

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS

In the August issue, in my article ("The Manner of Some") I mentioned the strict attitude, fairly general in the extreme north of Scotland, in the keeping of the Lord's Sabbath, and how everything comes to a sudden halt on a Sunday. In this morning's paper I notice that the ferry company, Caledonian McBrayne, is firmly locked in a bitter struggle with the islanders of Harris and Lewis in connection with proposals for a ferry service to these islands on Sundays. A 'no holds barred' war is taking place and there's even talk of the islanders blockading all ports. One can sympathise with these quiet people not wanting a 'continental Sunday', and the noise and mess that day-trippers would bring, but it's difficult to see how a ferry-service would be a desecration of the Sabbath. This week-end, these same islanders refused to allow the running of the "Sports Aid Race Against Time" on the Sunday and insisted it be run on the Saturday (unwittingly desecrating the 'real' sabbath). Their zeal is admirable, as was Eric Little's in refusing to run in the Olympics on a Sunday, but surely it is sadly misplaced and fostered by the clergy of the Free Church of Scotland, who ought to know better. The 'Christian Sabbath' is constantly referred to: an expression difficult to understand: and one which seems to be a contradiction in terms.

These islanders, after all, are like the rest of us in the U.K. in that we are Gentiles, and the Sabbath NEVER EVER applied to Gentiles. Even if the good folk of Harris and Lewis had lived prior to Christ (B.C.) they would not only have not been asked to observe the Sabbath; they would certainly not have been allowed to keep the Sabbath (or indeed any other part of the Mosaic Law). The Sabbath was a unique and exclusive sign between God and the Jew. It seems rather ludicrous, does it not, that a people to whom the Sabbath never pertained, should insist on keeping it, especially 2,000 years after it ceased to be binding on those who did receive it - the Jews? It is sometimes alleged that because God rested on the seventh day that the Sabbath fell upon the shoulders of all God's creatures but surely the scriptures do not uphold any such view. Ex. 31:13-16 says that the Sabbath was a sign between God and Israel, and could hardly be such a sign if previously given to everybody. Deut. 5:15 says that the Sabbath was given to Israel (exclusively) and was to remind them of their deliverance from Egypt. Neh. 9:13-14 says that the Sabbath was given at Sinai (notwithstanding the 'trial' Sabbath) and was part of the law of Moses. No 'work' was to be done that day and the definition of 'work' has been taken to such lengths that, even today, most Jews would regard switching on a light to come into that category. Breaking the Sabbath in the O.T. was much more serious than a joust with Caledonian McBrayne and carried a CERTAIN DEATH PENALTY (Ex. 31:14) even for gather-

ing some sticks (Num. 15:12-36). Amongst those who like to pay lip-service to Sabbath keeping, whether it be Seventh-Day Adventists, or the people in the Outer Hebrides, we rarely hear them calling for the death-penalty for the many who break the Lord's Sacred Sabbath. Is it just a kind of game?

### THE LORD'S DAY

But, some would say, the 'Christian Sabbath' has replaced the Jewish Sabbath and although God has changed the day from the seventh day to the first day, the Sabbath rules must still be observed. When pressed on the matter, they will say only some of the rules of the Jewish Sabbath apply; certainly not the death penalty. They will also insist that **no work** must be done (but do not care to define 'work') and may also add that we must **devote** Sunday to the Lord (but are not sure exactly what is meant by that). Some years ago I wrote to the Lord's Day Observance Society on this subject and asked for a list of the rules applicable to the 'Christian Sabbath' (with scripture references) but I did not get a reply. One sometimes hears even members of the church talk in these terms but rarely hears the scripture references quoted. Many of those who talk of a complete 'down tools' on a Sunday will still expect the trains and the buses to run; still expect hotels to feed their guests and hospitals to look after their patients on Sundays; still expect power-stations and water-works and police stations to be manned on a Sunday. The early Christians met to break bread on a Sunday **and so should we**, but surely there is no reason in the N.T. for thinking that this makes Sunday the 'Christian Sabbath', or that there is any remote resemblance between Sunday and the Jewish Sabbath. Certainly we remember, in breaking the bread, our rescue from bondage (not from Egypt but from sin) but surely it can't be deduced from this that God changed the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first. I am not advocating that Christians should seek secular work on Sundays and be unable to be in their places to worship God, but just occasionally some, in certain occupations, (like nurses, doctors, firemen, ambulance drivers etc) may have to serve in that capacity. One wonders if the Christian slaves, in N.T. times, prior to Constantine, were given a day off on Sundays?

It was said of John, on the isle of Patmos, that he was "in the spirit" on the Lord's Day (commonly regarded as Sunday) and this 'phrase "in the spirit" has been bandied about over the years to include all kinds of self-imposed restraints for Sundays. A black (or dark) suit used to be insisted upon, and highly polished boots, sober faces; no laughing or loud talking; no 'novel reading'; no whistling; no ball-games for children; no radio; only hymn-tunes to be played upon pianos, etc. These were all supposed to be indications that one was "in the spirit" on a Sunday, when, in fact, that phrase had nothing whatsoever to do with personal demeanour. Most (if not all) Bible Commentators interpret "in the spirit" to mean that John was in a spiritual exaltation in which revelations were given. E.M. Zerr says, of the phrase, "that John was in a spiritual rapture in which he could hear and see things that could not ordinarily be heard and seen." Thus very few of us can ever claim to be "in the spirit" on the Lord's Day: indeed none at all. However, if anyone insists upon keeping an austere Sunday he can do so provided he does not require all others to do likewise. Even if a man insists upon observing the Jewish Sabbath (or being circumcised) no one is likely to stop him but it certainly will not make tuppence worth of difference. In fact, God will expect such an one to keep the whole law (Mosaic). This is the logical outcome, and it reflects badly upon Christ. Paul says, to those who insisted that Christians be circumcised, "**Behold I say unto you, that if ye (Christians) be circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised that he is a debtor to do the whole law**", (Gal. 5:6) and goes on to show that we are fallen from grace if we want to go back to the law.

