

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

Vol. 71 No. 7

JULY, 2004

"Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us looking unto Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith"

BE INSPIRED...

Let's accentuate the positive. The worldly view of the Christian experience may well be that it is like having put ourselves in an intellectual straitjacket and that we have accepted a life that is dominated by the dictatorial constraints of an over-bearing God. **Wrong!** In Christ, we have unique freedoms; great and precious freedoms that should be nurtured and cherished; freedoms that allow our spirits to soar to heights that cannot even be contemplated by those who deny God; freedom to contemplate the majestic, immortal and glorious truths that rest on our relationship with God.

- 1 **We are in communion with God.** Romans 8:16 - "The Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are children of God." This eternal truth, that we have been born again but this time into God's own family, that we are his children and heirs, should be a constant inspiration to us.
- 2 **We have the freedom to contemplate immortality.** We'll receive some strange looks if we insist to our friends, family, colleagues etc that we are immortal. But it's true. "God... in virtue of his own purpose... now has manifested through the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." "Tim 1:8-10. For faithful Christians, eternal life is a present reality.
- 3 **We are in the process of being renewed.** Not for the Christian the slide into narrow-mindedness and complacency and a fearful looking forward. We have been born again! We are being re-made. Every day, through our communion with God, "our inner nature is being renewed" as we are "changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another."
- 4 **We can find honour in service.** The Master himself said that he "came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many." Matt 20:28 When Jesus washed the feet of the disciples he made a powerful statement about the freedom that we have to see service as a strength.
- 5 We have freedom to serve one another in love **"...only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another."** In Christ we don't need to worry about hierarchies, titles and positions. We have the privilege of expressing love through mutual service.

Contents: 1-Be Inspired; 2-Confronting the Resurrection; 4-The Road to Recovery; 7-Wonderful Woman; 8-Question Box; 12-Word Study; 14-Balaam's Way; 15-News & Info.

Confronting the Resurrection

(Mitch Vick, Stirling)



It was more than an audience with a king. It was a clash of belief systems. On one hand was King Herod Agrippa II, a worldly king whose main concern was pleasing his Roman masters. He was rich, powerful, and not very religious.

On the other was Paul, a former Jewish rabbi, a Pharisee who was now a believer in Jesus Christ, and a prisoner held by the Romans because of Jewish opposition to his preaching.

For Agrippa it was an opportunity to meet a man about whom he might have heard much but with whom he had little in common. For Paul it was an opportunity not so much to plead for his freedom but to preach Jesus Christ, crucified and raised from the dead, to this powerful but secular man. As he spoke he asked, in Acts 26:8, **"Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?"**

Paul's question to the king could well be our question to our modern, secular society. Yet, to large numbers of modern people, it is incredible, an outdated belief with no relevance to our modern situation. There are several reasons secular people need to consider resurrection.

CONFRONTING DEATH

First, death confronts us constantly. All of us are touched by death, in our own families, in the circle of people around us, in the knowledge of our own mortality. Practically every newscast contains more horror stories of death and mayhem. Yet, the thought of death terrifies many modern people. Death is an obscenity, an unmentionable to many modern minds, so we need to hear about the possibility of resurrection.

Second, life often seems out of control. It is difficult to get on an airplane now without wondering if someone might have slipped through the security net. Television programmes with psychics claiming to help people communicate with the dead are on the increase. Astrology continues to grow in popularity, because people want to know what will happen next week, or next year. The best answer, the only real answer, is in the word of the resurrection.

Third, what happens after death is always something of a mystery. Archaeology is replete with accounts of ancient people preparing for the afterlife. We all ask questions about death and dying, even those of us who accept the truth of Scripture.

Fourth, if the Christian message is true, everyone will be brought face to face with one who blazed the trail in resurrection and who will judge the world in righteousness, Jesus Christ! One reason modern people reject the possibility of God, life after death, resurrection, and the Lordship of Jesus is that to admit the possibility of any of those things then forces them to acknowledge that they will be judged on the way they have lived their lives.

THE SECULAR MINDSET

Paul also confronts the secular mindset in the letters to Corinth. The Corinthians lived in a huge city where the cultures and religions of the east and the west met. They were educated, sophisticated people with the same kinds of problems and pressures we face. Life was tough and short, and many people asked, "Is this all there is to this world?"

