

The **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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ALMOST OR ALL TOGETHER

Some months ago I drew attention to the marvellous speech of the apostle Paul on Mars Hill to the Greeks. On this occasion I would care to refer to the equally wonderful defence speech made by the same apostle to Herod Agrippa.

We may recall that when (in Acts 21) Paul arrived in Jerusalem the Jews set about to kill him and he had to be rescued by the Roman soldiers (Palestine being under Roman occupation at that time). He was tried by a Jewish Court (the Sanhedrin) on various charges and as further attempts were made on his life he was taken into close arrest by the Romans and was eventually brought before Felix, the then Roman governor. We read in Acts 24 that "After certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. And as he (Paul) reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgement to come, Felix trembled and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee. He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him; wherefore he sent for him the oftener and communed with him. But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room, and Felix willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound." For security reasons Paul by this time had been removed from Jerusalem to Caesarea.

When Festus took over as governor from Felix the Jews doubtless thought that a new broom would sweep clean and so renewed their charges against Paul. The High Priest and chief Jews asked for a new trial at Jerusalem (they wanted him brought back to Jerusalem so that they could ambush him on the way) but Festus refused and insisted that the Jews come to Caesarea. The Trial took place eleven days later and Festus suggested to Paul that he return to Jerusalem for another trial (this was designed to make Festus popular with the Jews) but Paul refused and "appealed unto Caesar". Paul's appeal to Caesar is very understandable for he had been in custody for well over two years by now.

It was about this time that Festus had a visitor. King Agrippa, and his sister, Bernice, had come to congratulate Festus on his appointment as governor and during their visit the conversation got around to the vexing case of Paul. Agrippa, perhaps from idle curiosity or for some idea of an entertaining distraction, expressed a wish to hear Paul speak for himself, and so it was arranged to publicly examine Paul the following day. Accordingly with great pomp and circumstance, Agrippa presided over an auspicious and distinguished gathering consisting of Bernice, Festus, the Chief Captains and the principal men of the city. Festus made a short introductory

speech explaining that the hearing was to establish exactly what charges would be laid against Paul when he would appear before Caesar. Agrippa then assumes control of proceedings and invites Paul to defend himself.

Paul begins by saying how happy he is to present his case before King Agrippa for previously he had always been heard by Romans (unfamiliar with Jewish customs and questions). Agrippa was a Jew, brought up in the Jewish faith, and knew all about the Jews — an “expert” Paul calls him.

Paul's Pedigree

Paul then describes his manner of life from his youth up. He was no mysterious stranger or passing rogue. He was of the strictest and straightest sect of the Jews — a Pharisee. He had spent all his life in and around Jerusalem amongst his own people. He was a knowledgeable and faultless Jew; a Pharisee of the Pharisees, taught by Gamaliel himself, serving God day and night, as all Jews knew well and could not deny. Amongst the Jews he was the *creme de la creme*.

Paul's Jewish Zeal

Paul is giving his “testimony,” in the true sense of the word, and refers to the fact that he was such a zealous Jew that when Christians appeared he regarded it as his God-binding duty to put them down. To him Christianity was in direct opposition to God. “I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, which things I did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the Chief Priests; and when they were put to death I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in the synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme, and being exceedingly mad against them I persecuted them even unto strange cities. Paul went on to relate that it was while he was on his way to persecute Christians in a distant city (Damascus by name) that a vast change took place in his life.

Paul's “Conversion”

Paul describes how, after seeking warrant from the Chief Priests, he set off with many horsemen, for the city of Damascus to search out and persecute any Christians he might find there, and how on the journey he was struck down by a light brighter than the sun, and how having fallen from his horse he heard the words from heaven, “Saul, Saul, Why persecutest thou Me?” Paul continues to describe how Jesus made Himself known to Paul and commanded him to continue to the city where he would receive further instructions. When he arose he was blind (requiring to be led by the hand) and spent the next three days and nights in the city, in great mental turmoil, and did neither eat nor drink. Amongst the fearful Christians at Damascus was one Ananias who was instructed in a vision to go and restore Paul's sight. Ananias, having already heard of Paul's reputation was reluctant to go but, having gone, found Paul praying and counselled him thus: “Why tarriest thou, arise, and be baptised and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” Paul had thus been confronted by Jesus Himself, and had talked with Him, and would now be a witness to the resurrection to all nations, Jews and Gentiles, “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins”. “How” asks Paul, “could I gainsay God?” “Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple and went about to kill me.” At this juncture of the speech Festus shouted with a loud voice, “Paul, thou art beside thyself, much learning hath made thee mad,” but Paul answered “I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the

words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely; for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, ALMOST THOU PERSUADEST ME TO BE A CHRISTIAN."

Herod Agrippa II

Paul was, of course, quite accurate in saying that none of these things were hidden from King Agrippa or that King Agrippa doubted the Jewish prophets. His father was the Herod who killed the apostle James and who imprisoned the apostle Peter with a view to killing him and had pleased the Jews by trying to suppress Christianity. Agrippa knew therefore, quite a bit about persecuting Christians. He would be about 17 years of age when Herod, his father, was consumed with worms (Acts 12:23) while giving a great oration and assuming the role of a god. Agrippa was also nephew of the Herod who beheaded John the Baptist and mocked Jesus on the day of His crucifixion. He was also the great-grandson of the Herod who slew all the infants in an attempt to kill Jesus when the wise men came to find him. Christ and Christians were "household words" to Agrippa and he was their arch-enemy, yet Paul had come close to bringing him to Christ. Agrippa had admitted that Paul had *almost* persuaded him to become a Christian and this brought forth from Paul that wonderful reply, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both ALMOST and ALTOGETHER such as I am, except for these chains."