## THE LAW

When the N.T. talks of "the Law" it generally refers to the Law of Moses, and Paul waged a constant war against Judaizing Christians who confused the law of Christ with Moses, and wanted to drag the Mosaic law (or parts of it) into the Christian faith. Men are still doing this today. Currently in our Bible Study Meetings at Haddington we are carefully examining and contrasting the Old and New covenants, and nothing can be more certain than that **the law** (including the 10 Commandments, the Sabbath, circumcision, animal sacrifices, and all other rites and ceremonies) have gone, lock, stock and barrel, for ever. It must be said that those who want to bring it back (or parts of it) are very selective. For example, those who want to keep the Sabbath seldom want to bring back circumcision, and those who go to the Psalms to find instrumental music ignore the references in that same book to worshipping God in dancing; and very few protestant churches engage in incense burning. As Paul says, those who would go back to Moses' law (or little bits of it) are in effect turning their backs upon Christ.

It must be doubtful if Paul could have used stronger language in his assertions that the law has gone in its entirety. (Space is limited and only a few quotations can be made). God oftentimes in the O.T. predicted the coming of a new, and very different, covenant (e.g. Jer. 31:31-33) and Paul in (Heb. 8:6-13) states that all these O.T. prophecies have now been fulfilled in Christ and that the New Covenant has come. God's use of "New" logically means that Moses' covenant was now "Old" and would pass away. Christ came **"to take away the first (covenant) that He may establish the second"** (Heb. 10:9). Christ took the law away **"having blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us; and hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to His cross."** (Col. 2:14). Christ took the law out of the way: blotting it out, and it must surely be difficult to misunderstand these words. But there is more. Christ said that He came not to destroy the law but to fulfill (fill it full) the law, and we know that any contract fulfilled is no longer of any force. The law was our school-master to bring us to Christ (Gal. 3:24) and was only a shadow of the good things to come (Heb. 10:1). If the first covenant had been faultless, no place would have been sought for another (Heb. 8:7) but He (Christ) **took away the first that He might establish the second** (Heb. 10:9). **"In that He (God) sayeth 'A New Covenant' He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away"** (Heb. 8:11). These statements could be greatly added to, but surely serve to show that the man is without excuse, who would say that any part of that old covenant is still of any force. The law, given by Moses, has been **fulfilled** in Christ: it has **decayed** and **waxed old**; it has been **taken away, blotted out**, and has **vanished** from the earth for ever.

Faced with the strength of such language, those who want to retain some items of Moses' law, have tried to short-circuit Paul's unequivocal words by claiming that **the law** can be split up into compartments such as 'the moral law'; 'the ceremonial law' and the 'judicial law' and that only parts of these have been abolished, but some retained. Paul does not seem to have been aware of these distinctions and certainly the N.T. **never ever** mentions them. It is, never the less, argued that the 'moral law', the 10 Commandments, was meant to apply to all of mankind everlasting, and therefore has never been abrogated. This is, of course, a nonsense for the '10 Commandments' **never ever** applied to Gentiles. Because the 10 Commandments have been abrogated, with all the rest of the law, does not mean that men can now do as they wish and are without law; for we are all (Jew and Gentile) subject to the law of Christ, and Christ's teachings are much more exacting than the 10 Commandments and broader in scope. In any case the first 4 of the 10 Commandments had nothing whatever to do with morals, and whole chapters in Exodus, and elsewhere, were devoted to morality.

Jesus certainly never talked in terms of 'the Moral Law' or 'Ceremonial Law' but He did occasionally refer to **'the law and the prophets'** (Matt. 11:12; 22:40) and no doubt meant by 'the law' the first five books of the O.T. written by Moses (The Pentateuch). On one occasion Jesus also spoke of Himself fulfilling scripture and said, **"all things must be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms,"** but usually when the 'the law' is referred to the whole O.T. economy is included. Indeed, twice (in John 10:34: and John 12:3) Jesus said, to the Jews **"It is written in your law"**, and **"We have heard out of the law"** and both times He is referring to something written in the Psalms (i.e. Ps. 82:6; 89:36). Also in John 15:25 Jesus said that it was written in **the law** **"They hated Me without a cause"** and this is, of course, from Psalm 35:19. And so 'the law' embraced the Psalms. In short; the law, the prophets and the Psalms were all fulfilled in Christ (Luke 24:44).

### CONCLUSION

Many have, no doubt, asked, as Paul does, what, then, was the purpose of the law? **"Wherefore then serveth the law?"** (Gal. 3:9) and Paul answers himself (and all others), **"It was added, because of transgressions, UNTIL the Seed (Christ) should come."** Christ has now come and so the law, which was but temporary, is no longer required, and as we have seen, vanished and was taken away so many centuries ago. Is it not strange that 2,000 years later, anyone, Jew or Gentile should want to bring back the beggarly elements which have been blotted out and nailed to the cross of Christ? For the new covenant, (or new testament) to come into force the death of the Testator had to come to pass (Heb. 9:16) and surely we all agree that this took place some 1988 years ago. Thus, the old covenant (with its Sabbath; Holy Days; animal sacrifices; tithing; circumcision; infant membership; instrumental music; dancing eating of meats; incense burning; temple worship; Aaronic priesthood, and all things pertaining thereto) has gone entirely and for ever. **"Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of a new moon, or of the Sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."** (Col. 2:16; Heb. 10:1). The law was the shadow: Christ is the substance.

