

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

VOL. 55 No. 5

MAY, 1987

## THESE LAST DAYS

I get a fair amount of mail and for various reasons I am somewhat behind in answering such mail and must apologise to those waiting to hear from me. I mentioned, a month or two ago, letters received from a member of The Churches Of God and I promised that I would inform readers if anything of interest arose from the correspondence. My correspondent originally complained of Churches Of Christ teaching baptism for the remission of sins, but has failed to respond to a short list of questions I asked him, which included, "Was John the Baptist's baptism for the remission of sins?" (and Mark 1:4 says it was). "Was Christ's baptism inferior to John's; or was it also for the remission sins, as per Acts 2:38"? My correspondent has not attempted to answer any questions or indeed reply to subsequent letters. I also get lengthy letters from a Christadelphian who sends a paper entitled "Present Day Events" which alleges to keep us informed as to how the nations (Russia, Africa, Syria, Israel etc.) are all fulfilling prophecy, and how God is isolating Syria and "clearing the decks in the Middle East" presumably for the setting up of the Throne of David in Palestine and the 1,000 years reign. This pre-millennial doctrine is fairly widespread and some members in most religious groups hold it fervently. For those to whom the subject may be new a few comments may be helpful but obviously an article of this size can but scratch the surface. In brief, the doctrine is based on Rev. 20 where, notwithstanding the chapter teems with imagery and figure, 'reign with Him a thousand years' is selected as being literal, and at the 'first resurrection' the godly will reign with Christ (on the earth) for 1,000 years before the resurrection of the wicked. There are, of course, variations on the theme, but basically that is it. Notwithstanding that Rev. 20 V.4 says that it will be the souls of those beheaded for the witness of Jesus who will reign, pre-millennialists generally ignore this slight limitation. Some, like Christadelphians, go a bit farther and predict the return of the Jews to the 'promised land' and the setting up in a sanitised Jerusalem, the Throne of David with Jesus reigning thereon. This ignores, of course, that Jesus is reigning over His kingdom NOW, on His throne which is at the right hand of God. (Zech. 6:13; Acts 2:30-35; Heb. 4:14 & 8:4). and that while literally standing on Palestine soil, He said, "I go to prepare a place for you". Where, did Jesus go to prepare a place for His followers?. Jesus also said (Sermon on the Mount) that His disciples should rejoice when evilly entreated, for great will be their reward in heaven. (Matt. 5:11). Jesus seemed to teach that heaven was the reward to faithful men: not this earth, and indeed the N.T. (notwithstanding Rev. 20) leaves us in no doubt that Jesus will never set foot upon this earth, let alone return to Jerusalem. Once we believe this we can then speculate as to what Rev. 20:4 actually refers.

### THE LAST DAYS

Surely no-one would dispute that we are living in the last economy of God, and are, indeed privileged to be living in the last days, or latter times. The writer to the Hebrews says. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the Fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son ..." (Heb. 1: 1-2). The apostle Peter says, "...knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days, scoffers, walking after their own lusts ..." (2 Peter 3:3) (See also 2 Tim. 3:1; James 5:3).

We are, therefore, living in the last days, and as these days draw to a close we, logically, come closer to the very last day of time – one final day when time shall end and when eternity shall be ushered in. I believe we can short-circuit all the various arguments about the "1,000 years reign" when we discover from the N.T. exactly what will happen on the last day. Will there be room, or time, for anyone to squeeze in a "1,000 years reign"? Let us see.

### THE LAST DAY

#### (1) CHRIST'S RETURN

The fact of Christ's return is certain: the time is completely unknown. Certain events and catastrophies (wars, rumours of wars, famines, earthquakes, etc.) were to precede the destruction of Jerusalem but no such signs will herald the final coming of Jesus and the end of the world (it will unannounced, like a thief in the night). The time is thus unknown to men; to angels; and even to Jesus Himself (Mark 13:32). Thus the coming of Jesus is always imminent – as imminent as a ripe fig ready to drop from the tree: the fig is ripe but who can say when it will fall? Jesus will, however, come suddenly but visibly – "every eye shall see Him". He will also come audibly – to the accompaniment of the great shout, the last trump, and the strong voice of the archangel (the noise will waken the dead). Neither shall He come alone but will be accompanied by myriads of mighty angels. He shall come in power and great glory and it is important for us to notice His purpose in coming, and give due regard to the momentous events which will occur simultaneously with His appearance.

#### (2) THE GENERAL RESURRECTION

Although the Book of Revelation talks of the first and second resurrection (and second death for that matter) yet on the last day there will be the only and general resurrection. Jesus said, "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and come forth." (John 5:28). This will happen 'in the twinkling of an eye' and would seem to rule out a period of 1,000 years between the resurrection of the good and the bad. Paul says to the Corinthians, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." This verse, you will notice links the resurrection with Christ's coming – both are simultaneous events at the last trump: on the last day. This was confirmed by Jesus when He said, "No man can come to Me except the Father (which hath sent Me) draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:44).

#### (3) THE JUDGEMENT

This will also be simultaneous with Christ's final coming and shows that He will not come to reign but to Judge. Paul, in smoothing the worries of the Thessalonians who thought that their dead would be left behind at the coming of Jesus says, "And to you who are troubled, rest with us, for the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels. In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." (2 Thess. 1:7). This surely links the time of Judgement with the final coming

of Jesus, and makes them simultaneous events on the last day. Paul urged Timothy, "charge them, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick (living) and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom" (2 Tim. 4:1). Both those alive and those resurrected from the dead will be judged when Christ returns. The Bible will cease to be a guide-book and will become an indictment and basis of judgement. Jesus said, "He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." (John 12:48). Here again we are confronted with this eventful "last day" – The day of Christ's return; the resurrection day and the day of Judgement.