Some people in Corinth lived the Epicurean philosophy, "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." Members of the Corinthian congregation rubbed shoulders with those people every day, and as they did, some in the church also began to think that perhaps there isn't anything after death. **"But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can**

some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?" (1 Cor. 15:12).

Paul's answer was to suppose first that Christ wasn't raised. What if the secular point of view is right?

If so, v. 13, then Christ was not raised. That means that a person cannot say there is no heaven, yet believe Jesus was a good man. If he wasn't raised, then his claims were wrong, he was a fraud, and all the early Church stood for and died for was deception.

No resurrection would mean that preaching is a waste of time: **"If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless."** Paul focuses on preaching because the heart of preaching is resurrection. Preaching is bringing the good news of the resurrection to people who are without hope.

Thirdly, if there is no resurrection, our faith is useless. It is built on a deception that someday we will live eternally. The Bible is an empty book, the God of the Bible is powerless and a figment of man's imagination, and believing in Him changes nothing.

Death is dead! Our lives have purpose and meaning because of the resurrection.

If that is true, the apostles are liars. Paul says: **"we then are found to be false witnesses about God"** (v. 15), because the apostles knew Jesus to be dead and yet they wrote that he was alive again. They were the worst of deceivers, a group of unscrupulous people who duped others with the biggest hoax of all time.

If there is no resurrection then people are still living in guilt and sin. The cross is an instrument of torture and death, not a symbol of victory, faith, or life. All our mistakes and failures still cling to us.

If there is no resurrection we will never again see our deceased loved ones, because this life is all there is. Paul says that if there is no resurrection, we who have believed are to be pitied more than all other men!

BUT IF CHRIST IS RAISED...

But what if Christ was raised and the secular mindset is wrong? **"But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep"** v. 20. Because Jesus Christ lives, God's redemptive purpose is taking place, not only in ancient Corinth but now as people around the world conform their lives to the will of Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

Because he lives, Paul says he is the first of many to live. **"But each in his own turn, Christ the first fruits, then when he comes those who belong to him."** A day will come when we also hear the voice of God and rise from the grave with a new, spiritual, eternal body never to die again.

Because we will rise again we have hope and security. As Christ rose from the grave he destroyed the power of death. Death is dead! Our lives have purpose and meaning because of the resurrection.

Because Jesus lives he reigns over everything. The Middle East might worry us, or the prospect of further wars, economic troubles, or terrorism, but the word of God teaches that this earth is not out of control, because Christ is Lord over everything! Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Ultimately, because Jesus is alive, God is fully glorified. **"So that God may be all and in all"** v. 28. God is in control. Everything is moving toward God's purpose, because Christ is alive.

His empty tomb tells us that our tombs will someday be empty also. And that brings hope to life, hope to death, and hope as we serve Jesus from day to day.

Practical Christianity

THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

(David Yasko, USA)

This is the beginning of a new series called the Road to Recovery. Specifically we are going to work on our hurts, our habits and our hang-ups.

This is God speaking...

Isaiah 57:18 "I have seen how they acted, but I will heal them. I will lead them and help them, and I will comfort those who mourn. I offer peace to all, near and far!" (GNV)

Life is tough. We live in an imperfect world. Romans tells us *all* have sinned. That means none of us is perfect. We've all made mistakes and the result is **we** hurt and we hurt others. Here's the good news: Regardless of what we need to recover from, the steps are all the same. The principles for recovery are found in the Bible, God's word and original recovery manual. In 1935 two men formulated, from God's word, what we call today the classic twelve steps to recovery. They founded Alcoholics Anonymous. We're basing the 8 lessons in this series around the word **RECOVERY**.

R in recovery stands for **Realise**. I need to REALISE: I'M NOT GOD; I ADMIT I'M POWERLESS TO CONTROL MY TENDENCY TO DO THE WRONG THING AND MY LIFE IS UNMANAGEABLE.