May it be that we shall be content with this, and not be harping back to those things Christ has removed. The O.T. is given for our learning and admonition (Rom. 15:4) but not for our obedience or compliance. We are subject only to the law of liberty: the teaching of Christ and His apostles. Truly, **"the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."** (John 1:17). Do we believe it?

EDITOR.

## GLEANINGS

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

### MY PEACE

**"Peace I leave with you: My peace I give unto you." — John 14:27**

"What would we do without these later chapters of John? How sublimely they unveil the heart of Jesus! What illumination they flash upon the thought processes of that matchless mind in the hours leading up to the cross! In these chapters we are treading sacred soil. A voice Divine speaks from them to the reverent reader as clearly as that which called to Moses from the flaming bush of Horeb — "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

### HE POSSESSED PERFECT PEACE

In reading thoughtfully through these chapters we cannot fail to be most deeply impressed by two facts which stand out above all others in connection with Jesus Himself: first, that He plainly knew of His approaching suffering; and secondly, that

He possessed perfect peace. We are struck with a kind of awed surprise as, on the eve of His supreme ordeal, we see His majestic movements, His complete composure, His calm confidence, and as we hear Him quietly uttering to His apprehensive disciples the profoundest pronouncements and most comforting truths of all His ministry.

**OUR LORD'S PEACE**

In speaking about our Lord's peace, however, we need to have clear views as to what peace really is. There are wrong ideas about peace which lead men and women into delusion and disappointment.

**PEACE IS NOT MERELY IMPASSIVITY**

Peace is not merely impassivity, a negative quality, a condition of mind in which we remain completely unaffected by the happenings and circumstances around us. There are those who make a mistake here. They tell themselves that if they had real peace they would never be roused into any concern or strong emotion about the things outside them. Peace, they think, is a passive condition in which one is quite insensible to the troublous scenes of life. What does anything really matter? Why in the least worry? Peace is not simply the absence of feeling. . . . Peace is not simply the absence of disturbance; it is rather the presence of an assurance in the heart which brings rest about everything else. . . .

**PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU**

In the Lord Jesus Himself we see strong emotion blending in perfect concord with His sublimely wonderful peace. Take two of His utterances recorded in these later chapters of John. "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say?" (12.27). "He was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said: Verily, verily I say unto you that one of you shall betray Me" (13.21). The Lord Jesus could be moved with compassionate concern for the multitudes; He could sigh over the sufferings of the afflicted; He could weep at the grave of Lazarus; He could marvel at men's unbelief; He could thunder forth His anger at the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees; He could be "troubled" in prospect of His agony; He could suffer as no other; yet this is the One who none the less gives to us the most wonderful picture of peace we could ever find or desire, and Who says to us: "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you; Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

J. Sidlow Baxter.

**PEACE WITH GOD**

"To be at peace with man, we must be at peace with ourselves. To be at peace with ourselves, we must be at peace with God."

Monsell.

**BLESSED**

"Blessed is promised to the peacemaker, not to the conqueror."

(B. T. I.)

**WE QUOTE – FRANCIS RIDLEY HAVERGAL**

Like a river, glorious	Is God's perfect peace,
Over all victorious	In its bright increase;
Perfect, yet it floweth	Fully ev'ry day,
Perfect, yet it groweth.	Deeper all the way.

**Stayed upon Jehovah,  
Finding, as He promised,  
Hearts are fully blest;  
Perfect peace and rest.**

Selected by Leonard Morgan.

## WHAT IS THAT TO US?

Matt. 27:4

“What is that to us?” These words were spoken by the enemies of Jesus to Judas, the betrayer of our Lord. The traitorous disciple had betrayed his Lord, but “when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to chief priests and elders, saying, “I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.” Surely the chief priests and the elders would be willing to release Jesus when they would hear the confession of sin on the part of the traitor! They were the religious leaders of the Jews. They were religious but they were not righteous. What did they care if Jesus was innocent? What did they care for the penitent traitor? What did they care for Jesus the Saviour or for Judas the sinner? “What is that to us? See thou to that.” Their indifference to the plea of the penitent Judas was as heartless and cruel as their determination to destroy Jesus.

The same spirit of indifference that was manifested by the enemies of Jesus is being manifested by the world and by many members of the church. Many members of the body of Christ are indifferent and negligent, and seem to have but little interest in the Lord’s work. “What is that to us?” This seems to be the attitude that many members manifest in regard to the work and to the welfare of the church. Many “are at ease in Zion” and are not concerned about their own salvation or the salvation of others. What is that to us whether the church prospers or perishes? If souls are saved or lost, what is that to us? If wicked men would try to destroy the church, what is that to us? Many members are so indifferent that they would not utter a protest against the introduction of innovations and unscriptural practices that would corrupt the church. The same spirit of indifference that crucified the Christ would crucify the church, if it were not for the faithful few in every congregation that bear the burdens and shoulder the responsibilities that every Christian should share.

Many members of the body of Christ are sleeping the sleep of indifference. It is “high time to wake out of sleep” (Rom. 13:11). The condemnation of the negligent and indifferent is certain and could be nearer than we suppose. Too many are at ease in Zion and have put far away the evil day. Such unconcern may cause the seat of violence to come near (Amos 6:1-3). Our indifference is the devil’s delight. We serve Satan best when we think or say. “What is that to us?”

