary one, is plain from John 19:31, "For the day of that Sabbath WAS A HIGH DAY". Although no SERVILE WORK (HEB. "Work of labour") might be done on the 15th and 21st days of Abib, they do not appear to have been under the strict law of the weekly Sabbath. Hence we find "on the morrow, which is THE DAY AFTER THE PREPARATION", the chief priests and Pharisees waiting on Pilate, and arranging for the tomb being sealed and guarded; which these sticklers for outward observance would scarcely have done on an ordinary Sabbath. (See Matt. 27:62-66). Besides, Luke says: "And it was the day of the Preparation, and the Sabbath (the high day) drew on. And the women, which had come with him out of Galilee, followed after, and beheld the tomb, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. And on the Sabbath (the ordinary Sabbath) they rested according to the commandment. But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came unto the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared" (23:54-24:1). Such a melancholy service of love as the preparing of the spices would not be regarded as "servile work", and therefore could be done on the 15th. Then we have the Saviour's explicit prediction that, "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12:40). Even allowing that with the Jews part of a day was reckoned as a whole one, it is impossible to get three days and three nights between sunset on Friday evening and very early on Sunday morning whilst it was yet dark (John 20:1). From all the data we seem justified in putting the matter thus - using our day names for greater clearness - the Passover (when the lamb was eaten) fell that year on Wednesday evening; Jesus was arrested, tried, condemned, and crucified during the night and the course of Thursday (Preparation Day); He was buried on Thursday evening; the Paschal Sabbath began Thursday evening and lasted till Friday evening; the usual Sabbath began Friday evening and closed on Saturday; Christ rose from the tomb early Sunday morning. Thus are the various passages harmonized, and the Saviour's prediction found to have been fulfilled. Tradition fails, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever.

From studies on "The Lord's Supper" by the late John McCartney.

## SOMEONE HAS SAID

Jesus promised his disciples three things—that they would be completely fearless, absurdly happy and in constant trouble.

## AN OLD PREACHER

WAS congratulated after preaching a fine "sermon" "Yes", he said, "but what did it do?" The value of any preaching or teaching is in its effect on the lives of those who hear it.

# GLEANINGS

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

**WE QUOTE - D. M. LLOYD-JONES (Ephesians 1:2)**

"What is grace? It is a term notoriously difficult to define. Grace essentially means 'unmerited favour', favour you do not deserve, favour you receive but to which you have no right or title in any shape or form, and of which you are entirely unworthy and undeserving. We may call it condescending love - love coming down, or stopping down. Or we may call it beneficent kindness. All these terms are descriptive of what is meant by this extraordinary term which is constantly put before us in the New Testament, by this amazing and wonderful word 'grace'. It is not surprising that Philip Doddridge lived to contemplate it as he tells us in the words -

Grace! 'tis a charming sound,  
Harmonious to the ear : ...

It is one of the most beautiful words in every language.

With regard to 'peace', the danger always present with this word is to give it a connotation, or attach a meaning to it, which falls short of its complete meaning. 'Peace' does not merely mean cessation of war, rest and quiet. Certainly it means rest and quiet but it means much more. The everpresent danger with regard to 'peace' is to think of it as merely an absence of such things as boisterousness or discord or fighting. It may well be that because the nations of the world think of peace in those terms we have never had a true peace. The peace dealt with in history books is merely a cessation of war; but 'peace' in the Bible does not merely mean that you stop fighting; it goes far beyond that. It is interesting to find that the actual root meaning of the Greek word that is translated 'peace', is 'UNION', 'union after separation', a bringing together, a reconciliation after a contest and quarrel. The word finds a place in the expression 'a peace offering', as presented by a man making a proposal for peace. He is proposing a union, a bringing together, a reconciliation. In other words two persons who have quarrelled and have been fighting put down their weapons, and look at one another and shake hands. They are joined, there is a reconciliation; where there was contest and separation they have been brought together. This idea is brought out in the second chapter of our Epistle, where we read, 'He hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us' (v.14). Two parties have been brought together, the middle wall of partition has gone, and by one Spirit they come together to the one Lord. That is the meaning of 'peace'.

'Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ'. There we have grace at the beginning and peace at the end; but we have not finished. The moment you confront such a statement you are driven to ask a question. Why does the Apostle wish this for these Ephesians? The answer to that question, as I have already been saying, is the whole of Christian doctrine. We must learn how to read the Scriptures; and there is no one thing that is more important when we do so than just this, to ask questions of it."