The Gulf

We read later that King Agrippa would have acquitted Paul and set him free had not Paul already appealed to Caesar. Paul was later sent to stand trial in Rome but we never read that the wish of the apostle for Agrippa, Bernice, Festus, the chief captains or the chief men of the city came to pass (that they might not *almost* be Christians but *altogether* would be). There is obviously a great gulf fixed between "Almost" and "Altogether" which can never be bridged. Lot and his family were *almost* destroyed — his wife was *almost* saved. Moses and Aaron *almost* reached the promised land. God *almost* devastated Nineveh. Think of our plight if Jesus had *almost* died, or if He had *almost* risen from the dead; if His blood *almost* cleansed us from sin; if the bible had *almost* been written or if it was *almost* the word of God, or *almost* infallible. Some accidents *almost* happen and some runners *almost* win the race.

If King Agrippa had obeyed the gospel he would have had, perhaps, to give up his position as governor, radically change his attitude to others and completely alter his lifestyle. Likewise many today are *almost* Christians but are deterred because of the "humiliation" it may bring, the "friends" they might lose, the loss of business or business associates, the love of popularity — in short, the love of the world. Those who are *almost* disciples will *almost* receive remission of sins and will *almost* inherit life eternal. Felix said that he would hear Paul when he "had a more convenient season." Agrippa was *almost* persuaded to be a Christian, and Paul was *altogether* a disciple of Jesus: here lay the difference — a great gulf.

Almost persuaded now to believe

Almost persuaded Christ to receive

Seems now some soul to say, "Go Spirit, Go Thy way

Some more convenient day, On thee I'll call"

Almost persuaded, harvest is past

Almost persuaded, Doom comes at last

Almost can not avail; Almost — is but to fail,

Sad, sad, the bitter wail, Almost — but lost.

EDITOR.

BELIEF

What does "belief" mean?

THE original word meaning "I believe" in the Greek language in which the New Testament was written is "*pisteuo*." This is the word used in Mark 9:24, where Jesus says to the father of the deaf and dumb son, "If thou canst *believe*, all things are possible to him that believeth." In reply, the father "cried out and said with tears, I believe (*pisteuo*), help thou mine unbelief."

Pisteuo, "I believe," is the verbal form of the noun "*pistis*," meaning *belief* in 2 Thessalonians 2:13, the passage with which these articles were begun.

Belief and Faith

But *pistis* with its derivatives is the *same* Greek word translated *faith* whenever that word occurs in the New Testament! To take one example of many where the word "faith" appears: "Faith (*pistis*) cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). The translators could quite easily have used the word *belief* instead of *faith*, and so we see that both "belief" and "faith" mean exactly the same thing.

Not only so, but this passage sheds light on the statement of Jesus, "He that is of God *heareth* God's words" for it is only by hearing God's words, as revealed by Jesus and his apostles that we *can* believe, and enjoy the important results which follow therefrom. But more about this later.

Dictionary Meaning of Belief

In the various English Dictionaries, "belief" means "to be firmly persuaded of," "to trust." The word "faith" has the same meanings attached to it as has "belief," thereby proving that "belief" and "faith" are synonymous terms. It does not, therefore, have sense to say, "If only I had faith," implying that faith is something *given* to us from outside ourselves. In fact, faith or belief is a God-given faculty of the mind, in each one of us is the power to exercise it.

Consequently, when Jesus sometimes censured his hearers, and also his disciples, in the words, "Oh ye of little faith (*oligo-pisto*, meaning "of little belief") he simply meant that in face of the facts, or the evidence available to them, there was no excuse for the smallness of their belief — or, as we might put it, their irresponsible attitude, their doubt, their *disbelief*.

Beginnings of Belief

If you have followed the reasonings so far, and have studied the New Testament passages mentioned, you will have perhaps come to the conclusion that the hearing of God's words, as revealed by our Lord and his apostles, and their acceptance by our minds and hearts, so that we are firmly persuaded of their truth, constitutes belief. This is indeed so, but notice that this persuasion only touches, as it were, the *beginnings* of belief, important though these beginnings are. There are further aspects of belief to consider, before we can understand fully what belief means.

More Involved

Much more is involved in belief than the mere acceptance of statements. We have to get at the back of what these statements mean. Then, having ascertained their full significance, we must ask ourselves whether they will involve any change in the direction of our future actions, behaviour and lives. This is true not only from a religious point of view; it is also true in secular life. There, almost without exception, people's behaviour is dependent upon their beliefs.

This leads us to our second leading question which also involves further aspects of the meaning of the word "belief."

What Truth are we Required to Believe In?

This is the second of four questions dealing with the four important subject, Belief, Truth, Sanctification and Salvation. There are many truths contained in the Bible (which is also called the Scriptures or Writings of truth) and which we believe to be the inspired Word of God. All Scripture, however, leads up to, or involves *one central truth* beside which all other truths are merely incidental. That does not imply that these other truths are not important. Indeed they have their own peculiar degrees of shades of importance, in the various circumstances and contexts in which they appear. But *all* fade into insignificance before the great central truth to which all Scripture points: **that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.** Indeed, there are more than three hundred and thirty prophecies in the Old Testament, foretelling the coming of Jesus as the Messiah and

The Son of God

John. in his gospel, writes concerning Jesus. Many truths had been presented by John in that wonderful record of our Lord's sojourn upon earth. He records many great miracles which Jesus performed. Then he writes, "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book, but these are written that ye might, *believe* that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:30-31).