Cain was of that wicked one and slew his brother. He seemed unconcerned about his crime. God said, “Where is Abel thy brother?” Cain’s reply was one of indifference: “Am I my brother’s keeper?” His attitude toward the righteous son of Adam was the same as that of the chief priests and elders toward the righteous Son of God. Both he and they shed innocent blood and said, “What is that to us?” Cain could not free himself of the responsibility for the safety of his brother by manifesting a spirit of indifference. The unconcern of the chief priests did not diminish the guilt of the men that clamoured for the life’s blood of the Son of God. Many of the followers of the Christ have become imitators of the murderer Cain by their indifference to the welfare of their brethren in Christ. “Am I my brother’s keeper?” “What is that to us?” “Why should I care?” These are the answers of the indifferent and unconcerned when faced with the responsibilities and duties of the Christian life. Many members are honourable enough not to offer excuses for their indifference. Indifference on the part of a Christian is inexcusable.

The church at Laodicea was condemned for its luke-warm condition. That church did not care enough to realize its own wretched condition. It was indifferent, ignorant and independent. Its indifference was a disgrace. There are many congregations of the church that are no better than Laodicea. The Lord will not hold the negligent guiltless. The Lord has no use for a lifeless congregation or a luke-warm Christian.

Some day we must all stand before the judgement seat of Christ. There we shall be judged for what we have done and for what we have failed to do. The negligent and unfaithful must be separated from the good and faithful. The Lord shall separate them one from another as a "shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats." (Matt. 25:31-46). The good and faithful shall be "blest of my Father" because they have been a blessing to others. The negligent and indifferent shall be accursed forever.

G.W. Butterfield.

## "WHAT IS OUR GOAL"?

This is a very plain and simple question when looked at on the surface. Yet how many would base the answer upon God's word? In ordinary walks of life all men have a goal in mind. Some aim to become great sportsmen, professors, technicians carpenters, doctors, artists etc. Others seek leisure, entertainment, and the pleasures of life.

The purpose of this article is to remind the Christian of his proper goal and to suggest to the unbeliever the goal he must pursue. Many of those who attend worship services do so because of family tradition or because mother and father force the issue. There is little thought at all that in God's sight we are sinners, despite the fact that the Bible declares, "**All have sinned and come short of the glory of God**" (Romans 3:23), and that God "**commandeth all men everywhere to repent**". (Acts 17:30). Perhaps our reaction is "Oh! No! After all, who is going to tell me, a respectable-living person, who does no harm to anyone, who pays his way through life, who gives to charity, that I am a sinner?" This attitude is no better than that of the Pharisee (in Luke 18) who prayed aloud, "**God I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican**".

Yet we read that the publican was the more justified when he smote on his breast and cried, "**God be merciful to me a sinner**". The publican, thank God, was one of the individuals in life, who aims at the right goal: pleasing God, because he realised and admitted that he was a sinner. Recall, what Jesus said, "**Wide is the gate and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it**" (Matthew 7: 13-14). So many adopt the self-righteous attitude of the Pharisee which places them in the broad way. Few are of the humble, penitent type, who take the narrow way that leads to life. To enter this narrow path to life should be our goal.

We can look for no better example of proper goals than Jesus. He had one goal in mind: to please God, even though the road led to Calvary. It is recorded that when His appointed time was come "**He set his face steadfastly toward Jerusalem**". That was his goal. It meant life and hope for the world steeped in sin although it cost great sacrifice on Calvary. How thankful we should be! Paul once wrote, "For me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21). Think of this bold statement; "to live is Christ"! Dear friend, what is your goal? If we expect to live, it means more than just believing, singing, praying, giving, etc, it means self-denial of all things; it means crucifying self.

Did Jesus not teach us in Matthew 6:21 "**For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also**"? Paul admonished his brethren, "**One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus** (Phil. 3:13-14). Yes, for Paul to live was Christ! nothing else in the world was of any value: it was only Christ. Again he said: "**I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city saying that bonds and afflictions abide me**". But he boldly adds, "**none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course**

with joy, and the ministry, which I received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:22-24). That should be the pre-eminent attitude and spirit of every Christian.

On another occasion Paul said, "I rather Glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2nd Cor. 12:9). He spoke also of being in perils of robbers, in perils in the sea, being beaten with rods, stoned, a night and day in the deep, 39 stripes, painfulness, hunger, thirst etc, (2nd Cor. 11: 23-27). Can we imagine the physical pain and not marvel at the attitude that led to his admonishing his brethren, "press on, for to me to live is Christ"? Yes, Paul's goal was fixed. When he wrote "Be ye followers of me even as I am of Christ", he meant more than preaching, praying and giving. He meant suffering too! "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live, not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me". (Gal.2:20).

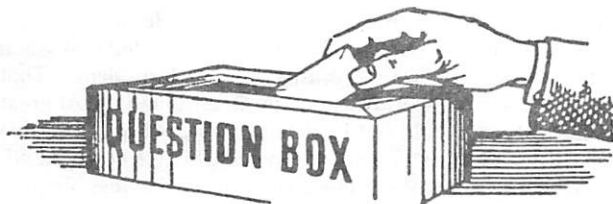
Quite apart from the physical sufferings Paul had to endure for his faith, there was also the mental agonies over false doctrines and that which came upon him daily – the care of all the churches. In manacles in Rome, he was deserted by nearly all his brethren. He said, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present evil world", and eventually reported that "only Luke is with me." What a sad report on Demas. His goal was clearly to get back into the world, for that was where his heart lay. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Truly, as Jesus said, "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of heaven."

"But none of these things move me" said Paul, "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

May we all strive towards the greatest of all goals – that we may lay hold on life everlasting, and enter the Holy City, where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, and where there shall be no more pain ... for all the former things shall have passed away. (Rev. 21:4). Who can find a better aim than that?

This is the challenge; whether we be unbelievers, or striving to be Christians. What really is our present goal in this life? God is challenging YOU!!

T.W. Hartle, (Evangelist)  
Cape Town, R.S.A.