## THE CROWNING TRIUMPH OF GRACE

"The best people in the world are the people who live lovely lives without being conscious of it. They do good without thinking of what they do. They do it absent-mindedly. This, I say, is the crowning triumph of grace. It only comes with the years.

F. W. Boreham.

## WISE WORDS

"Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith." Proverbs 15:16

"Seeing that God prefers a tender conscience, they that make themselves fools for the kingdom of heaven, are wisest. And the poor man that loveth Christ is richer than the greatest man in the world."  
John Bunyan

## THIS IS THE DAY THAT THE LORD HATH MADE

"One Sunday, while on his way to the Tabernacle in a downpour of rain, C. H. Spurgeon was accosted by a member of his congregation, who remarked in a doleful tone: "This is a dreadful day, Mr Spurgeon!" "Nonsense, my good sir," was the cheery reply. "This is the day that the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24)  
T.W.T.

## THREE ESSENTIALS

"In the historic Mohawk Valley in America there is a sign, which reads as follows: "Jesus said, 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life' (John 14:6).

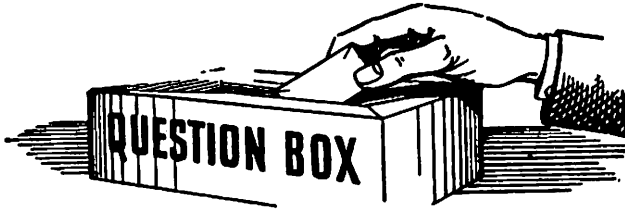
Without the Way there is no going.

Without the Truth there is no knowing.

Without the Life there is no living".

T.W.T.

SELECTED BY LEONARD MORGAN




---

Conducted by  
Alf Marsden

---

## "What are the designs of baptism?"

This question is fundamental to the Christian faith, and is a necessary prerequisite for salvation in its implications. If people *do* think about Christianity at all these days, they generally end their thoughts by saying, "But it doesn't *really* matter what you believe or do; we are all going to the same place anyway". This attitude of mind is symptomatic of a dangerous delusion which seems to be afflicting people today. They seem to be willing to commit their eternal destinies to what they *think* the will of God is, rather than endeavouring to find out from God's Word what *His* will *really* is.

Luke, writing under the influence of the Holy Spirit, records for us the words of Jesus shortly before He returned to His Father. The burden of His instruction was this: repentance and remission of sins should be preached; it should be in the name of the Christ of God, Jesus; it should be preached first in Jerusalem; and the same message was to be preached to all nations. Consequently, the reader of the New Testament can say with positive conviction that if religious groups exist which have not met the requirements as laid down in the Lord's instructions, then such groups, to say the very least, cannot be said to be following the 'way of God'. So we need, then, to examine the New Testament in order to find the true answer, and by so doing we shall see, I believe, the designs of baptism clearly laid out for us.

### Waiting on the Lord

Another of the instructions of the Lord to His disciples was that they should tarry in Jerusalem until, as Jesus put it, "they would be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). In the first and second chapters of Acts of Apostles we find them there, where the Lord had indicated, waiting for His promise. Suddenly, there was the sound of a mighty rushing wind which filled all the place where they were sitting, and the Holy Spirit descended on them, in appearance like cloven tongues of fire. This was Pentecost. The Apostles then began to speak in tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. This was reminiscent of the words of Jesus to His disciples, "take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Matt. 10:19-20).

The stage was now set for the Apostolic announcement concerning salvation. After Peter had reminded the crowd of their heritage, and after *they* had realised the enormity of what they had done in giving Jesus over to be crucified, they cried out to Peter and to the rest of the Apostles, "Men and brethren; what shall we do" (Acts 2:37). The inspired answer of Peter was plain and unequivocal, "Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (2:38). So we see the pattern. The message regarding repentance and remission of sins had been preached; it was in the name of Jesus Christ; it was under inspiration of the Holy Spirit; it was preached in Jerusalem. Who would be bold enough, or foolish enough, to say that once having followed the pre-ascension instructions of the Lord to the letter, that the Apostles would then go on to preach *different* versions of the Gospel message in other places. The idea is ludicrous, and unworthy of intelligent consideration.