#### (4) THE ASCENSION

A brief reference (1 Thess. Chap. 4) suffices to assure us of this and links the ascension with the final coming of Jesus as being simultaneous. Not only does the verse not say that Jesus will set foot on the earth, but rather it says that men shall be caught up into the clouds to meet the Lord and ever be with Him (in heaven, as mentioned at the outset). "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (precede) them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words". (v. 15-18).

#### (5) EARTH'S DESTRUCTION

The apostle Peter said, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise (of Christ's return) as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night: in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with a fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness." The delay in Christ's return is not occasioned by God's slackness or incompetency but rather by His desire that men be given further opportunities to repent, but nevertheless the day of the Lord will come (as a thief in the night). After His coming there will be no other opportunities given to reform for the earth will be brought to an end and completely destroyed. Some say it will only be the evil works on the earth which will suffer destruction, but a careful perusal of Peter's words show that the earth **and** the works therein will all be dissolved. No reign on earth, therefore, at Christ's coming – indeed, no earth. We have no abiding city here but we seek one to come. The Jews need never strive to refurbish the holy city or foster national aspirations in Palestine for all God's promises are spiritual, as are the real Jews, and the 'promised land' is in the many mansions beyond the skies.

#### "THE END"

"Then cometh the end". When one considers all the wonderful events which are to occur simultaneously when Jesus comes for the final time, one is surely forced to the conclusion that whatever Rev. 20 means, it does not mean a literal reign on a literal earth, for literally 1,000 years but must mean something else. Certainly much, if not most, of the rest of the chapter can only have a metaphorical application. Jesus is **reigning now** (and has been for about 2,000 years) over His spiritual kingdom and will continue to do so until His last enemy (death) shall be destroyed. "Then cometh the end when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when He shall have put down all rule and authority and power." Thus, the end: the last day, will not be a time to begin reigning but to **cease** from reigning; and to hand the kingdom over to the Heavenly Father.

## GLEANINGS

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

### THE BIBLE AND THE EVANGELICAL FAITH

During this year of 1938 we are remembering the Edict of Henry VIII, seventy-three years before the King James' Version, and we recognize that in that Edict we discover the hand of the over-ruling God. It did not depend upon the Sovereign himself in any sense; but we thank God for the thing that happened, and for the chained Bible. The chain is gone: The Bible is still there, at least, mostly; not altogether, I am afraid.

The theme announced has infinite possibilities which it is not my intention to attempt to explore. It would be futile to make any such attempt in a necessarily brief consideration. I want rather to follow the line of inclusive simplicity, dealing with what the writer of the letter to the Hebrews spoke of as "the first principles of the oracles of God."

The subject then, "The Evangelical Faith and the Bible," consists of a phrase in which two matters merge, the Bible, and the Evangelical Faith. The one is concrete. The other is abstract. They are, however, intimately related. Of which, more anon.

Our method will be quite briefly and simply first, an enquiry in the realm of the abstract. What is the evangelical faith? Secondly, a consideration of the relation of that faith to the Bible.

What do we mean when we speak of the evangelical faith? It is good sometimes thus to ask ourselves what we mean by things we easily say. We are very apt to take things for granted, and imagine we know them, when we do not know them at all. I agree with Josh Billings who said "**I'd rayther be sartain of few things, than know so many that ain't so!**"

The word faith may be used in two ways quite naturally, first of individual action. I said action, not sentiment, because we believe that Professor James was right, there is a will to believe. Or we may use the word faith of a system of belief. It is in that second sense that we employ it now.

The phrase then, the evangelical faith, refers to the whole body or system of truth concerning which there is confidence and assurance. Whether we speak of faith as an individual action, or as the system of belief, it has a common quality, and that is one of assurance, of confidence. Faith is not credulity. Faith is not guessing. Faith is not not hoping. Faith is being sure. "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for," because it is "the evidence of things not seem." We are thinking of the faith, as Paul thought of it when writing to the Philippians he spoke of "striving for the faith of the Gospel"; or as Jude thought of it when he said, "The faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."

The Christian religion is distinguished from all others in this fact. The faith is not a quest. It is confidence in a revelation, and consequently it is a revelation in itself. Just as *o logos* may stand for the thing spoken and the method of the revelation, so with the faith. As I have said, faith is not a quest. I am told that I ought to be engaged in a quest for truth. I am not so engaged. I am engaged, and have been for half a century in an attempted diligent study and enquiry into the truth as it has been revealed to man from God. That is my understanding of the faith.

Now we come to the word, *Evangelical*. This is the predominant note. What does evangelical mean? The announcement of good news. That is very elementary, but it is final. I have always had very great sympathy with the Scot who was sitting waiting in a dentist's outer room. He had to wait some time, and the dentist found him looking at a book, which was an English dictionary; and when the dentist expressed some surprise, the Scot said, "Oh it is verra interesting, but the stories are unco' short"! In

the Oxford dictionary I found six and a half columns of cognate words, all round about the word *evangel*; and all the six and a half columns again and again, in many connections and applications, stressed the word *Gospel*, good news. That is the evangelical faith.

Thus, when we speak of the evangelical faith two ideas merge in the mind. First it is a message, not the announcement of a human discovery, but the declaration of a Divine revelation. Secondly it is good, it brings comfort, it brings confidence, it brings courage. The evangelical faith is the confidence, the assurance, based upon a Divine revelation, which is good news for a storm-tossed and wounded world, to every man in his deplorable condition of helplessness.