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Conducted by  
Alf Marsden

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**"I have seen and read quite a lot of controversy by religious groups and by media writers concerning the person of Jesus. Should this give rise to any concern to members of Churches of Christ?"**

Anyone who is unaware of the controversy must live on another planet. Let us not delude ourselves; this is but the latest episode in a determined assault upon God, the Bible, and the Son of God. It seems that there are many people who will not be content until the last vestige of Christian influence is swept away. The much-maligned 'do-gooders' have been the butt of such people for a long time, and now the greatest 'do-gooder' of all, Jesus, is being de-valued by insidious attacks upon Him; it is almost



as if the statement about Jesus, “He went about doing good”, drives some people into a frenzy of anti-Christian activity. But we shouldn’t be surprised at this; Satan is still very active in the world although we tend to forget this, and the sad fact is that he has many willing helpers. Christians everywhere **should** be concerned about this, and we must always ensure that we are not aiding and abetting Satan in his work of denegation.

### Thoughts on the Godhead

The Biblical concept of the Godhead – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – seems too difficult a concept for many Christians to grapple with, indeed, there are many who say that we should not even try to understand it. This attitude of mind I find to be indefensible because God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit are fundamentally central to anything pertaining to Biblical truth; without them, the Bible would simply be a collection of morals and ethics applied to different historical situations.

There are certain fundamental features of the Godhead that we must strive to understand. God is a Spirit (the revelation by Jesus to the woman at the Well of Sychar. John 4:24); in this medium He was and is unapproachable by man in the flesh, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (John 1:18). Again in 1 Tim. 6:16 we read, “Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen or can see”. Man, God’s highest creation, was irrevocably lost in sin, a terminal condition which only a God-sacrifice could alleviate. The flesh-God – personified in the Christ of God, Jesus of Nazareth – who came to earth to be the God-sacrifice, was a function of the Spirit-God and essentially the same; consequently the words of Jesus to Phillip when he asked to see the Father, “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?” (John 14:9, but read on). Similarly, the Spirit, the Holy, was also a function of God and His Christ and attested to by Jesus Himself, “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26). Later, Jesus intimated that he had many things to say to His disciples which they could not bear at that time, but He went on, “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak : and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you” (John 16:13,14). Now if the Holy Spirit could do all the things that Jesus said, then we can only conclude that there is complete unity in the Godhead, and that God, in the persons of Jesus and the Holy Spirit, is making a complete revelation of **Himself** to mankind. If that is so, and if God has seen fit to direct this considerable **Divine** effort for the benefit of mankind, then those who ridicule and blaspheme and try to bring down Divinity to the level of fallen humanity had better prepare themselves for the inevitable Day of Judgment; there will be no hiding place for them.

### Jesus — the Problem of His Humanity

We can look at Jesus in two ways. He was either the personification of Divinity, i.e., God in the flesh, or He was a man like other men who proved Himself fit to be accepted by God as His Son. If He was God in the flesh, then prior to His advent He must have known the purpose of His mission and the inevitable outcome of it (this would seem to be supported by the many statements He made concerning His mission); the only thing which would be foreign to Him would be the actual experience of living in the flesh; this was not the chosen medium of gods. If, on the other hand, He was a man like other men who proved Himself good enough to be accepted by God as

His Son, then He would have been like other men, i.e., a sinner needing salvation. I cannot find anything in the N.T. which supports such a view. There are those who seek to limit Christ by saying that he had to learn how to be obedient, and they quote Heb. 5:8 which says, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered". Do such people really suggest that God would have jeopardised the whole scheme of Redemption by committing it into the hands of One who could have been disobedient to Him? It seems to me that the New Testament portrays a Christ who was not only certain about His mission but also about its outcome.

We need to look at the humanity of Christ in the context of the work which He had to do. John records that Jesus said to His disciples, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:34), and later in the prayer which He made to His Father He said, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4). So far as Jesus was concerned His mission had to end in the **completion** of the work which the Father had initiated in Him. The salvation which had been decreed in Heaven could only be completed on earth, hence the advent of Divinity on earth in the flesh with all the staggering implications of that momentous event. We **must** understand that the completion of the whole work of Redemption necessitated God appearing in the flesh. If there had been another way then I feel sure that God would have chosen it; I think the agony of contemplation by the Perfect One in the Garden of Gethsemane illustrates how abhorrent, but necessary, death by crucifixion would be. We think how detestable such a death would be to us, reared in the cesspool of human iniquity; how can we realise how it would appear to One who had come from the rarified and perfect atmosphere of Divinity?

Our understanding or misunderstanding of Jesus hinges on this cardinal fact; **He was not like us**. Oh, I know that His physical experiences in the flesh must have been excruciatingly painful and we should never try to minimise this, but surely He was never 'emptied' of His Divinity otherwise the many claims which He made would be invalid. Some detractors, their fertile and dark imaginations influenced by Satan, would have Jesus up to the age of thirty years as promiscuous, a wine-bibber, taking part in orgies, and even guilty of homo-sexuality, and the tragedy is that many people believe them. We must now address ourselves to the question of **why** they believe them because I feel that this is the crux of the whole argument.