### The Primary Design

It ought to be plain from Peter's inspired announcement on the Day of Pentecost that baptism is 'for the remission of sins'. There can also be little doubt that the *form* of baptism was total immersion in water. This is made clear in other places, e.g., when Paul wrote his letter to the saints in Rome he said, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death" (Rom. 6:4). Similarly, when he wrote to the Colossian saints, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein ye are also risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead" (Col. 2:12). So the form of baptism was, and still is, total immersion in water, i.e., *buried* with Him in baptism.

The primary *design* of baptism is indicated after the *form* of baptism has been given. Repentance and baptism are related to a further thing - remission of sins. These three things are connected by the Greek preposition *eis* (for) which means 'in order to'. So what is being said by Peter is literally, "Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ *in order to receive* the remission of sins". Remission of sins, then, is the primary design of repentance and baptism. We must understand, of course, that after the Apostles had made the proclamation of the form and the design of baptism on the Day of Pentecost they could not thereafter change the message, nor indeed would God and the Holy Spirit allow them to, so we can safely say that whenever the Gospel was preached in New Testament times, repentance and immersion in water (baptism) were always necessary conditions for the remission of sins. Furthermore, to my knowledge anyway, God has *never changed* that order, so it is still in force today.



### The Secondary Designs

When God created man, He created him in His own image; Adam was made in the image of God. But because of the intervention of Satan into the affairs of men, Adam fell. Therefore, there needed to be a second Adam, and that was to be the Son of God. "For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many" (Rom. 5:15); such is the way that Paul explains it. There was need for a new creation.

Paul further states in his letter to Rome, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into his death?" Again, a little later he says, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6:3-6). So according to the Holy Spirit through Paul we are baptised *into* Christ, and therefore find ourselves in Christ." As he explains to the saints at Corinth, "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). Wonder of wonders! Baptism is the initiatory step into the new creation in Christ Jesus. Well might Paul exult, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5:1). The designs of our Heavenly Father surpass our thoughts. We can only stand in amazement, and take advantage of that which He has so wondrously wrought for us.

A further design of baptism, I believe, is to bring us into the full knowledge of what the new life in Christ Jesus really is. Paul writes to the Colossian saints, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:1-4).

When we arise out of the watery grave of baptism our eyes are lifted to the divine horizon. There, shimmering in the benign light of the grace and glory of God, through the eye of faith we see the vast, rolling plains of God, bejewelled by the saints who have gone before. Then turning our eyes earthward again, we see the Church to which we have been added, the glorious Body of Christ. In it we see those who have escaped the bondage of sin through being washed in the blood of the Lamb, joyfully striving to obey the upward call of God through the life of the risen Christ; experiencing the comfort and consolation which comes through possession by the Holy Spirit, even though they still have to endure the sometimes abrasive problems of this earthly life. If only we could cultivate the habit of seeking those things which are above, how much more would we relish the cool, refreshing springs of eternal life rather than the brackish, stagnant waters of earth. Yes, God's design in fitting us for participation in the life of the risen Christ is a measure of His love and concern for us.

Perhaps we in the Church have grown so accustomed to the preaching of baptism that we have forgotten the significance of this most beautiful ordinance. We should thank God that *He* hasn't.

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

## "I SAW THE LORD" (Isaiah 6)

"IN the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried to another, and said Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."

Isaiah says "He saw the Lord". How devastating, and humbling, such a vision must have been. All of us, at one time or another, must have been carried away in rapture at some captivating sight which met our eyes. We have, too, seen the expression of wonder, awe and amazement in the faces of *others* at some earthly marvel - perhaps an ancient castle, cathedral, monument or beauty spot. If we can be caught up in ecstasy over some *earthly spectacle*, think of Isaiah when he saw the Lord. He had been in the temple many times and knew every nook and cranny of it. He knew the Law and he knew the priesthood but on this occasion, he saw the Lord. Here, surely is the first step in Spiritual contemplation - to see the Lord. We may be familiar with our meeting place, and with our brethren but 'in the temple' we should endeavour to "See the Lord" and to see "Only the Lord". Too often our minds are allowed to stray to worldly considerations and personal activities. All Christian experience should commence at the point "I saw the Lord".

The Lord was sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above the throne stood the seraphims. The posts of the door trembled at the voice of the seraphim and the house was filled with smoke. Can we even remotely imagine the scene? Small wonder that Isaiah cried out, "Woe is me! for I am undone: because I am a man of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts." Surely, when we glimpse the majesty of the God of heaven we are humbled, we share Isaiah's feeling of complete unworthiness. Those who do not know humility have never encountered the King. "For mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts."