Secondly then, what is the relation of the Bible to the evangelical faith? Everything I have already said is the outcome of the Bible. Take this Book away, and the world has no evangelical faith. We may discuss with great appropriateness comparative religions. Great attempts have been made to find a common denominator. It never will be found. There is no common denominator if Christianity is included. A common denominator may be found in the rest. There is no evangelical faith apart from this Book. There is no direct message from God to man claimed by any other form of religion of which I know anything, and I have not been utterly idle in consideration of such matters.

And certainly there is no assurance of comfort, of confidence, of courage, or hope. The study of other religions is full of interest. But what is found in them? Questioning, wondering, hoping: but no assurance, no finding, no answer to the questioning: no solution, no reply to the wondering: no promise in the presence of the hope.

But in this Book its claims are very clear and definite. It claims to be a message from God to man. I will dare to gather up the whole of the evangelical faith into a brief statement. What is this message of God to man which constitutes the bed-rock of the evangelical faith? For the moment I am not asking anything about its implications or its applications, for that is an almost infinite sphere of consideration, and most important. But what is the essence? I submit that the profoundest student and professor of theology, and the most recent recruit of the Salvation Army will agree with me that the whole message of the evangelical faith is found in John iii:16. Yes, I think we had better repeat it. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have the life of the ages, eternal life."

That is the supreme message of the Bible. That is the supreme declaration that God has made to man, not only in the Literature, but in the Person of His Son.

But we are thinking of the Literature, and that is the supreme message of the Bible. If we follow it through as a growing manifestation, we find it proceeds from a glimmering twilight to the full-orbed sun-rising. That is the Faith. The background is a perishing world, but all round it is a God of love, and the fact that God has made a way of redemption and renewal for that perishing world. That is, as I understand it, the evangelical faith. We are in the glimmering twilight as we read the ancient and poetic history, and hear God whisper into the heart of a woman, in view of all the tragedy resulting from acts of rebellion, a hope that there should come a Seed that should bruise the head of the serpent. From that first whisper down on through the messages of prophets, seers, and psalmists, never complete, through singing, sighing, sobbing and hoping, it was a message rightly read, of God's love of a perishing world, and His purpose to save that world.

Reverently let it at once be said, that is the Cross. The evangelical faith is centred there. It can be nowhere else. The Cross, not as a martyrdom, not as an example, but a mystery, a manifestation, and a clear message. All that is in this Book. It is a message. We do not know anything about the Cross until we come here. We do not

know anything about God until we come there. That is the faith of the Book.

I had a friend 'in the ministry' who was very much concerned about the application of preaching to various matters, city life, economic conditions, and so forth. He was concerned about what men called the Social Gospel. My friend went to Manchester to see Alexander Maclaren, and he asked him this question. How far am I warranted in attempting to deal with conditions, individual, social, and economic? Alexander Maclaren said to him, "Put one foot of your compass on Calvary, and swing the other as wide as you can. You are limited by your compass, but keep one foot in the Cross. If you do so, you will be true to the evangel in every application of life." I believe that to be true.

Let me end on a personal note. I do so by going back to childhood, and and in the most simple way. In the year 1800 there was one, John Burton, who was a great friend of Robert Hall, and a great lover of children. He wrote a little volume of Hymns, many of which have found their place in the hymnology of the young. There was one I learned when I was eight years old, and I have been singing it ever since:

"Holy Bible, book divine,  
 Precious treasure, thou art mine:  
 Mine to tell me whence I came,  
 Mine to teach me what I am.  
 Mine to chide me when I rove,  
 Mine to show a Saviour's love;  
 Mine art thou to guide my feet,  
 Mine to judge, condemn, acquit.  
 Mine to comfort in distress,  
 If the Holy Spirit bless:  
 Mine to show by living faith  
 Man can triumph over death.  
 Mine to tell of joys to come,  
 And the rebel sinner's doom;  
 Holy Bible, book divine,  
 Precious treasure, thou art mine."

Campbell Morgan.  
 Selected by Leonard Morgan.

## CAN I BE SAVED OUTWITH THE CHURCH?

**Intro:** God does the saving. Salvation is the pardon or forgiveness of God — the blotting out of our sins. The church then does not do the saving. The question is, "can one enjoy the salvation that God has provided without being in the Church which Christ built?"

### 1. THE ATTITUDE OF JESUS TOWARDS THE CHURCH PROVES HOW ESSENTIAL AND IMPORTANT IT IS.

#### (a) He purchased it with His Own Blood.

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which He hath PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD." Acts 20:28.

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious BLOOD OF CHRIST, as of lamb without blemish

and without spot.” 1 Peter 1:18-19.

(b) **JESUS GAVE HIMSELF UP FOR THE CHURCH.**

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and **GAVE HIMSELF UP FOR IT**. Ephesians 5:25.

Thus Jesus evidenced His attitude towards the essentiality of the church by the **PRICE THAT HE PAID FOR IT**.

2. **ONE CANNOT BE IN CHRIST WITHOUT BEING IN THE CHURCH.**

(a) **Jesus is the head, the church is His body, Christians are members. “and HE IS THE HEAD OF THE BODY, THE CHURCH; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence.”** Colossians 1:18.

“**AND HATH PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIS FEET, AND GAVE HIM TO BE THE HEAD OVER ALL THINGS TO THE CHURCH WHICH IS HIS BODY**, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.” Ephesians 1:22-23

“**Now ye are THE BODY OF CHRIST, and MEMBERS IN PARTICULAR.**” 1 Corinthians 12:27.