I believe that we, and in this I include many Christians, have sought to make Jesus **too human**. In so doing we have, consciously or unconsciously, tried to bring Him down to our level. From my early days as a Christian I have always thought the opposite to be true; I cannot read the Philippian letter without it becoming startlingly clear that God is calling us 'upwards' in Christ Jesus. The statement about Jesus coming 'down' to earth is a directional irrelevance, but somehow it has become implanted in our minds that 'down' applies not only to direction but also to grading; He has become a down-graded Christ. Now isn't this precisely what is happening in the world today? God is too high a concept for many people to grapple with let alone accept, but they are acutely uncomfortable because He will not go away. So they say, "Ah, let's make God and His Christ just like we are, then they will be just as **fallible** as we are, **then** we can feel comfortable". Brothers, Sisters, Friends, let us not be afraid of the Deity of Jesus. Personally, I want my God and my Christ to be so far above me that I, along with the hymn-writer, have to view them with 'awesome wonder'; I want to thrill to the knowledge that the Creator of the universe 'stepped down' from Heaven to save fallen humanity; every time I think of God and His Christ I want to be able to think and say, "O God, How Great Thou Art"; in short, I am not interested in a high-class human being, I want my God to **be** God. You see, as my brother Peter teaches me, I, along with other Christians, have been made 'a

partaker of the Divine nature'; 'I have escaped the corruption that is in the world', and wonder of wonders, that Divine nature can in-dwell me in the Person of the Holy Spirit. I am related in the most intimate way to the God-Head. Even the humanity of Christ was glory to God, and isn't this why God sees fit to elevate us as Christians? "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you" (1 Peter 4:14). Yes, we as Christians **should** be concerned when Christ is denegated. Let us say with a loud and clear voice that the God-way is for us to rise to His level, not for we to try to pull Him down to ours.

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

## THE WORD OF GOD

Here are a few good points to remember about God's Word and the chapter and verse of the Bible where they are found:

1. **What is the word of God?** John (17:17) tells us that it is the word of truth. Ps. 119:105 says it is a lamp and a light. Luke 8:11 says it is the seed of the Kingdom. In Peter 1:23 we read that it is the incorruptible seed. Eph. 6:17 teaches us that it is the sword of the spirit and Heb. 4:12 adds that it is quick and powerful. John 6:63 says it is the spirit and the life. We find in Acts 13:26 that it is the word of life. 2 Cor. 5:19 tells us that it is the word of reconciliation.

2. **What does the Word of God do?** In 2 Tim 3:15 we read that it makes one wise unto salvation. James 1:21 tells us that it saves the soul. In Acts 20:32 we find that it builds us up. It discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart according to Heb. 4:12. In 2 Tim. 3:16-17 we are taught that it completely furnishes us unto every good work. John 15:3 tells us that it cleanses us from evil and it makes one free according to John 8:32. It tells us how to behave ourselves in the house of God. (1 Tim. 3-15). James 1:25 we find that the New Testament is the perfect law of liberty and in Heb. 10:19-20 that it contains the new and living way to heaven. The old law was only temporary in that the sins of the people were rolled forward a year at a time and that done by the shedding of the blood of animals (Heb. 10:1-4). It required the shed blood of the sinless, stainless, spotless son of the Living God on Calvary's cruel cross that mankind might be saved eternally in heaven. There is now a NEW and living way to heaven, although it is more than 1900 years old, (Heb. 10:19-20). The old way was done away at the cross and it was superceded by the new way.

### 3. What is the New way?

1. Hear the word. Mark 12:29; Rom. 10:17.
2. Believe it. John 8:24; Rom. 10:10.
3. Repent of sins. Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30.
4. Confess Jesus to be Christ, the Son of the living God. Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:10.
5. Be baptized for the remission of sins. Mk 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 2:16; Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27; 1 Peter 3:21.
6. After these things are done we must live the christian life as God directs. When we come to the river of death we can go across unafraid, there to enjoy the sunlight of God's eternal love. We, as christians, are sometimes prone to neglect the last major point in this new way – Rev. 2:10 sums it up – BE THOU FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH.

## A COMPARISON OF THE TWO COVENANTS

The First (Heb. 10:9)	The Second (Heb. 10:9)
1. Old Covenant (II Cor.3:14).	1. New Covenant (II Cor.3:6).
2. Takes away first (Heb.10:9).	2. Establishes second (Heb.10:9).
3. Given by prophets (Heb.1:1,2).	3. Given by Christ (Heb.1:1,2).
4. Given to Jews (Gen.17:13).	4. Given to every creature (Mark 16:15,16).
5. Written on stones (11 Cor.3:7).	5. Written in hearts (11 Cor.3:3).
6. Shadow of good things (Heb.10:1).	6. The true (Heb.8:1,2).
7. Offering oftentimes the same sacrifices (Heb.10:11).	7. Christ offered once for all (Heb.7:27).
8. Blood of animals (Heb.10:1-4).	8. Blood of Christ (Heb.9:14).
9. Animals as dead sacrifices (Heb.10:1-4).	9. Human body as living sacrifice (Rom.12:1).
10. A remembrance of sins (Heb.10:3).	10. Sins remembered no more (Heb.8:12).
11. Made nothing perfect or complete (Heb.7:19).	11. Perfect or complete in Christ (Col.1:28).
12. Fleshly circumcision (Gen.17:9-11).	12. Circumcision of the heart (Rom.2:29).
13. Ministration of condemnation (11 Cor.3:9).	13. Ministration of righteousness (II Cor.3:9).
14. Levitical priesthood (Heb.7:11).	14. Each Christian a priest (1 Peter 2:5).
15. Old priesthood and law (Heb.7:12).	15. Priesthood and law changed (Heb.7:12).
16. Faulty (Heb.8:7).	16. Perfect law (Jas.1:25).
17. Blotted out (Col.2:14).	17. Remaineth (11 Cor.3:11).