The seraphim shouted, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory." Even the celestial bodies, the angels, bow down and worship Him. There is but One who is worthy of our worship. All of our worship and praise should be directed to Him, for only He is worthy. John, in his vision of the throne declared, "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." (Rev. 5:11-13). May those of us who claim to have "Seen the Lord" give Him, *in our lives*, all Blessing and honour, and glory, and power for ever and ever.

The Lord occupied His throne, and a throne denotes *complete authority*. God's throne also implies permanence. As history shows, earthly thrones are uncertain and some occupy them only for short periods. Earthly thrones fail and ultimately pass away. In these days of great uncertainty, it is wonderful to know that there is a throne in the heavens, which transcends all the dynasties of men and is 'from everlasting to everlasting.' "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."

When Isaiah 'saw the Lord' and saw God's majesty, and God's purity, he was quick to acknowledge his own unworthiness, his unclean lips, his sins and iniquities. Isaiah was, indeed, conscious of his own sinful nature. We too should share such a consciousness when we are confronted with God's purity. We are surely very aware of our sinful rags as we stand in His serene presence. All reformation must begin with such an awareness. Only the truly humble can truly repent. We must be 'pricked to the heart' with the realisation of our complete unworthiness in God's holy presence. Because of Isaiah's acute understanding of this, and because he could cry "Woe is me", God was able to intervene in the matter. The seraphim came with a live coal from God's altar and laid it upon Isaiah's unclean lips, and said, "Thine iniquity is taken away; thy sin is purged." Thus the cleansed Isaiah was ready for God's service and when the call came from God. "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us", the response from Isaiah was quick, "Here am I, send me, send me."

The churches of the Lord Jesus Christ claim to have "seen the Light" if not to have "Seen the Lord", and we have all been cleansed, (like Isaiah) from our iniquities and sins in the blood of the Lamb. God's good news of pardon must be taken into all the world - the gospel must be preached. "Who shall go for us. Whom shall we send." May we be as ready to respond as Isaiah was, by shouting "Lord, here am I. Send me, send me,"

T. H. Blackmore, Weston-super-mare

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

MARCH 1984

4—Deut. 31:30 to 32:12	Rev. 15
11—Joel 3:8-21	Rev. 16
18—Jer. 30:33-46	Rev. 17
25—Jer. 51:1-19	Rev. 18

### MOSAIC TYPES IN GLORY

John views another great and marvellous sign in heaven. It introduces seven plagues required to satisfy God's wrath against sin, fulfilling the final destruction of Babylon, the mystery of iniquity, which is spiritual fornication, the enjoyment of unfaithfulness towards God. It involves physical fornication, the enjoyment of disobedience towards God in human sin. We must know that God is utterly holy. He cannot trifle with sin, nor can we if we are to be eternally with Him. The appearance of the Mercy Seat and the Holy of Holies in heaven indicate God's HOLINESS and the redemptive power of the LAMB, whose sacrifice makes forgiveness of sin possible. It is conditioned on confession and

repentance. So when the angels bearing the last plagues come out of God's presence their work is the final warning of final justice. Here in the divine presence are seen the men and women who have borne and triumphed over "the beast, his image, his mark and his number" - surely basically "that old serpent" dressed up as Rome, heathen, papal and all false religion, relation of man to God. In all humility may we all attain to the triumph and sing with the redeemed the praise of Almighty God. We may do so now! "Who shall not fear Thee, and glorify Thy name!"

### The Seven Plagues

We humbly present what we think fulfills in history this prophecy.

The first vial is poured out upon the earth (land). We suppose the Emperor Justinian in AD 533 began or recognised the domination of European nations by pope and patriarch, the formal appearance of christianity. The plagues are to complete their overthrow, and on land there began a breaking of its power in the French Revolution in 1793. The oppressed and poverty stricken population, led by

desperate and fierce athiestic men, rebelled against reigning powers. The storming of the Bastille prison in Paris began a "Reign of Terror" of a most cruel and disastrous period. "The uprising of the enslaved masses maddened into fury sent Catholic King, royal family, nobles and priests to the guillotine by tens of thousands" (Shepherd). The nation declared itself atheistic, forbade religion, and plunged into civil war, and war with neighbours, including Britain.