Therefore one cannot be **JOINED TO THE HEAD WITHOUT BEING IN THE BODY OF CHRIST WHICH IS HIS CHURCH.**

3. **JESUS IS THE BRIDEGROOM – THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE!**

Read Ephesians 5 verses 22 through 32.

The **TWO ARE ONE**. One cannot be related to Jesus without being equally related with His Church.

4. **JESUS IS KING. THE CHURCH IS HIS KINGDOM.**

“Which in His times he shall shew, who is the Blessed and **ONLY** Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.” 1 Timothy 5;15.

“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son.” Colossians 1:13.

One cannot be a subject of the King without being a citizen of His Kingdom.

5. **TO BE IN CHRIST IS TO BE IN HIS BODY, WHICH IS THE CHURCH.**

(a) **In Christ Jesus – made nigh by the blood.** Ephesians 2:13.

(b) **In one body reconciled by the cross.** Ephesians 2:16.

Therefore to be in Christ Jesus is to be in His Body, and to be in His Body is to be in the Church.

6. **ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS ARE IN JESUS.**

(a) **The Church is the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.** Ephesians 1:23.

(b) **To be a member of the Church of Christ means to have your name enrolled in Heaven.** Hebrews 12: 22-23. “But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly of the first born which are written in Heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.”

Therefore to not have your name enrolled in Heaven means to be eternally lost at the judgement. Revelation 20:15.

“And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”

7. **THE SAME PROCESS AND CONDITIONS THAT SAVE FROM SIN, MAKES ONE A CHRISTIAN AND ADDS ONE TO THE CHURCH.**

(a) **Faith, Baptism, Salvation.** Mark 16: 15-16.

(b) **Faith, Baptism, Puts one into Christ Jesus.** Galations 3: 26-27.

(c) **Faith, Baptism. Adds one to the Church.** Acts 2;42.

There is therefore no such thing taught as being saved outside of the Church which Jesus built.

Tom Kemp,  
Hindley, Wigan.




---

Conducted by  
Alf Marsden

---

**“I can understand the necessity for historical and prophetic Books in the Old Testament but of what value are the Books of Poetry?”**

The questioner highlights a basic deficiency in our approach to the Word of God, namely, that unless the text of Scripture indicates something which is either theological or doctrinal then it is comparatively valueless to us. Many of the problems which debaters – we might even say combatants – have agonised over have been concerned with the literal text; needless to say, the results have been at best counter-productive and at the worst downright divisive. Literalism has reigned supreme; our understanding of our true Christian heritage has been downgraded. The comparative insignificance of our numerical strength reflects the intensity of our internecine struggles. It may be interestingly nostalgic to dwell on events and personalities of the past, but our immediate concern should be with the potential for the future. It is my firm belief that an understanding of the poetic works in Scripture will assist us greatly.

**What is Poetry?**

Poetry is an art form. The real worth of the poet is his ability to express the beautiful and elevated thoughts which come into his mind. He must do it in such a way that he evokes responses in those of us who have not the imagination to conceive the thoughts, and have not the words to express them even if we did; as Emerson says, “He (the poet) unlocks our chains, and admits us to a new scene”.

So it is with music also. Who can fail to be moved by the uplifting melody of the orchestral intermezzo “Judex” from Gounod’s church cantata “Mors et Vita”; by the thundering reverberations of the wave simulations in Mendelssohn’s “Hebrides Overture”; or by the expansive grandeur of the ‘heroic’ Third Symphony, the ‘Eroica’, by Beethoven. These, and many others, are expressions of imaginative thought interpreted for us by the composers through the medium of music. They excite and they thrill; they transport us from the mundane to unimagined soul-satisfying heights. They express that which in normal circumstances would be inexpressible by us. I use these examples to indicate to us that joy and ecstasy have to be sought through the relevant expressive mediums; the notes of a symphony on paper would be bleak and unmotivating to us, but when fully orchestrated and harmonised they become thrillingly real. So it is with our responses to God. We sing the hymn ‘Break thou the bread of life’, some lines of which say,

“Beyond the sacred page, I seek thee Lord;  
My spirit pants for Thee, Thou living Word.”

If we would know **about** God we look to the literal text. If we would **know** God, we look **beyond** the text. For that, we need the poets.

**The Hebrew Heritage**

Many of us would view the slaughter and sacrifice of animals with some distaste; we perhaps fail to appreciate why God countenanced this. It is true to say, I believe, that the most significant act of worship in early days was sacrifice, and it would be equally true to say that during this worship the feelings of the worshippers would be stirred to such a degree that they would make expressions of praise to the One to whom they were offering the sacrifice. **Words** of praise would be a natural way of expressing an exquisite feeling; and so was born the poetry of the time.



The Books of Poetry in the Bible are, as we perhaps know, the Psalms, Job, Lamentations, the Songs, and Proverbs. These Books are perhaps not identifiable as poetry in the sense in which we understand poetry today. Poetic Form and Metre were only in the formative stages in early Hebrew history; to the Hebrew poet, the thought expressed in words was more important than the form in which those words were written, so if we are looking for something like Cowper's,

"There is a fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains",

we shall not find it, but we **shall** find a concept of Deity which is so dramatic and awe-inspiring that we shall be arrested by the majesty and scope of the thoughts behind the words. It is the sort of intimacy with Deity that our Father wants to foster in us; Jesus put it this way when He prayed to His Father, "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one" (John 17:23). If in such a relationship we do not find the soul-energising satisfaction that we ought to, then we are indeed appreciating nothing more than a textual form of words.

#### Some Examples

The greatest of the Books of Poetry is, of course, the Book of Psalms. Here we can find some of the greatest poetical works of the Bible.