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

Nov. 6 Deut. 15: 1-11 1 John 4: 13-5:5  
 Nov. 13 Jer. 7: 16-31 1 John 5: 6-12  
 Nov. 20 Prov. 23: 1-15 2 John  
 Nov. 27 Gen. 18: 1-15 3 John

### Water and Blood

John wrote: "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the spirit that bears witness, because the Spirit is truth" (5:6). I used to wonder what he meant by these words. I think I understand now. In those days, there was a sect of heretics known as Docetists. They held that Christ's body was either a phantom or of celestial substance. They taught that

Jesus appeared to men in a spiritual body and that since he had no actual human body he only seemed (Greek: *dokein*) to suffer and die on the cross. (For example, the spurious **Gospel of Peter** has Jesus saying on the cross: "My power, my power, why hast thou forsaken me?") John answered this heresy by declaring that the Divine Christ was there at his baptism (came by water) and he was there at his crucifixion (came by blood). I am reminded here of the words in John's gospel record: "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knows that he says the truth, that you might believe" (19:34,35). F.F. Bruce has written: "This solemn attestation is evidently in-

tended to confirm (a) that Christ really died, (b) that by his death the O.T. prophecies regarding the Messiah were fulfilled, (c) that the blood and water from his side were a parabolic token of the truth that he came not with water only but with the water and the blood'."

### 1 John 5:7,8

Nearly all modern translations of the Bible do not contain the following words of the Authorised Version: "... bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the ..." Certainly, any honest student of the Biblical text would admit that this passage is an interpolation. But why is it there? My good friend and brother Graeme Pearson of Dunfermline is an ardent student of the Biblical text. In a recent joint-study we made on the Bible Graeme wrote: "Among the criticism levelled at Erasmus (editor of the first Greek N.T. in 1516), one of the most serious came from the editor of the Polyglot Bible who claimed that the Erasmus's text lacked part of the final chapter of 1 John (5:7 & 8). Erasmus replied that he had not found any Greek manuscript containing these words. In an unguarded moment he promised that he would insert this verse in future editions if a single Greek manuscript could be found that contained the passage. At length a copy was found, or was it made to order? The manuscript is known as the Leicester Codex which was written in Oxford in 1520 by a Franciscan friar named Froy. He took these words from the Latin Vulgate. Erasmus stood by his promise and inserted the passage in his 3rd edition in 1522, but he indicates in a lengthy footnote his suspicions that the manuscript had been prepared expressly in order to invalidate his text.

### The Sin Unto Death

John said: "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There

is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it" (5:16). This statement has puzzled a lot of scholars as well as ordinary Christians. I have in my bookshelves W.E. Vine's *The Epistles of John* and I see that he concurred, for example, with the views of Dr. James Macknight on this passage. Both believed that in those days God punished some men for their sins directly with physical disease or infirmity, and, in aggravated cases, with death. He wrote: "The phrase 'unto death' signifies tending towards death; rather than the actual condition of being in death. Accordingly, this would seem to rule out the view that the state referred to is that in which a child of God has lost all communion with the Lord, for that would involve a condition of spiritual death, already experienced, instead of that which tends toward it ... As to the subject of death, the only conclusion that seems possible is that the reference is to physical death." It is a controversial interpretation. Dear reader, I leave you to your own judgment on this passage.

### 2 John

The second epistle of John deals with the same general problem as the first, but apparently in reference to the particular situation of one local group or house church. It can be divided thus:

1. Opening salutation (1-3).
2. Occasion of rejoicing (4).
3. Exhortation (5-11).
4. Personal notes (12).
5. Final greeting (13).

We see from this epistle the importance of hospitality to travelling preachers. However, such hospitality was open to serious abuse by false teachers. The sister is warned not to have dealings with them (10,11). These were strong words from John, but the situation demanded them. The deceivers were out to undermine and destroy the apostle's doctrine, at the heart of which was the great fact: "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" (7). Of course, every Gnostic denied that.

In this letter we see the close relationship between truth and love. I once read: "The fellowship of the church is created by truth and exhibited in love. Our love grows soft if it is not strengthened by truth, our truth grows hard if it is not softened by love. We must love each other in the truth and hold to the truth in love".

It is also clear from this epistle that one cannot have God without Christ. John wrote: "Whatsoever transgresses and abides not in the doctrine of Christ, has not God. He who abides in the Doctrine of Christ, he has both the Father and the Son (9).

### 3 John

1. Opening salutation and good wishes (1-2).
2. Occasion of rejoicing (3-4).
3. Appreciation of help given to travelling teachers(5-8).
4. Diotrephes's unbrotherly conduct (9-10).
5. Exhortation (11).
6. Recommendation of Demetrius (12).
7. Personal notes (13-14).
8. Final greeting (14).

2 and 3 John were clearly written by the same author. Alford said: "They are like twin sisters." A. Brooke wrote: "The similarity between them is too close to admit of any explanation except common authorship or conscious imitation." F. F. Bruce has commented: "That all three epistles come from one and the same writer is, in my judgment, scarcely to be doubted".

The main object of John's third letter was to encourage Gaius in his course of Christian faithfulness and to contrast his conduct with that of a domineering Diotrephes. One writer has said: "Diotrephes, in his ambition, his arbitrariness, his arrogance, his tendency to the idle babble of controversy, and his fondness for excommunicating his opponents, furnishes us with a very ancient specimen of a character extremely familiar in the annals of ecclesiasticism."

There are five references to the name Gaius in the N.T. Scriptures. They may well represent four different people. Gaius was a very common name in the Roman world. Four times John called Gaius "beloved", which shows the deep affection the elderly apostle had for this servant of Christ.

Demetrius could well have been the bearer of the letter. John R.W. Stott has pointed out that in it he is given an impressive threefold testimony (12). Certainly, both Gaius and Demetrius contrast greatly with the wicked Diotrephes. Altogether, they make this small epistle fascinating reading.

Ian S. Davidson, Motherwell.