Exercises in Belief

Study the following passages:—

Genesis 3:15; Romans 16-26; Hebrews 2:14; Isaiah 9:6; Genesis 49:10; Psalms 118; 22-23; Isaiah 28:16; Matthew 21-32; Romans 9:33; Acts 8:26-40.

W. BROWN.

GLEANINGS

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

'And this too shall pass away'

"When Abraham Lincoln stood on the platform of the train that was to take him from Springfield, Illinois, to Washington D.C., he told this yarn to his neighbours who had come to bid him good-bye. "I have heard," said he, "of an eastern monarch who once charged his wise men to invent a sentence, one which would be true and appropriate in all times and for all situations. Finally they presented him with this sentence, 'And this too shall pass away.'"

C. G.

Almost lie on a penny

"I am afraid that all the grace I have gotten out of my comfortable and easy times and happy hours might almost lie on a penny. But the good that I have received from my sorrows and pains and griefs is altogether incalculable. What do I not owe to the hammer and the anvil, the fire and the file! Affliction is the best bit of furniture in my house."

C. H. Spurgeon

Be ye kind one to another. — Ephesians 4:32

"A little kindness goes a long way, and how much it accomplishes! It is not the large acts of kindness that are so important, although these are necessary at times, but it's the little ones: a smile, a friendly handshake, a pat on the shoulder, a sincere compliment, a word of encouragement, a brief note of thanks, a simple gift. These often produce results far beyond our expectations. One man carried a small can of oil to eliminate those irritating squeaks that often jar our nerves. Insignificant? Possibly. But think how much smoother things would run if we carried a little "can of kindness" everywhere, and used it frequently."

H. G. Mackay

He . . . took a towel, and girded himself

"Humility is not self-negation or self-depreciation. Jesus knew who He was, and that the Father had given all judgment and all authority into His hands. He knew that one day the whole universe would bow before Him. With such knowledge He knelt before His disciples as a servant and washed their soiled feet with tender care. Humility is greatest in the apron of a servant."

D. L. Norbie

Emptied and annihilated

"I felt an ardency of soul to be — emptied and annihilated; to love Him with a holy and pure love; to serve and follow Him; to be perfectly sanctified and made pure with a divine and heavenly purity."

Jonathan Edwards

Let us lose ourselves in God

"Spiritual beauty is loveliest when it is unconsciously possessed. We must become so absorbed in God as to forget ourselves. We cannot gaze upon "the glory of the Lord" and remain conscious of ourselves. Contemplation brings transformation. Let us lose ourselves in God."

J. H. Jowett

The love of Christ

"The love of Christ has no borders; is boundless, infinite, divine. It will fill you full of wonder and expectation — full of joy and sweetness and satisfaction, and still the half will not have been told."

Alexander Whyte

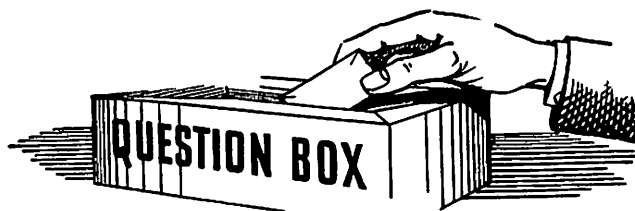
We quore — Fenelon

"God does not so much regard our actions as the motive of love from which they spring, and the pliability of our will to His; that which is so dazzling in the eyes of man is of little account to God. What He desires is a pure intention, a will ready for anything, and ever pliable in His hands, and an honest abandonment of self; and all this can be more frequently manifested on small and ordinary occasions, and on simple and ordinary duties, than on great ones."

Christ everything

"I remark again, that Christ is everything in the great plan of redemption. We are slaves; Christ gives deliverance to the captives. We are thirsty; Christ is the river of salvation to slake our thirst. We are hungry; Jesus says, "I am the bread of life." We are condemned to die; Christ says, "Save that man from going down to the pit. I am the ransom." We are tossed on a sea of troubles; Jesus comes over it saying: "It is I, be not afraid." We are in darkness; Jesus says: "I am the bright and morning star." We are sick; Jesus is the balm of Gilead. We are dead; hear the shrouds rend and the grave hillocks heave, as He cries: "I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live."

T. De. W. Talmage

Selected by Leonard Morgan

 Conducted by
 Alf Marsden

During a recent discussion meeting I understood you to say that it was not possible for Jesus to have sinned while He was here upon earth. Can you please explain what you mean, because it puzzles me somewhat?

It is true that I hold very well-defined views about my Saviour, and it is equally true that *anyone* who holds definite views is always likely to state them without having the opportunity to explain them fully, and so I welcome this opportunity which the question affords me. So, we shall examine from the Word that which is factual, and say which our reason tells that we ought to believe.

The Mission of Jesus

The mission of Jesus was quite clearly and simply stated by Himself, "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). John also records Jesus as saying, "For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:16, 17). These statements by Jesus are plain and unequivocally expressed.