First of all let us examine the unity of verses which are tied together, so to speak, with a 'refrain'; we find a good example of this in Psalm 136, where the 'refrain', "for his mercy endureth for ever", continues all the way through the Psalm. When we read this portion of Scripture we are arrested with the thought that God is Good, and it is to Him that we should constantly give thanks. The Psalmist then goes on to show how this Good God watched over the welfare of the Israelite nation throughout its history. In singing the praises of this great God the Psalmist hammers out the recurring refrain, "for his mercy endureth for ever".

Now just think what this would mean to the devout Jew. This great, good God, the God of gods, who had created the very earth on which they lived, who had spread out the heavens above them, who had delivered them from bondage, who had parted the Red sea, this mighty God was **their** God; He was **their** Father; and more than that, His mercy would never end. How the heart would thrill to this sublime thought. How the soul would leap as it were with joy. How they would shout out to each other, "His mercy endureth for ever".

But wait! Isn't He the God and Father of Christians today?: Of course He is. And cannot we in our weaknesses, depressions, griefs, and trials, sing out this glad refrain, "His mercy endureth for ever"? Yes, indeed we can and should. And, oh, do we not see that when He sacrificed His only Son to remove the guilt of **our** sin that He did a mightier work than parting the Red sea, when He brought us out of the bondage of sin? Yes, I will **sing** of my Redeemer, "for his mercy endureth for ever". What a refrain!

We can see further examples of 'refrain' if we look at Psalm 42 vv 5, 11, and Psalm 43 v 5, when self-examination poses the question, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul"? and the answer is given, "Hope in God".

Another intense, emotional experience is the desire for someone or something not now available to us. This can give rise to a heart-rending song of despair; ask anyone who has lost a much-loved wife, husband, or child. Psalm 137 is a good example of this type of despairing lament.

You can picture the scene. The Children of Israel in captivity in Babylon. There they are weeping, desolate, sitting by the rivers and being taunted by their captors. "Sing us one of the songs of Zion". How they must have regretted their off-handed

treatment of God when they had spurned His love. Oh, what despair to be in bondage to a people who worshipped alien gods.

But don't you see what that song of despair is all about, dear brother, sister. The harps, the strings of which had vibrated under the impulsive urge of praise to God, now hung listlessly on the willows. The melody, which had once accompanied the praise to God, was now silent in a hostile environment; they were in a far country, not now under the benign rule of God. but subject to the malicious taunts of their captors. They were intensely sad. The message to us is loud and clear; why should we want to leave the green pastures that God leads us into, for the arid wastes of the 'far country'? Let us resolve to so worship and praise God that our hearts will always sing the melody of love, and our lips will continually praise His name.

You see, dear questioner, we have only explored a small portion of the greatest Book of Poetry in the Bible. What treasures it will yield to us if we continue. What new horizons to look to. The poetic Books of the Bible are of immense value to us, and it is only when we have unlocked the treasure of the poets that we shall truly become the willing and obedient servants that God wants us to be. If we look upon Christianity as a chore, perhaps the poet can transform it to us into a symphony of praise and love. Perhaps someone better qualified than I can unlock further treasures for us.

(All questions, please, to  
Alf Marsden, 20 Costessy Way, Winstanley, Wigan, Lancs. WN3 6ES)

## A VOICE FROM THE PAST

Alexander Campbell — Preacher,  
Debater, Writer.

CAMPBELL, in addition to his preaching tours, had his Bethany College and Church duties, and farm supervision and toil when at home. Deeply interested in Bible union and translation matters, he gave time and thought to these, travelling 2,400 miles on one occasion, to deliver two addresses in their support, very narrowly escaping destruction through fire on the Mississippi boat used on the journey.

Though not desirous of public disputation, Campbell by his ardent advocacy of New Testament principles was perforce constrained thereto. Seeking truth for truth's sake with no thought of personal glory, he was an ideal controversialist. He became pre-eminent in America's realm of religious debate. In 1820, he discussed with a Presbyterian preacher the identity of the covenants on which the Jewish and Christian institutions rested, and the following year with a like representative on the subjects of, action, and design of baptism.

Three debates stand out specially. The first, in 1829, in Christianity's defence, was with Robert Owen, a sceptical leader, well-known on both sides of the Atlantic. On the fifth night, Owen, unable further to meet his opponent, suggested Campbell should proceed uninterruptedly to close his argument. In a magnificent address of twelve hours, Campbell did so. It was a masterpiece of clear, informing statement, and sustained logical reasoning, scarcely to be surpassed. 'I have been listening,' said a hearer, not favourable to Campbell, 'to a man who sees as one who had been living in all ages.' At the debate's conclusion only three of the huge audience stood as opposed to Christianity.

An interesting incident occurred during Owen's preliminary visit to Campbell to arrange for the discussion. Strolling near the burial ground, Owen declared he had one advantage over the Christian, 'I am not afraid to die.' Campbell replied, 'You say you have no fear in death. Have you any hope?' 'No.' 'Then,' went on Campbell, pointing to an ox, 'you are on a level with that brute. He has fed till he is satisfied, and there stands in the shade, and has neither fear nor hope in death.' Owen attempted

no answer.

The second special debate in 1837, was with the Roman Catholic Bishop Purcell, in defence of Protestantism. At the conclusion, a mass meeting adopted a resolution, 'that it is the opinion of this meeting that the cause of Protestantism has been fully sustained throughout the discussion'. Dr. Lyman Beecher, the famous preacher and temperance pioneer, and other religious leaders present expressed warm admiration of Campbell's defence.