The Bible calls this tendency "my sinful nature." Our sinful nature gets us into all kinds of problems. We do things that aren't good for us, even when we know they are self-destructive. And we don't do things that **are** good for us. We respond the wrong way when we are hurt and it increases the hurt instead of lessening it. We react the wrong way to people and it backfires on us because we do it even though we know it's not going to work. Proverbs 14 tells us that there is a way that **seems** right but it always ends in death. Paul understood it. Can you identify with him: *Romans 7:15-17* **"I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, I can't help myself, but it is sin living in me."** Have you ever been there?

Now the first step to recovery comes when we understand the cause of this problem. First we understand the cause, then we can understand the consequences, so we can start to cure the problem. So let's look at them.

THE CAUSE OF MY PROBLEM: I WANT TO BE GOD. You say, "No I don't." Do you want to call all your own shots? Do you want to decide what's right and what's wrong? Yes. Would you like to make the rules? Of course. Would you like this world to revolve around you? You bet. Do you want anybody telling you what to do with your life? No. Do you want to be your own boss? Sure! That's called "playing God." What it says is, "I want to control." And the more insecure we are, the more we want to control; control ourselves, control other people, control our environment. It's trying to play God. This is mankind's oldest problem. It goes back to Adam and Eve. God put them in paradise and they tried to control it. God told them, "You can have everything in paradise with the exception of one thing: the fruit of that tree." What did they do? They made a beeline for that tree. Satan said, "Eat this

fruit and you'll be like God." The problem from the very start is that we want to be God.

How do we play God? By denying our humanity and by trying to control everything for selfish reasons. Control is the real issue. We try to control **our image**. We want to control what other people think about us. We don't want people to know what we're really like because what if I show you and you don't like me?

We also try to control **other people**. Parents try to control their kids. Kids try to control parents. Husbands try to control wives. Wives try to control husbands. We all have office politics. Countries try to control other countries. We use a lot of tools to try to control others. We use guilt, fear, praise, the silent treatment, anger.

We try to control **our own problems**. We use phrases like "I've got the situation under control." And "I can handle it, no problem." Whenever you hear that understand somebody is trying to play God. We may be dying on the inside and somebody asks us, "How are you doing?" and we say "fine, really." How's work going? "Fine, really." Of our problems, we'll say, "I'll work it out on my own." A TV repairer told me recently that the most common problems are "...the damage that's done when people try to fix their own stuff." The more we try to fix our problems by ourselves, the more damage we do.

Then, we try to control **our pain**. Have we ever noticed how much time we spend running from pain? We try to deny, reduce, avoid, escape, and especially postpone it. We do that by eating, or not eating. Some by getting drunk or by smoking or doing drugs; or by getting in and out of relationships looking for the one that's going to bring wholeness. Pretty soon we have a whole string of bad relationships. Other times we get mad or abusive; or by getting critical and judgmental of others as a means of hiding our pain; getting depressed... There are many, many ways to try to control our pain. The pain comes to us in our quiet moments when we realise we can't control everything and that scares us. Our first step to recovery is an understanding we aren't going to get well on our own. We didn't get sick on our own, Satan was right there with us.

...we will never change until the pain of the situation becomes greater than our fear of changing.

THE CONSEQUENCES: WHEN WE TRY TO PLAY GOD WE HAVE FOUR THINGS THAT HAPPEN TO US.

FEAR.

When we try to control everything we get scared. Adam in *Genesis 3:10*. "**He answered, 'I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.'**" When we try to play God we get scared because we're afraid somebody's going to find out we're not God; that we're fakes and phoney; that we aren't perfect and we don't have it all together. That's why we have such a hard time letting people get close to us.

FRUSTRATION.

It's frustrating trying to be the general manager of the universe. We knock down one problem and three more pop up. And we whack down one compulsion and another one takes its place. And we slam one relationship problem and another one just lines up behind it. We just can't get them all knocked down at the same time. Now we say we can. We say we are powerful enough to handle all of them. Paul understood frustration. Look at *Romans 7:21-23*. "**So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in**

the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.” David too understood frustration... In *Psalms 32:3* **“My dishonesty made me miserable and filled my days with frustration.” (LB)** If frustration is ruling our lives today it is just the symptom of a deeper problem that we’ve not dealt with. Namely that being God just doesn’t work for us.