I mention these scriptures first in order to illustrate what I consider to be fundamental facets of the mission of the Christ, namely, compassion, pre-knowledge, pre-existence, and pre-capability. Compassion, because it was Divine love and not Divine requirement which brought my Saviour to earth. Pre-knowledge, because not only did He know the true condition of man — 'the lost' — but He also knew the Divine will of His Father in respect of the salvation of man, that He, Jesus, should seek out those lost in sin, and by His own death, save them. Pre-existence, because if Jesus knew precisely what the Divine will was, then He must have existed with the Father before He came to earth to fulfil that will. Pre-capability, because if He was *to be* the Saviour, then the capability to save must have been inherent *before* He actually started His mission.

So here we are dealing with a unique person, no one less than 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world' (Rev. 13:8).

The Problem of the Flesh

"And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Immediately some Christians read the phrase 'made flesh' they tend to think of all the sinful propensities which the phrase connotes. There no doubt springs to mind the statement by Paul, "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (Rom. 7:25). Furthermore, they assert that the Bible says (which it does, of course) that Jesus was made "in the likeness of sinful flesh," and they conclude that He was exactly as we are: But this is not so, as we shall see later.

The statement by Paul in Romans 8:3 is worthy of serious examination; it reads, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." In the fifth chapter of the same letter, Paul affirms that sin entered into the world by one man (Adam), and consequent upon that defection, death passed to all men because all have sinned. Such was the catastrophic consequence of Adam's transgression. Are we then to conclude that because Jesus came in the flesh that He was the natural progeny of Adam? No, because Paul argues that by one man, Jesus Christ (who *resembled* Adamic man, but was not *exactly* like him) the grace of God abounded unto many. So a distinction is drawn by Paul; the flesh of Adam is marked by sin, *but not the flesh of Christ*. Romans 8:3 says that God sent His Son *for* sin (in other words, concerning sin-our sin) and in doing so He condemned sin in the flesh. He (God) condemned the sin of men and the condemnation took place in the flesh of Jesus. If Paul had used the article, and had said, "condemned (the) sin in the flesh" then he would have affirmed sin in the flesh of Jesus also, but he was careful to avoid that.

So again, in the medium of the flesh, we are considering a special and unique person.

Son of Man, Son of God

In his letter to the saints at Philippi, Paul takes us further along the road of our understanding of this unique person, Jesus the Christ. In the second chapter, Paul makes a clear statement about the deity of Jesus: He was, in His pre-incarnate state, "in the form of God," that means He had all the essential attributes of God. Paul goes on to say that Jesus "emptied Himself." Of what did He empty Himself?

Certainly not of His divine nature. He was Son of God both before and after His incarnation. Lightfoot says, "He stripped Himself of the insignia of majesty." It is true that Jesus took upon Himself the limitations of time and space, but it is extremely difficult for us to believe that He limited Himself to such a degree that His knowledge and conduct were impaired. He was without sin, even though He was tempted as we are.

However, we must not fall into the same trap as did the Gnostics. The humanity of Jesus was just as real as His deity. The Gnostics believed that the humanity of Jesus was not real. They reasoned that perfect deity could not be "in fashion as a man"; *all* flesh, they argued, was tainted by sin, and so the appearance of Jesus in the flesh was a ghost-like appearance. But Paul would have none of this; he said, "he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Jesus 'plumbed the depths for fallen humanity. He left the heights of heaven for the lowest degradation that man could subject Him to, "even the death of the cross." As they hammered the nails into His hands and feet He felt the excruciating pain. Oh, yes, He was real, but He was sinless, otherwise He could not have been the Saviour.

Two Propositions

Those who argue that the mission of Jesus could possibly have failed are in effect saying, with respect to the outcome of His earthly life, that He was a man who *proved* Himself to be the Son of God. The other proposition, which I personally embrace, is that Jesus was, is, and has always been Son of God, and whatever medium had been chosen for Him to express Himself in, He would have demonstrated in that medium the perfectness of the Godhead. It had to be in the flesh, because the sinlessness of the flesh of Christ was a standing condemnation of the sinfulness of fleshly man.

But there are some who will say, "What was the point of the Temptation if Jesus couldn't have sinned"? I would counter that by asking, "What was the point of His Coming if He *could* have sinned"?

Are we to get a mental picture of God, having foretold down the ages the coming of the Messiah, and by His predeterminate counsel and will precisely arranged in time this consummate act of salvation in Jesus His Christ, breathing a sigh of relief in Heaven when Jesus did not let Him down? Such a picture does not equate in my mind with the precision of the God in whom I have believed. Did God cast around for someone in the lineage of Adamic flesh? No, He sent His Son in the flesh as an indictment of sin. The immaculate birth, the immaculate life, and the immaculate restoration of the Christ of God to Heaven, all reflect the immaculate nature of the Godhead.

Lest I be misunderstood, let me make it perfectly clear that when I consider the Apostle and great High Priest of our calling then I can share in His pain and agony as He walked the earth; it was real. But I also look at the power of His Gospel, and then I can turn my eyes to Heaven and see the Almighty God, my Heavenly Father, who takes no chances with sin. We say that not one of God's promises has failed. Well, He promised us a Saviour, and *He* did not fail; I believe that it was not in the economy of God *for* Him to fail.

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

1829 — AND A GREAT DEBATE

In 1829, Andrew Jackson was inaugurated as seventh President of the United States; the first Oxford-Cambridge boat race took place at Henley; William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, was born; Sir Humphrey Davy, the English chemist, died; L. Daguerre and J. N. Niepce formed a partnership for the development of their photographic inventions; and the Centralised Metropolitan Police Force was installed in London. It was also the year of a great debate. It was held in the city of Cincinnati, Ohio, U.S.A. The disputants were the great social reformer, Robert Owen, and the outstanding Christian preacher, Alexander Campbell.