During the debate Purcell denied the accuracy of Campbell's quotation from a recognised Romanist treatise that some Roman Catholic authorities had winked at priestly concubinage. A classical teacher was unable to find the passage. Not daunted, Campbell communicated with the author of the synopsis from which he had taken the quotation, and was informed the passage was on page 444. Requesting loan of the volume from Purcell, Campbell read the passage *word for word* as he had quoted.

The third debate was in 1843, with a Presbyterian leader, N. L. Rice. Henry Clay, the statesman presided. Again Campbell was strikingly successful. Some deem this his best debate. He and his opponent have been compared, the former to a military chief marshalling his forces according to military order, the latter to a guerilla captain seeking from ambush to fall unexpectedly upon his foe and inflict temporary injury. The report of the debate, extensively circulated, considerably aided the Restoration Movement.

As an author, Alexander Campbell was still more widely known. His publications were read with avidity by many also in Britain, so leading to a request to assist the cause personally in this country. For forty years, Campbell pursued editorial duties. Fifty books were written by him or published under his direct auspices, besides numberless articles contributed to sundry magazines. During the first seven years of his career, he issued forty-six thousand volumes from a little printing establishment at his Bethany home. He realised the invaluable aid of pen and press. Of the monthly, *Christian Baptist*, 1823-1830 – afterwards the *Millennial Harbinger* – David King declared it gave a 'larger insight into primitive Christianity than any volume extant excepting only the Bible.'

In sundry ways, Alexander Campbell's greatness as preacher and debater was recognised, and appreciation was shown of his outstanding services to religion generally and to the Restoration Movement in particular. In June, 1850, he preached before both Houses of Congress, at the Capitol, Washington for ninety minutes, presenting the glorious theme, John III 16-17, to the distinguished audience crowding the Lower Hall.

Asked to meet Campbell in debate, one of Presbyterian's foremost leaders refused. He said: 'No, I will never be Alexander Campbell's opponent. A man who has done what he has to defend Christianity against infidelity, to defend Protestantism against the delusions and usurpations of Catholicism, I will never oppose in public debate. I esteem him too highly.'

Similarly, Judge Jeremiah Black, the celebrated jurist connected with the Restoration cause, unveiling a marble bust of Campbell, said, 'He was invincible, by virtue of the divine armour with which he was clothed. He filled it grandly, wore it always, and never sank under its weight ...' The first sentence of his discourse drew his audience "still as death," and every word was heard with rapt attention to the close. It was not the enticing word of man's wisdom: the arts of the orator seemed to be inconsistent with the grand simplicity of his character. It was logic, explanation, and argument so clear that everybody followed it without effort, and all felt it was raising them to the level of a superior mind. Persuasion sat upon his lips. Prejudice melted away under the easy flow of his elocution.'

What Alexander Campbell preached and taught must be summarised in few

sentences. He emphasised to the utmost the Saviour's full divinity and, hence, absolute authority in all things; the Bible's full inspiration and, therefore, one and sole authority in religion — no present-day destructive critical views had his sympathy; everlasting salvation, through the Saviour's sacrifice, received by faith, repentance and baptism; and observance of the ordinances just as in apostolic times. In his tour report, mentioned above, rebutting pleas for acquiescence in communion of the unbaptised at the Lord's Table, he pointedly stresses that the tastes, prejudices, and errors of others are no justification 'to set aside the Christian law for their special accommodation and thus make the ordinance of God of no value by their tradition.' He emphasised strongly consistency of Christian living, no participation in worldly allurements. Referring to these and dancing in particular, he asked: 'Who claims precedent in Holy Writ, for courtly balls and midnight masquerades?' Surely no disciple of Jesus Christ? 'Because of these things iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold.'

It was well written of Campbell. 'He was pre-eminently a man for naked truth, naked fact, and naked divine authority. He neither wanted these illumed by the corruscations of the imagination nor improved by the refinings of the metaphysician. He was a warrior in an instant, with a broad, keen blade, ready to strike the moment the truth of Christ was to be marred even in the minutest item. 'This,' he said, 'is perfect, and I fall a martyr ere the profane fingers of mortal shall smut it or change it.'

We add that in the early years, when dedicating his life to New Testament advocacy, Campbell resolved never to accept remuneration for this. His father feared Alexander would then have to wear many a ragged coat, but eventually he himself resolved the same. Whilst realising the Scriptures plainly teach the labourer is worthy of his hire, Alexander like Paul, waived this undoubted right lest, in some wise, the truth might thereby be hindered. *Insistent stipulation* on so much financial return for preaching labours was abhorrent to Campbell, as to all true disciples to-day. Remuneration, in most instances, is essential, but assuredly must be secondary.

Deeply cherishing Alexander Campbell's memory as the greatest of all our magnificent movement's heroic pioneer leaders, let the same spirit of absolute loyalty to the Saviour and rigid devotedness to the naked truth of New Testament revelation animate us, and ever be our inspiring glory. Whatever our abilities and opportunities, dedicate and re-dedicate these, as Campbell did, to life-long divinely approved service for the Master.

C. Bailey.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

June. 7	Malachi. 3	John 3:22-36
June. 14	Isaiah. 55	John 4:1-26
June. 21	2 Kings.4:24-44	John 4:27-45
June. 28	1 Kings.17:8-24	John 4:46-5:18

### JOHN THE BAPTIST

Frank Charles Thompson details the following characteristics of John:

**SELF DENIAL.** "John's clothes were made of camels' hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey" (Matthew 3:4, N.I.V.).

**COURAGE.** "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptising, he said to them: 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?' (Matthew 3:7).