FATIGUE.

It is tiring playing God. It’s tiring pretending you’ve got it all together, trying to control everything and denying it takes a lot of energy. *Psalms 32:4-5* **“For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity.”** Most of us try to hide from our pain by keeping busy. We think, “I don’t like the way I feel when I slow down.” “I don’t like the sound in my head when I lay down at night.” So we work 70 hours a week. Or we’re out on the golf course. Or we get involved in a hobby or sport that becomes our new compulsion. Let me be honest... Sometimes churches promote this because you can get lost in church activities to hide your pain. What is there that we don’t want to face up to?

FAILURE.

When we try to play God that is one job description we are guaranteed to fail at. *Proverbs 28:13* **“He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.”** We need to be honest and open about our weaknesses, faults and failures. At my congregation we are committed to being a safe place where real people can come and talk about real hang-ups, hurts and habits, and not be blown away by judgment. There isn’t a one of us who has it all together. So we want to develop this atmosphere where we can all work these steps together. Our sinful nature tells us that we will never change until the pain of the situation becomes greater than our fear of changing. When the acid of our pain eats through the wall of our denial, we’ll finally do something. It started with Adam and Eve. When they sinned they ran behind a bush. God made them, God made the bush, and they’re hiding from God. That’s how silly it is. I once said to a brother who had come to me for help, “Have you told God about this?” He said, “Oh no, I wouldn’t want him to know about it.” We can’t get fixed until we face the fact that we are powerless.

THE CURE: ADMIT MY POWERLESSNESS.

The Bible tells us that when we admit our weakness, we find strength. In our self-sufficient culture, this is not a popular idea. So admitting we’re not God is the key, and by admitting that, we know three things:

- ***We are powerless to change our past.*** It hurts, I still remember it, but all the resentment in the world isn’t going to change it.
- ***We are powerless to control other people.*** It just doesn’t work. We are responsible for our actions, not anybody else’s.
- ***We are powerless to cope with our harmful habits, behaviours and actions.*** Good intentions are not enough. We have tried and failed too many times. We need something more than ourselves; we need God. He made us to need him.

James 4:6: **“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”** For us to recover from hurts, hang-ups and hassles we have to go through God and God only gives grace to the humble. How do we determine what needs changing? By asking ourselves, “What have we been trying to ignore?” When we get over this hump we are well on our way to recovery, on the road to Freedom. It’s the hardest step because it is the most humbling step. But God knows it, and we know it, so let’s start off this series by admitting it.

WONDERFUL WOMANHOOD

Well, here it is - the Woman's page for the Scripture Standard. After much hard thought about worthiness, time available and so on (I'm sure all you women know what I mean), I decided there *is* a great need for women to know where they fit into the Church and, as no-one appeared to be taking on the task, here I am. I have often heard the question: "Why can't women preach - they do in the other churches?" and also "What is *our* job in the Church?". These questions are not just general moaning. In the world today (certainly in the West) women have become more independent and self-confident. This has resulted in the questioning of the status of women in the Bible and the Church. I had a discussion with a friend about the verse in **Ephesians 5:22**. She found it terrible that women had to submit/obey their husbands. Of course she was looking only at that verse, and not the rest of the chapter: **Husbands love your wives (Ephesians 5:28)**.

Women **do** have a place in the Church, and it is as important as that of men. **Train up a child the way he should go, and he will never depart from it (Proverbs 22:6)**. The first human contact or relationship a child has is usually his mother, so teaching the child is a most important job. There are many other ways women can serve in the Church.

Consider these verses:

Proverbs 31:10 to 31 (a verse often quoted to me - no prizes for guessing who quotes it!)