The background to their meeting was as follows. Owen, during a series of lectures in New Orleans, had challenged the clergy of that city to discuss with him the claims of the Christian religion. "I propose," he said, "to prove, as I have already attempted to do in my lectures, that all the religions of the world have been founded on the ignorance of mankind; that they are directly opposed to the never-changing laws of nature; that they have been and are the real source of vice, disunion and misery of every description; that they are now the only real bar to the formation of a society of virtue, of intelligence, of charity in its most extended sense, and of sincerity and kindness among the whole human family; and that they can no longer be maintained except through the ignorance of the mass of the people, and the tyranny of the few over that mass."

No response came from those addressed. Owen was about to embark for the Old World, boasting that no man in America dared to debate with him. But as soon as the news of this defiant attitude reached Campbell, he published the challenge in the "Christian Baptist" and announced his readiness to accept it. "I have long wondered," he wrote, "why none of the public preachers of Christianity has appeared in defense of the last, best hope of mortal man. If none but Christian philosophers composed this society, it might be well enough to let Mr. Owen and his scheme of things find their own level. But while a few of the seniors disdain to notice, or affect to disdain, his scheme of things, it ought not to be forgotten that thousands are carried away as chaff before the wind by the apparently triumphant manner in which Mr. Owen moves along ... Relying on the Author, the reasonableness and the excellency of the Christian religion, I will engage to meet Mr. Owen any time within one year from this date, at any place equidistant from New Harmony (the site of Owen's community) and Bethany (Campbell's home town), such as Cincinnati, Ohio, or Lexington, Kentucky, and will then and there undertake to show that Mr. Owen is utterly incompetent to prove the positions he has assumed, in a public debate.

The debate lasted eight days, and brought out the strongest arguments of each side. Owen read out reams of papers on his social and moral philosophy. Campbell presented fact upon fact in proof of the Divine origin of the Christian religion. One of his speeches lasted twelve hours, on three successive days. What was the outcome of it all? The cause of Christianity was advanced, and an effective check was put to the spread of unbelief. How could it have been otherwise? As the "Cincinnati Chronicle" commented at the time, "If the genius, the wit, the ridicule, and the argument of such men as Hume, and Voltaire, and Condorcet, and Gibbon, and Paine, have failed to arrest the mighty and widespread march of the Christian religion, it requires no small degree of credulity, to believe, that Robert Owen can ever be successful."

A book was published containing an authentic report of the whole proceedings. It runs to 465 pages of small print and is entitled "The Evidences of Christianity." I would recommend, nay urge, all to read it. Here, for example, is part of what

Campbell wrote in the introduction.

“Christianity is a **POSITIVE INSTITUTION** and has had positive existence in the world for more than eighteen centuries. Infidelity, as opposed to Christianity, is not an institution, but a mere negation of an institution and of the facts and documents on which it is founded. It has no essential formal existence. It has no facts and documents, and, therefore, it has no proof. It merely assails Christianity but offers no substitute for it, and has none to offer...

“I have never read, nor heard a philosophic, rational, logical argument against Christianity; nor have I ever seen or heard a rational, philosophic, or logical argument in favour of any form of scepticism or infidelity. Jesus Christ was and is a **PERSON**; not a thing, not a doctrine, not a theory. Infidelity is not a person, not a thing, not a theory. There may be a theory of it, but it is not a theory. It is a state of mind, an intellectual, or moral imbecility. It is a spiritual jaundice, sometimes green and sometimes black. They cannot be philosophically, logically, rationally compared. They are neither logical nor literal contrasts. The infidel is but the incarnation of a negative idea. He is absolutely but a mere negation. He stands to Christianity as darkness stands to light. Is darkness anything? Is blindness anything but the loss of sight? Is unbelief anything but the repudiation of evidence?...

“Jesus Christ was a real person, and had personal, positive attributes. He had a real and positive character, unique, original, transcendent. It was as fixed, as positive, and as radiating, as the sun in heaven. The originality and unity of his character is all sufficient, in the eye of educated reason, to claim for him a cordial welcome into our world, and to hail him as the supreme benefactor of our race...”

Alexander Campbell, in the subsequent years, continued incessantly to labour for the promotion of the cause he so greatly loved. Through his writings and addresses, he preached to increasing thousands, unfolding the great plan of human redemption in all its details. More debates followed too. One was with Bishop John Purcell of Cincinnati on the subject — “The Roman Catholic Religion,” and another with the Presbyterian N. L. Rice on “The Action, Subject, Design, and Administrator of Christian Baptism etc.” These debates were also printed and can be read with profit today.

Robert Owen, after 1829, still devoted himself to preaching his educational, moral, rationalist and marriage-reform ideas. At the age of 82 he became a spiritualist. It is said that when Ralph Waldo Emerson asked him in his old age, “Who is your disciple? How many men possessed of your views, who will remain after you, are going to put them in practice?” Owen candidly replied, “Not one.”

Ian Davidson, Motherwell.

THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

An unusual Poem

In **GENESIS** the world is made by God's creative hand;
 In **EXODUS** the Hebrews march toward their promised land.
LEVITICUS contains the law — holy and just and good;
NUMBERS records the tribes enrolled — all sons of Abraham's blood.
 Moses in **DEUTERONOMY** records God's mighty deeds;
JOSHUA into Canaan the Lord's host bravely leads.
 In **JUDGES** their rebellion provokes the Lord to smite,
 But **RUTH** records the faith of one well pleasing in His sight.
 In **FIRST** and **SECOND SAMUEL** of Jesse's son we read:

Ten tribes in **FIRST AND SECOND KINGS** revolt against his seed.
 The **FIRST** and **SECOND CHRONICLES** see Judah captive made,
 But **EZRA** leads a remnant back by princely Cyrus's aid.
 The city wall of Zion **NEHEMIAH** builds again;
 While **ESTHER** saves her people from the plots of wicked men.
 In **JOB** we read how faith will live beneath affliction's rod,
 And David's **PSALMS** are precious songs to every child of God.
 The **PROVERBS** like a goodly string of choicest pearls appear;
ECCLESIASTES teaches man how vain are all things here.
 The mystic **SONG OF SOLOMON** exalts sweet Sharon's rose;
 While Christ, the Saviour and the King, the rapt **ISAIAH** shows.
JEREMIAH'S warning apostate Israel scorns;
 In **LAMENTATIONS** he the accomplished downfall mourns.
EZEKIEL tells in wondrous words of dazzling mysteries;
 While kings and empires yet to come **DANIEL** in vision sees.
 Of judgment and of mercy **HOSEA** loves to tell;
JOEL describes the blessed days when God with men will dwell.
 Among Tekoah's herdsmen **AMOS** receives his call;
 While **OBADIAH** prophesies of Edom's final fall.
JONAH enshrines a wondrous type — our resurrected Lord;
MICAH pronounces Judah lost — lost, but again restored.
NAHUM declares on Nineveh just judgment to be poured,
 When God Almighty pours his wrath on to Assyria's horde.
 A view of Chaldea's coming doom **HABAKKUK'S** vision give;
 Next **ZEPHANIAH** warns the Jews to turn, repent and live.
HAGGAI writes of those who see the temple built again,
 And **ZECHARIAH** prophesies of Christ's triumphant reign.
MALACHI, the last to touch the high prophetic chord,
 In final notes sublime predicts the coming of the Lord.

MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE and **JOHN** the holy gospel pen,
 Describing how the Saviour lived and died for love of men.
ACTS proves how God the apostles owned with signs in every place;
 Paul in **ROMANS** teaches us how man is saved by grace.
 He in the **CORINTHIANS** instructs, exhorts, reproves;
GALATIANS show that faith in Christ alone the Father loves.
EPHESIANS and **PHILIPPIANS** tell what Christians ought to be;
COLOSSIANS bids us to live to God and for eternity.
 In **THESSALONIANS** we see the Lord will come from Heaven;
 In **TIMOTHY** and **TITUS** a bishop's rule is given.
PHILEMON marks the love of Christ which only Christians know;
HEBREWS depicts the gospel, prefigured by the Law.

EXAMINE YOURSELVES

... whether ye be in the faith (2 Cor. 10:12).

It is Judgment Day and souls are entering the portals of eternity, aware that the time has come when each must give account of himself to God (Romans 14:12). A great many have never till this moment seen themselves as they really are, and as God sees them. They fall down speechless and weeping. But a few have come prepared, able to stand and speak, and these Jesus welcomes with a smile. During

their lifetime, they had often examined themselves — and that not by the standards of the world now gone, but by the Book now open in their Judge's hand. With Bible open, they had prayerfully practised each day the following command: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith" (2 Cor. 10:12). This conditioned them to give account of themselves to God.

Begin examining yourself to see whether you are in the faith by paraphrasing some of its great texts with your own name, and see if the results are true. ——— has sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). God so love ——— that He gave His only begotten Son, that ——— believing in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16). God is not willing that ——— should perish, but that ——— should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9). For with the heart ——— believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth ——— confesses, resulting in salvation (Rom. 10:10). For ——— has been baptized into Christ, and has put on Christ (Gal. 3:27). Although ——— was formerly alienated and hostile in mind, Christ has reconciled ——— in His fleshly body (and blood) through death, so as to present ——— Holy and blameless and beyond reproach, if ——— continues in the faith (Col. 1:19-23).

To further examine yourself, consider the following seven questions. As you come to each question, it will require more maturity in the faith for an affirmative answer than it did for the preceding question.

- 1 Have I been obedient to the faith? (Rom. 1:5).
- 2 Am I continuing in the faith? (Col. 1:23).
- 3 Am I established in the faith? (Col. 2:7).
- 4 Am I contending for the faith? (Jude 3).
- 5 Am I united with others in the faith? (Eph. 4:2-5, 13).
- 6 Do I hold the faith without personal favouritism? (James 2:1).
- 7 Am I loved in the faith? (Titus 3:15).

How many of us could get half way through these questions without faltering? We contend not for the faith, but our own sentiments. We unite not with others in the faith, but only with those in our own "club". We hold the faith not without personal favouritism, but excluding those whom we think do not have quite the right connexions. We are loved not in the faith but on the basis of our personalities. We are examining others when we ought to be examining ourselves.