**OBEDIENCE.** "But John tried to deter Jesus, saying 'I need to be baptised by You, and do You come to me?' Jesus replied, 'Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness'. Then John consented" (Matthew 3:14-15).

**POWERFUL PREACHER.** "The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were

baptised by him in the Jordan river" (Mark 1:5).

**HUMILITY.** "And this was his message: 'After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie'" (Mark 1:7).

**HOLINESS.** "...because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a holy and righteous man" (Mark 6:20).

**BURNING ZEAL.** "John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you choose for a time to enjoy his light" (John 5:35).

**HONOURED BY CHRIST.** Jesus said: "I tell you the truth: Among those born of woman there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Matthew 11:11).

**DID NO MIRACLE.** "...and many people came to Jesus. They said: 'Though John never performed a miraculous sign, all that John said about this man was true'" (John 10:41).

**SUFFERED MARTYDOM.** "...he (Herod) ordered that her request be granted and had John beheaded in the prison" (Matthew 14:9-10).

John was the subject of prophecy (Isaiah 40:3 & Malachi 3:1). He was the harbinger who came to prepare the way of the Lord (Matthew 3:3). His cry was: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near!" (Matthew 3:2).

John baptised many. On my notes on John's baptism I have these points. It was in water (John 3:23). It was of God (Matthew 21:25; Luke 7:30). It was unto remission of sins (Mark 1:4). It justified God (Luke 7:29). It preceded a life of repentance (Luke 3:8). It was superseded by the baptism commanded by Jesus (Acts 18:24-26; Acts 19:1-7).

Remember, John's work was limited to his fellow Jews. On this matter Alexander Campbell once said something interesting: "Now it was more necessary that the pretensions of John should be favourably regarded by the Pharisees than the Sadducees; for if

favourably regarded by the Pharisees, the more general would be the reception of the Messiah by the whole nation. Now the Pharisees placed the highest degree of sanctity, just in such a demeanour, dress, and manner of life, as John the Baptist assumed. Thus he dressed himself to the taste of those who could give the most influence to his message. Hence we find that so soon as his preaching, dress, food, and manner of life, were known, the Jews in Jerusalem deputed very honourable characters, both Priests and Levites, to wait upon him to hear his testimony, and to report it in the metropolis. Thus the testimony of John in favour of the Messiah was favourably announced through Judea and to the nation".

#### **JESUS' ENCOUNTER WITH A SAMARITAN WOMAN**

Everyone knows that the Jews and the Samaritans did not get on. In fact they hated one another. Consequently, Jews travelling from Judea to Galilee, to avoid Samaria, took the long way round by the east bank of the Jordan river. But Jesus went right on through.

The one-on-one encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman is a fascinating one. The incident took place at Jacob's well, which gave the Master an excellent opportunity to teach spiritual lessons. (Not for the first time did water play its part in communicating divine truths. Consult the commentaries.)

The woman was amazed that Jesus spoke with her. After all, she was a Samaritan and a woman! You see, strict rabbis at that time forbade a rabbi to greet a woman in public. There was an old saying: "Better that the words of the law should be burned than delivered to women."

Because of his insights into her life, she perceived Jesus was a prophet. She immediately mentioned the topic of worship. To the Jews, Jerusalem was the centre for worship; to the Samaritans, Mount Gerizim. But Jesus replied: "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on

this mountain nor in Jerusalem ... God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (4: 21-24, N.I.V.). Following these words, Jesus revealed unto her that He was the promised Messiah.

Many of the Samaritans became believers (4:41). Later the apostles witnessed to them (Acts 1:8). Philip the evangelist also did great work in Samaria (Acts 8). They were a people not forgotten by God.

#### NOBLEMAN'S SON HEALED

The miraculous signs performed by Jesus were for a purpose. "and many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name" (John 20:30-31). We read in the case of the healing of the young boy by Jesus: "So he (the nobleman) and all his household believed" (4:53, N.I.V.). Sincere and honest people could have come to no other position.

#### THE HEALING AT THE POOL

I have no problems with the miracles of Jesus. As one writer has said: "I would have problems with Jesus if it were not for His miracles. What he did to attest His deity is exactly what I would expect of one who claimed to face a sceptical world as the Son of God."

The miracle at the pool was performed on the Sabbath day. The legalistic Jews were not impressed. The healed man, they said, was guilty of breaking the Sabbath because he carried his pallet. Jesus was the cause and so "the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to slay him because He had done these things on the Sabbath day" (5:16).

The contrast is clear. Jesus sought to help a man recover and live; the Jews sought how they might kill Jesus and stop Him from living.

I could write on a number of points here, but I only mention one. Jesus once said: "Man was not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath for man." In other

words, God was really interested in men, not in days. Sabbath means rest. The rest was for the good of mankind.

#### DEITY OF JESUS

I usually only study one subject with Jehovah's Witnesses — the deity of Jesus. I point out that if they are wrong about Him then they could be wrong about everything else (which is the case). I like to mention John 5:18 to them. I particularly want to hear their definition of the word "equal". (Check the dictionaries for yourself).

There are a lot of ex-Jehovah's Witnesses around. One of them in America once sent me some excellent material. In a chart he himself drew up, he shows how clearly the Scriptures teach that Jesus is Jehovah. Jehovah is Creator, Jesus is Creator (Genesis 1:1; John 1:3); Jehovah is Saviour, Jesus is Saviour (Isaiah 43:3, 11; 1 John 4:14); Jehovah is Judge, Jesus is Judge (Genesis 18:25; 2 Corinthians 5:10); Jehovah is Light, Jesus is Light, (Micah 7:8; John 8:12); Jehovah is "I AM", Jesus is "I AM", (Exodus 3:13-14; John 8:58).