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Slamannan District:** The Mutual Benefit Meeting was held on Saturday, 10th September at Haddington, when a goodly number enjoyed a great time of chat, study and interesting discussion. It was nice to have visitors from all over: even from Kirby-In-Ashfield, and we had a wonderful fellowship. The subject discussed was "If it is wrong for the church to receive money by Deed of Covenant, how can we justify the receiving of interest from the Bank." The two speakers dealing with the subject were John Kneller (Tranent) and Ian Davidson (Motherwell). James R. Gardiner (Haddington) was in the chair. After the speakers there was one hour's general discussion and this proved far reaching into many aspects of church finances. Much food for thought was engendered. Our next Meeting, God willing, will be at Wallacestone on 10th December, when the subject will be "What is meant by 'Keepers at Home'." The chairman will be John Wilson (Newtongrange) and the speakers Mark Plain (Snr.) (Tranent) and Jim Sinclair (Snr.) (Tranent).

H. Davidson (Sec.)

**Wallacestone:** The church meeting at Wallacestone had great cause for rejoicing

when Isabella Wynn, made known her decision to accept Jesus as her Saviour and was baptised for remission of her sins on Sunday, 7th August. We take courage from this decision and pray that God will use both our new Sister and ourselves in the further extension of His kingdom.

James Grant.

## OBITUARY

**St. Louis, Missouri:** We regret to report the sad passing of sister Nell N. Ketcherside, who passed from this life on Saturday, 13th August, 1988 aged 82 years. Nell well-known to many in Britain, was the beloved wife of W. Carl Ketcherside, evangelist in St. Loius. Nell, a mother and grandmother, was buried in Farmington, Missouri, her 'home town'. Many of the brethren here in Great Britain remember, with great pleasure and affection, the two visits made to this country by Carl and Nell, and would want to join in sending their sympathy and condolences at this sad time. We ask God's strength and blessings upon the Ketcherside family in this their hour of great loss: to Carl, Gerald, Sharon, Sue-Burton, and indeed to all their families and friends. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

## APOLOGY

We apologise to all readers for any inconvenience caused by the recent postal strike. It seems that it will take another two weeks to clear the backlog of delayed mail, and this may mean that it will be some time before readers receive their September issue. We are sorry about this. It may also well be that items for the October issue have not yet reached me and may indeed not get here in time for the October issue. Our printer is very helpful and I know he will do his best to accommodate us as much as possible, but I apologise in advance should anything be omitted in the next issue, because of the strike. Ed.

## IMMERSIONS IN WILFORD

Bro. John Dodsley has provided me with an interesting and recent newspaper article which appeared in the *Nottingham Evening Post* regarding baptisms by immersion carried out by the Rector of St. Wilford's, Wilford, the Rev. Peter Newton.

Following his Sunday morning service, the Rector strips off his cassock, dons an old pair of trousers, and leads his 200 strong congregation down to the riverside (River Trent - near his church building) and accompanied by congregational hymn-singing, baptises all candidates for baptism in the river, by immersion.

The Rector says, "**The modern practice of sprinkling water in a font is a long way from the original concept of cleansing and washing away sins by total immersion.**"

The article also displayed photographs taken during these immersions and seems to have caused a bit of interest, and perhaps raised a few eyebrows, in the district.

It is extremely encouraging to hear, at last, some of this country's clergymen are realising the truth about baptism and talking about immersion for the washing away of sins. Churches of Christ have been advocating and practising immersion since the church began. Let us hope and pray that many others may follow this example, or at least be encouraged into making an investigation of the matter, and that other N.T. truths may yet be brought from obscurity by the main-stream churches into the bright light of day.

Ed.

## COMING EVENTS

**SOCIAL:**The Annual Social of the Church at Newtongrange will, God willing, take place at the Meeting-house on Saturday, 15th October, at 4 p.m. Chairman Joe Currie, speakers: John Kneller (Tranent) Ian Davidson (Motherwell). A warm welcome to all. Join us if you possibly can.

**BREVITIES**

Trials, temptations, disappointments — all these are helps instead of hindrances, if one uses them aright. They not only test the fibre of character, but strengthen it. Every conquered temptation represents a new fund of moral energy.

John Buchan.

All as God wills, Who wisely heeds to give or to withhold,  
And knoweth more of all my needs, than all my prayers have told.

Whittier.

Dear is the spot where Christians sleep,  
And sweet the strain which angels pour:  
Oh, why should we in anguish weep?

They are not lost, but gone before.

Anonymous.

**MISCELLANY**

The fact that you are not a leader does not mean that you should be a blind follower. (E. Morgan).

If you stand high in life, like a great pine or a cliff, expect to be shaken by storms. (W. W. Ayer).

David Thompson, and American journalist, writing of Palestine says: ‘The Bible, whose every word is testified to by stones in this land, has one ever-recurring refrain from the mouths of poets and prophets, and records one ever-recurring fact: that great civilisations perish when

men turn from God and fail to walk in the paths of righteousness, justice and mercy.’

Hidden bitterness, hidden deep within the soul, is a far more fruitful cause of spiritual defeat and powerlessness in the lives of Christians, than we have any idea. It smoulders there for years on end — bitterness. A wrong was done you, either real or fancy, and instead of committing it to God you have allowed it to lodge in your heart and fester. By such undisciplined emotions we grieve the Holy Spirit.

He that does not bring up his son to some honest calling and employment brings him up to be a thief. — Jewish proverb.

Thinking well is wise, planning well is wiser, doing well wisest and best of all. — Persian proverb.

God hangs the greatest weights upon the smallest wires — Bacon.

**ARE YOU WILLING TO TRY THESE?**

To close your book of complaints and open your book of praise?

To believe others are as sincere as you, and treat them with respect?

To ignore what life owes you and to think about what you owe to your life?

To stop looking for friendship and to start being friendly?

To be content with those things you have and to stop wishing for what you have not?

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