If self examination can be reduced to one question, it is that of **attitude to the faith**. Without the right attitude to the faith, no man can say yes to those seven questions. It is the key to all of them. Especially is it the key to unity and fellowship and love in the faith. Someone has said, "I would rather be wrong on almost every point of doctrine and yet have a right attitude to the word of God, then be right in every detail but for a wrong attitude to the word. For in the first case I would quickly come to a knowledge of the truth, but in the other case I should quickly depart from the faith." If we must examine others, let attitude to the faith be the test; but certainly on this basis let us examine ourselves.

Ron Graham
28 Faulkner Street, South Blackburn,
Victoria, Australia

SCRIPTURE READINGS

MAY 1982

2 Gen. 50,14-26	II Cor. 7, 2-16
9 Ex.35, 20-35	II Cor 8, 1-15
16 Ex.36, 1-13	II Cor 8, 16 to 9,5
23 Isa. 55	II Cor 9, 6-15
30 I Kings 22, 9-28	II Cor 10

REPENTANCE

This word means simply "change of mind" and we are reading of this in relation to some of the Corinthian brethren (and of course sisters), Titus and Paul himself. Obviously the heart-strings are involved. We hope it is a right way of expressing what the whole letter is about. Years of work intervene between Paul's leaving Corinth and his "first" letter, and possibly one between "first" and "second." His anxiety must have begun when he had report from "them of the household of Chloe" concerning trouble in the church. The visit he projected was put off, given up from discretion after the immediate action, the first letter (1, 17).

Then Titus was sent and expected to return with report of conditions. This was indeed anxiously awaited, and not satisfied until the journey from Ephesus got via Troas into Macedonia (possibly Philippi or Thessalonica). Had the letter been too severe? Had Paul's enemies — who were enemies of truth — successfully poisoned the minds of those precious souls whose new birth had been by his agency? We need not imagine the changing feelings experienced because they are written here. Any earnest preacher of the present day may have the same heart throbs. When we have done wrong or made mistakes repentance is the essential step, and godly sorrow the motive. Repentance almost always means action, change of direction and behaviour.

One result has already been noticed in chapter 2 from verse 5. Here further proof is set down with joy for the satisfaction derived from Paul's pride in his converts in that vigorous and famous church (1,14: I Cor. 1, 4-8). Note the change in R.V. from repent to regret (7,8). The change of mind in the cases of Paul and Titus was not repentance because they had not done wrong. It was a change from fear and sorrow to joy. Titus must have reported the dramatic effect of the letter upon the church as a whole. Verses 7 and 11 overflow with the signs of godly sorrow — eager longing, earnestness, defence, fear, vehement desire, clearing of yourselves, zeal to assure Paul of their desire to obey him. Our statement (page 30) should of course have been "before" not "when" he wrote the letter. We note Paul's emphases as in verse 2 "neither wronged, corrupted nor defrauded anyone." His earnest endeavour was to make the Corinthians see themselves as the object of his care. He surely did write also for the sake of those concerned in the evil-doing, but his care was supremely the well-being of the church. Much had been done to correct the troubles and this brought relief, and removed regrets.

BENEVOLENCE

We repeat what we think is needful that the heathen world was without God and without hope. No such thing as a hospital, charitable institution, or medical care for the poor was ever heard of. The gospel alone is responsible for the existence of such things. It was in truth the GRACE OF GOD bestowed upon mankind made visible in Macedonia, only in the churches, and it was so wonderful to see at all anywhere. The giving instead of the getting was beginning because the good news was being spread that God so loved that he GAVE. The DAMNED SOCIETY of the world was beginning to see THE LOVE OF GOD in the persons of the REDEEMED. Communities (churches) composed largely of converted heathens

but also basically of Jews, are sacrificing their worldly goods to relieve where poverty and persecution were being suffered. A one-time Pharisee is organising with the help of an uncircumcised gentile a collection of money from those of little or much means for their suffering brothers and sisters in Judaea. And the Corinthians themselves were already engaged in the work, quite voluntarily as a part of their faith and practice. Their appreciation of the GRACE of God in giving His Son, and the amazing sacrificing of supreme deity to share our human frailty, and not just that but a lowly position in life, a labouring man, made them adopt compassion for human suffering as a natural life exercise.

The development of public charity as so rightly held up to ridicule by Dickens was a hopeless caricature of the benevolence springing up with the New Testament Christianity. What divine or human institution has not been similarly travestied? Paul indeed stresses the freewill nature of the collection, using the pressure put upon him that some had used (8, 4) as an encouragement not to fall back from the first intention. The giving among Christians is to be their continued care for one another. Over the world there is to be the "fellowship" (sharing) of the ministry, that is, service to one another as a mutual responsibility. The spiritual fellowship is to be shown in material fellowship. With what joy did that band of pilgrims take the offering to Jerusalem? Was this not the fulfilment of unity in Christ (Gal. 3, 28)? — Paul's special place in the apostolate? We must glance at companions (Acts 20, 4).

Decently And In Order

This expression refers to the way we behave when gathered in a meeting and it is important then, but administration of a gift from one group to another does need to be carefully conducted. Paul is careful that no blame should fall upon any one person but that brethren of reputation and recognised character

should share this responsibility. Titus is the leader but two others will be travelling also. One had actually been chosen, and the other trusted many times by Paul. He urges the Corinthian church to show all goodwill to them. The intention seems to have been to journey directly to Judaea from Corinth, but that was changed (Acts 20, 3 & 21, 15). Seven disciples went ahead to Troas. Luke and Paul followed. Luke, Timothy, Aristarchus and Trophimus certainly came to Jerusalem (Acts 21, 29: 27, 2). We assume Titus there fulfilled his duties relating to the collection (Gal. 2, 3 mentioned on another occasion). It does not appear that either Timothy or Aristarchus experienced the shipwreck on the way to Rome, neither being mentioned, and possibly disembarking at Sidon or Myra. The collection handed over at Corinth was to be of "bounty" not of "covetousness," seems to mean not to appear to be on account of pressure by Paul but with expression of gladness. Like Habakkuk's expression of faith (3, 18) — so glad to give — the Christian's attitude towards his fellows.