Ian S. Davidson, Motherwell.

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Slamannan:** The church here has resumed its Sunday evening meetings forthwith. The new time will be 5 p.m. The congregation is small in number now and requires all the assistance it can get to ensure the continuance of a presence in this part of the Lord's vineyard. With this in mind, the church would be pleased to receive visiting brethren, either just coming along or perhaps advising the church in advance by writing to me at the following address.

John B. Wilson,  
24 Owendale Avenue, Bellshill,  
Lanarkshire ML4 1NS.  
Tel: (0698) 746874.

**Haddington:** The church have now left the hired hall at which they have been meeting for the last 30 years or so, and have moved into their own premises at Newton Port, Haddington. Much remains to be done but the place is capable of holding our meetings. Many churches and individuals have been extremely generous to us and we are exceedingly grateful. We hope to publish a brief account later. We also hope to hold a Social gathering there soon, but in the interim will be happy to welcome visitors.

Ruth Nisbet (Sec.).

**Hindley:** We were very pleased to have the services of Bro. Bill Mair from the church meeting in Buckie, Scotland, on Saturday, Lord's Day and Monday March 14th, 15th and 16th. He presented some soul stirring messages from the Word of God to excellent meetings. We are very grateful to members of the district churches and other areas as well as neighbouring friends who gave much encouragement to our visiting speaker. We thank our dear Brother and sister wife for making such a long journey to be with us, and ask God's rich blessing upon his efforts. We look forward in anticipation of a return visit.

Lord's Day, March 22nd, saw a wonderful climax to the effort. Sister Annie Tattum was restored to fellowship, and Nigel Ghani making the good confession, was united with his Lord in baptism, performed by Bro. Philip Partington, a delighted grandfather.

Tuesday, March 24th, more cause for rejoicing. Julian Morgan expressed his desire to follow the Lord Jesus, and upon his confession of faith was buried with his Lord in baptism, rising to walk along the road that leads to eternal life.

May these, along with us, continue faithfully and steadfastly, to follow the One whom to know means Life Eternal.

Tom Kemp.

## OBITUARY

**Slamannan:** It is with much regret that the church here announces the death of sister Grace Wilson, beloved wife of our late Bro. John Wilson (Senr.). Sister Grace was a faithful follower of our Lord for a great number of years. During her active life she faithfully attended all church meetings and never failed to provide hospitality for visiting brothers and sisters. She did indeed set a good example for the young and her own two daughters decided to obey the gospel and they have kept up the good work and example set by their mother.

Although we sorrow that the church has lost another faithful member yet we do not mourn as if we had no hope, but along with the apostle Paul we know that our sister "kept the faith" and are sure that she too can claim the promise of the "crown of life." Our thoughts go out to our sister's immediate family at this time but we are comforted, as I am sure they are, that she did not have to suffer a protracted illness. Would to God that we who remain can live up to her example.

John B. Wilson (Sec.).

**Newtongrange:** It is with great sorrow and regret, that we report the death of our beloved sister Mrs. Mary Brunton. Sister Brunton passed away, peacefully at 6 a.m. on Friday, 3rd April 1987. Sister Brunton was in her 73rd year and for the past few months had been cared for in the Royal Infirmary and Queensberry Lodge. We thank the staff for their care and concern.

Sister Mary was a faithful and regular attender at all the meetings of the church. Her place will be hard to fill. It was always a treat for the younger members, to be talking with our sister, due to her vast knowledge of the early church, here at Newtongrange. Some wish that they had the strength and tenacity of our departed sister. All through her aches and pains, and she

had many, a smile was forthcoming. The church will miss her. To the family left we offer our sincere condolences. Our sister has fought the good fight and now reaps the just reward.

A funeral service took place at St. Davids on Wednesday, 8th April at 1.30 p.m. Bro. Morris conducted the service as was our sister's wish. The funeral proceeded to Newbattle cemetery where the internment was conducted. A word of thanks to all friends and brethren who attended at the cemetery.

A. P. Sharp. (Sec.).

---

### COMING EVENTS

**BUCKIE ANNUAL SOCIAL.** The Annual Social will take place, God willing, on Saturday, 6th June, 1987 at 2.30 p.m. Speaker: Alvin Gardiner. We invite you to be with us to enjoy fellowship one with another and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Items will be appreciated.

John Geddes (Sec.).  
Tel. 0542 33793.

---

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Recently we gave the new address of John Partington as "2 Sandy Loan" when, in fact it should have been "2 Sandy Lane", Hindley, Wigan, Lancs. WN2 4DB. We now make the correction and apologise to our brother.

### "HOW CAN I?"

Recently a lady asked me, "How can I win my husband to Christ?" She seemed surprised when I replied, "You can't!" She never attends Bible Study. She doesn't even attend worship services regularly. If the husband wants to go on a trip Sunday, she forgets her Lord (to humour her husband) and goes. She will never win him in this way! He's neutralizing her.

Selected.

Until a person lets **everyone** around him know what his stand is — that religion means more to him than anything else in the world — he will not have the influence it takes to lead lost souls to Christ."

---

### "NO ROOM"

No room for the baby in  
Bethlehem's inn

Only a cattle shed;

No room on this earth for the dear  
Son of God

Nowhere to lay his head,

Only a cross did they give to my Lord,

Only a borrowed tomb.

Today he is seeking a place in your heart:

Will you still say to Him

"No Room"?

---



---

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is published monthly.

### PRICE 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  
Lothian Printers, 109 High Street, Dunbar, East Lothian. Tel: (0368) 63785