**The second vial** is poured upon the sea. Catholic powers of Portugal and Spain had dominated the sea for centuries, colonising Central and South America under papal authority. This had been disputed by the ships of protestant nations, Britain and Holland, and prolonged and bitter fighting took place, being finally settled by the battle of Trafalgar in 1805 in favour of Britain. It was a world conflict on the seas by which Catholic power was broken.

**The third vial** was poured out upon the rivers and fountains of water. The northern territory of Italy could be so described, and that had been the scene of merciless persecution of the Albigenses and others by the Roman church with French, Spanish and Italian military power. Napoleon in 1796 with "revolutionary zeal" invaded Italy and battled in these same regions against papal authority. The pope was carried a prisoner into France where he died. Papal authority in France was almost destroyed.

**The fourth vial** was poured out upon the sun. We think this must refer to Napoleon who became Emperor of France, restoring order in that country (reminding us of Hitler) and destined to conquer Europe, deluging it in warfare. He conquered Italy, imposed a republic upon it and in 1804 compelled the pope to share in a ceremony making him "Emperor of the Romans" to satisfy his ambition to rule Europe

as Ancient Rome had done. Thus was the office humiliated further, and Europe was "scorched" by war.

**The fifth vial** was poured upon the "seat of the beast". In 1848 the people of Italy rebelled against the pope and he was exiled. He had remained a power in Italy after the invasion by Napoleon, but now a King is appointed to rule the nation, and the papal territory reduced to its present proportions. The pope was restored by French interference, and subsequently by payment of what we may call tribute to the nation to possess the Vatican territory. Napoleon had pillaged its wealth and treasures, and while it remains fantastically rich in treasures and property, the old authority has gone. The city of Rome, the city of seven hills was afflicted by the fifth vial.

**The sixth vial** was poured upon the great River Euphrates. We will recall the invasion of the middle-east and parts of Europe by the Turks in 1453, making a vast Empire from Spain to India including North Africa. This had become "the sick man of Europe" early in the present century, which seems to agree with the "drying up" of that vast region now largely freed from any connection with Turkey as also the Balkans and Russia. Without future certainty we may see Kings or kingdoms in the east such as Iran and Iraq developing in riches and influence. However the earth is the Lord's and China and India are in the east, and coming to know the Word of God, though slowly.

**The seventh vial** was poured out in the air. The physical manifestations following this action describe disasters of a universal character as though coming from physical causes but we believe they are as in all the other marks of God's wrath, manifestations of man's wickedness. Surely they picture the terrible nature of the final

"plague". Man's development of mechanical artifice used for his own selfish and wicked designs. In other words we could say "WARFARE". The voice from heaven declares it to be the final exhibition of divine wrath - "IT IS DONE". We are instructed that the execution of God's judgement upon Babylon is being worked out through the seven vials. Man's invasion of the air, including invasion into space, is to bring about his defeat. He puts things and creatures before his Creator to whom he owes everything - and the first need is godliness.

### The Great Deception

Man failed to have sufficient faith in the word of God to deny Satan's lie that to partake of the forbidden fruit would be a wonderful advantage to him. The lie that it would not bring death upon him, and that it would make him wise, was accepted. History proves he still accepts the same lie in spite of the proof that going his own way never makes him self-sufficient. He has used God's earth for centuries and knows evil cannot destroy evil but continues to use weapons that are useless against evil. The one infallible remedy is the application of the gospel to the human heart. We believe an apostate church has exercised man's authority for centuries while claiming it to be God's, hence blasphemy. The period in time appears to have been 1260 years but a measure of truth has emerged from the darkness through the Reformation brought about by the release of the BIBLE into the languages of the people, and the enlightenment of a small minority. We have only space to make our suggestion relating to chapters 17 and 18. To get a correct understanding of the darkness of the period we need to consider deeply what was involved, first in that period rightly named DARK AGES, and secondly what is being accomplished by the Bible wherever it is truly accepted. Today it is being forgotten and played

down what fearful wickedness and horrible suffering the Papacy and its myrmidons inflicted upon the innocent and the ignorant with strong misrepresentation of the gospel. The same torments are being used against faithful Christians today in iron curtain countries. Alcoholic liquor excites the brain and stupifies. So national authorities have been deceived into selfish and foolish ambitions for greatness, and have exercised themselves in destroying one another. Hence we have "wine" of her fornication, and "wine" of God's wrath, and the awful truth of the result of lust for power — "drunk with the blood of the saints". A conservative estimate of deaths by persecution is 39 millions.