Paul's Challenge

The remaining portion of the letter forms a vindication of Paul's character and claims. An anxiety remains that some of the members at Corinth will remain unconvinced. Such has been the subtle but powerful effort to belittle both the character, teaching and work of Paul. It appears plain that the Judaisers claimed apostolic backing based upon the fact that Paul was not one of the twelve chosen personally by Jesus. No argument, however trifling, could be left out which could be used against him. His powerful advocacy of the truth drove them to criticise his letters and deride his rebukes. In chapter ten he vindicates himself, and warns the church that there will not be any compromise when he does come in person among them. He does not need to speak of work which he has not himself undertaken. Those who made claims for themselves could not equal or match his

"boasting," which needed no proof as it was the truth. That church could anticipate supporting him into further fields of labour, such was his expectation of divine ability and authority. His was a direct, divine commission. His appeal in this letter is by meekness and considerateness so that he would not need to exercise his authority with severity upon unrepentant opponents in person.

R. B. Scott

A NEW BODY

THE Bible teaches plainly that there will be a bodily resurrection when Jesus makes his second appearance. What sort of body the wicked will have at that time, I do not know.

As for the righteous, this much is certain: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The resurrected body therefore will be a changed body. The faithful who are living when Jesus comes again will be changed, "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." (1 Cor. 15:50-52).

In 1 Cor. 15:35-54 and Phil 3:20,21, we have the following contrast:

The Old Body	The New Body
Corruptible	Incorruptible
Mortal	Immortal
Dishonourable	Glorious
Weak	Powerful
Natural	Spiritual
Earthly	Heavenly
Vile	Fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body.

Many questions could be raised about the glorified new body which no one can answer. John wrote, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be

like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:2).

It is obvious that there will be no physical scars on the incorruptible body — no pain, no sickness, no broken limbs, infirmities, and no death. It is enough to know that our spirits shall dwell eternally in heaven clothed in immortality!

I. HIMMEL

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Slamannan District: Scotland: The Quarterly Mutual Benefit Meeting was held at Redding-Muirhead on Saturday, 6th March, 1982, when an enthusiastic gathering, some coming a considerable distance, considered the subject, "What are the qualifications of elders and are they responsible for discipline in the church." The speakers were Harry McGinn, Dalmellington, and Mark Plain (Snr.) from Tranent. In the chair (at short notice) was Hugh Davidson, East Kilbride. The speakers dealt well with the subject and a great deal of discussion ensued. Indeed there was insufficient time for all those taking part to exhaust what they wanted to say. The next Mutual Benefit Meeting, will, God willing, be held at Tranent on 15th May, 1982, (4 p.m.) when the question will be "What is the sin unto death that should not be prayed for?". The speakers will be L. Purcell, Motherwell, and Tom McGinn, Dalmellington. The chairman will be Peter Sneddon, Denyloanhead.

H. Davidson

Zimbabwe: We are in Salisbury, Zimbabwe, (formerly Rhodesia) for a two-week visit. Since independence the country has become much more like Zambia. Chester was the main speaker in a day's Bible Teach-in for a combined meeting of eight Salisbury congregations. In addition he preached at three African congregations.

Angela & Chester Woodhall.

SOCIAL

Slamannan, Scotland: The Social will (D.V.) take place in the church Meeting House, New Street, Slamannan, on Sat. 22nd May, 1982, at 4 p.m. The speakers will be Bro. John Wilson (Jnr.) of Slamannan, and Bro. Tom Kemp, Hindley. A warm invitation is given to everyone to come and hear the Lord praised in word and song.

John B. Wilson (Sec.)

WELCOME TO BRIGHTON

It has always been a great joy at meetings of the church in Oxford Street, Brighton, to welcome Christians and friends who visit Sussex. As travelling days come round again, a very warm invitation is extended to everyone who is able to come and share in our fellowship. Con. John Batchelor tel. Brighton 722927.

WHAT JESUS THOUGHT OF HIS CHURCH

HE "loved the church and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25). He "nourisheth and cherisheth it." He loves and cares for it with loving and tender care, as the husband cares for his wife. To Him it is to be "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish". (Eph. 5:27).

The Lord's thinking and attitude towards the church should be our thinking and attitude. WE MAKE UP THE CHURCH, each brother and sister. Let us never at any time be a "spot" or "wrinkle" or "blemish".

Is Christ's attitude yours and mine?

—Woodstock (Cape Town) - Bulletin

WHEN GOD CALLED

Elijah was busy plowing;
Gideon was busy threshing wheat;
David was busy caring for the sheep;
Matthew was busy collecting taxes;
Amos was busy following the flock;
Peter and Andrew were busy fishing;
Saul was busy persecuting the church;
Moses was busy with his flocks in Horeb;
Nehemiah was busy carrying the King's cup;
James and John were busy preparing to fish;
King Savi was busy searching for lost beasts.

LET US ALL GET BUSY!
MAYBE THE LORD CAN USE US!

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