### Enlightenment

The angel having great power is surely serving the light which will finally end the scarlet beast and his burden, when the day comes for the false appearance of prosperity to end (18/8).

R. B. SCOTT

(We greatly appreciate the prayerful sympathy we are receiving in the illness of Sister Scott, and regret to report she had a fall which involves broken femur and hospital treatment. She is 81 this month. Continue in prayer please. Thank You.)

## BELIEF : (18)

### : The True Meaning of the Gospel Message

IN view of the meagre results of gospel preaching nowadays, one is led to wonder whether this is due to wilful disobedience on the part of the hearers or to wilful ignorance of what the gospel message really means. We are inclined to the latter view, though not entirely ruling out the former.

### Not of men . . .

Obviously the responsibility for obeying or disobeying the gospel lies with each individual who hears it; but there is also a greater responsibility placed on those who preach it. It is the

duty of preachers to proclaim only the gospel revealed in the New Testament — not a man-made version, modified or changed to suit men's ideas and opinions.

### ... but of Christ

Paul makes this clear. He says: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1:16). In Galatians 1 he wonders why those to whom he wrote had so soon removed unto another gospel by "those who would pervert the gospel of Christ."

### Only one gospel

Obviously the gospel was being corrupted, for Paul says: "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that which ye have received, let him be accursed." He emphasised that it was Christ's gospel that men should receive, and not man's. He warned his brethren: "I certify unto you... that the gospel which was preached by me is not after man, for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it (i.e. by man) but through revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:6-12).

### The true gospel

How important then, that Christ's gospel be preached (Luke 24:47). After all, if a sinner is to be saved from his sins, it will only be by obedience to Christ's commands, and not the commandments of men.

What command did Jesus give, that we might obtain sanctification and salvation? It was this: "He that believes and is baptised shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).

### Ignorance

It is a fact that this command of the Saviour's is not being made known by the great majority of present-day religious preachers. When Peter preached the first gospel message many were "pricked in their heart" and cried out "What shall we do" (Acts 2:37).

Peter's answer was the answer of the Christ — for he was speaking under the influence of the Holy Spirit. He said, "Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

Surely Peter was carrying out his Lord's command as stated in Luke 24:47: that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name . . . beginning at Jerusalem". And that "he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Is it not reasonable to believe that if men and women today will do likewise they also will be saved?

### What is wrong?

Why are so many believers in Christ not baptised nowadays? Is it not because many have been wrongly taught — taught, for instance, that baptism is the same as being sprinkled as an infant? But how is it possible for an infant to believe the great truths of the gospel?

### Baptism is total immersion

Preachers of such false doctrines are wrong on two important and fundamental counts. First: it is impossible for an infant to exercise belief, and second, because baptism (as any reputable New Testament Greek scholar knows) is not sprinkling but total immersion. More of this in our next article.

### Exercises in belief

Ephesians 4:5; Acts 8:36; John 3:5, 23; Mark 1:9; Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12-14.

W. BROWN

(To be continued)

## ABILITY

THE Bible teaches us the ability of God. Over and over again we are told 'God is Able.' The testimony of God's power is revealed in men and women.

God's treasure is found in earthen vessels that the power may be of God and not of ourselves.

Ability means able to do. What is our ability? What are we able to do. All have ability of some sort or another. Some have more than others and some have less. Ability must be used rightly or it is wasted.

In the parable of the Talents, One had five; another had two; and the other had only one. They were given according to their ability. They all had ability and were given talents they were capable of using. The five-talent man went to work and added five more. The one with two talents traded and gained two more. The one-talent man buried it in the earth. With it he achieved nothing.

From this we learn that it is not the ability we have that matters, but what we do with it. Five, two or one matters not so much as to whether they become ten, four or none. Five and two gained one hundred per cent, but the one, lost even the one he had been given, because he failed to put it into use.

Let each of us assess the ability which God has given to us and let us use it to the praise of His Glory.

Tom Kemp, Hindley

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Dennyloanhead, Scotland:** The church here is now mid-way through its intended series of Saturday-evening gospel meetings. These meetings have been well attended both by non-members and brethren from sister churches. We again take this opportunity of thanking all those who supported us by their presence and especially those brethren who faithfully proclaimed the gospel message in its fulness - Brother James R. Gardiner, (Haddington); Brother

William Black (Dalmellington); Brother Andrew Scobie (Dennyloanhead); and brother Ian Davidson (Motherwell).

We pray, indeed, that The Word preached may have free course in those who heard it, to the honour, praise and glory of God our Heavenly Father. In the coming months we hope, God willing, to have Brother Alex Brown (Dennyloanhead) on January 21st; Brother Hugh Davidson (Motherwell) on 18th February; John Kneller (Tranent) on 24th March; and David Chalmers (Dalmellington) on 21st April. All these meetings will commence at 6 p.m.

We look forward hopefully to these meetings for we know that the gospel is God's power unto the salvation of souls. Please pray for these efforts.

Joseph Malcolm (Sec.)

**Slamannan District, Scotland:** The churches of the Slamannan District held their Annual Social Meeting on Monday 2nd January (as the 1st January was a Sunday) in the Meeting House at Newtongrange. A large gathering of brethren from sister churches, (from as far away as Buckie) had a wonderful time of fellowship. After tea a very pleasant afternoon was spent singing together and listening to two very uplifting addresses. The first by Leslie Purcell, Motherwell, and the second by Andrew Scobie, Dennyloanhead. In-between the speakers we had exhortation in song from Harry McGinn, Dalmellington; quartette pieces from the Motherwell brethren and from the brethren from Dennyloanhead; and thought-provoking poetry from sister Scobie. The proceedings were ably chaired by brother John Kneller, Tranent. All-in-all a very good time was had by all and sincere thanks is in order to the good brethren at Newtongrange for the organisation and work involved.

H. Davidson (Sec.)

**COMING EVENTS**

Tranent Annual Social  
31st March, (D.V.) 1984  
at 4 p.m.

in the School Dining Hall (as usual).  
Speakers: John McLuckie (Tranent)  
Andrew Sharp (Newtongrange).  
No chairman appointed so far.

J Colgan (Sec.)

**CHANGE OF SECRETARY**

Seymour Road, Eastwood, Notts: the  
Secretary is now Adrian R. Limb,  
60 Newthorpe Common, Nottingham  
NG16 2EH. Tel. No. (0733) 761670  
(25th January on)

Treasurer remains R. A. Limb, 14  
Stanhope Crescent, Stoke Bardolph,  
Notts. Tel. (0602) 242263

**CHANGE OF SECRETARY**

Burn's Street, Ilkeston, Derbys: Due to  
the passing away of brother W. S.  
Bradley, on November 5th, 1983, a new  
Secretary has been appointed, i.e.

Bro. W. W. Wheatley  
11 John Street, Ilkeston,  
Derbyshire DE7 8GL  
Telephone No. 328157

**A PLEA FOR HELP**

As many will know Eastwood is a very  
small congregation as are many others  
but even though we are, we feel it is  
our duty to serve the Lord by spreading  
the Gospel in Eastwood. In recent  
attempts Potential, though small, has  
been realised, and until there is no  
response at all we feel that we should  
continue the work. However we have  
also found that due to our circum-  
stances at Eastwood it is not always  
possible to follow up work that is  
started as well as we should. So we are  
appealing to our Brethren, if there is  
anyone who would like to go into full  
time work may we suggest you  
consider Eastwood as a possibility. Or  
if anyone would like to move into the  
area to help with the work of the  
Church in this medium-sized town. Or  
if anyone has any constructive  
suggestions to make as to how best this  
work could be carried out then we are  
willing to listen if it means growth in  
the Lord's Church. Please support us in  
your prayers.

Adrian R. Limb,  
60 Newthorpe Common, Newthorpe,  
Nottingham NG 16 2EH

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is published monthly.

PRICES PER YEAR - POST PAID BY SURFACE MAIL

UNITED KINGDOM and COMMONWEALTH.....£5.50  
CANADA & U.S.A. ....\$10.00  
AIR MAIL please add £1.50 or \$3.00 to above surface mail rates

DISTRIBUTION AGENT & TREASURER:

JOHN K. KNELLER, 4 Glassel Park Road, Longniddry, East Lothian, EH32 0NY  
Telephone: Longniddry (0875) 53212 to whom change of address should be sent.

EDITOR: JAMES R. GARDINER, 87 Main Street, Pathhead, Midlothian,  
Scotland EH37 5PT. Telephone: Ford 320 527

"The Scripture Standard" is printed for the publishers by Walter Barker (Printers) Ltd.,  
Langley Mill, Nottm. Tel. Langley Mill (0773) 712266