I Corinthians 7 (on marriage) all the conditions of marriage are applied to both men and women

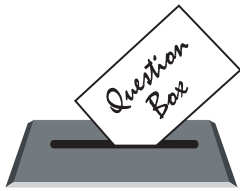
Titus 2 older women are encouraged to teach younger women

So, this page is intended to be used as a "meeting place" for thoughts and teachings concerning the idea of "being a woman". In the modern world there are many dilemmas facing us - career or motherhood or both, what to teach our children when their friends are doing things we don't allow, how to cope as a Christian in a different culture (different to the West, that is). Now many of these things are also the responsibility of the husband and father, but the first "port of call", so to speak, is the wife and mother. Think of your family - who does what and why? I'm not suggesting total equality between men and women, as we are different. Men can do things that require strength, while women have been given the ability to bear children (which is one of God's many wonders). Men have the more public job in the Church, while women have a more background job, that of raising the children and keeping house, which does have advantages (any suggestions?!). Every time the Scriptures talk about men and women as a couple, there is no mention of superiority - the words used do not show God favours men over women, or the other way round: "**in the image and likeness of God He created him; male and female He created them (Genesis 1:27)**" "**helpmate (Genesis 2:18)**" "**whoever believes in Him will have everlasting life (John 3:16)**". These promises are for **all**, not men or women.

These will be the themes for the next issues of "Wonderful Womanhood" in the SS, so I want your views on anything to do with the woman's role in the Church, problems you have had (or are having) and how you are coping with them, verses or teachings that you have found supportive, questions on the roles we have today, and so on. We all have opinions, thoughts and experiences to exchange that will be of benefit to some or all of us - have you ever thought no-one has the problem you have, and then spoken to someone to find that they have gone through the same thing? There is nothing new under the sun (**Ecclesiastes 1:9**).

So, get pen to paper, or fingers to keyboard, and start edifying us.

Ann Boland, Vardingholter Strasse 5, 46414 Rhede, Germany
e-mail: familie_boland@t-online.de



The Question.

"Which English version of the Scriptures should we use? Which is the best translation?"

These are questions taken from a letter which I recently received and I am fairly confident that they are as familiar to almost every other teacher or preacher of the Word of God - and, indeed, to every older Christian - as they are to me, because they are questions with which most devout students of the scriptures find themselves confronted, at some time or another in the course of their spiritual journey.

To this we must also add the fact that these are questions which have, through many years, given rise to quite serious debate, as Christians have compared the merits of the various English versions that are currently available.

The 'K.J.V'.

There are, for instance, many believers who are utterly convinced that there is one version which outshines and surpasses and which will survive all others, and that is the venerable K.J.V; the familiar 'King James Version', and they advance what they regard as incontrovertible reasons for adopting this position. They point out that:-

- 1) The K.J.V. is the oldest of the English versions in use today, having stood the test of time. It has been with us for almost 400 years and its very durability is an eloquent testimony to its worth.
- 2) It is still the most widely used and best loved of all the English versions.
- 3) It survived the early attempts of Roman Catholicism to prevent it from reaching the hands of the people, as well as the subsequent attacks that have been made upon it by critics and unbelievers of all kinds.
- 4) The beauty of its English prose is unsurpassed by anything modern scholars have produced and, even from a mere literary point of view, it must be regarded as one of the greatest treasures of English literature.

Furthermore, enthusiastic advocates of the K.J.V. have sometimes claimed that it is the most accurate version yet to be produced from the original biblical languages. And, they point out, after all, is it not *'the Authorized Version'*? This is a notion that, in the thinking of some, must surely give it special status.

Now let me, at this juncture, place on record by own affection for the K.J.V. It is, after all, the Bible version with which I was brought up and in which, many years ago, most of my memory work was done. I make this statement because there are certain historical facts that need to be set out, and I would not wish anyone to suppose that I am 'anti-K.J.V', because I draw attention to them.

The Unanswerable Question?

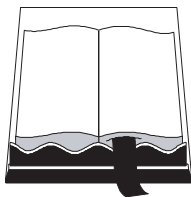
"Which version should we use?" Someone said that to ask the question is rather like asking, "Which car should I drive?" The answer is that the car you should choose depends on the use you have in mind for it.

Put it this way; If you have little interest in car-mechanics and simply want a vehicle that will transport you from 'a to b', there is a vast range of suitable vehicles from which to choose. But, if you are a mechanically-minded car enthusiast and you want a more technically-advanced, high performance sort of vehicle, these, too, are readily available. The choice is yours! So with Bible versions.



1. First, think about the question in relation to *personal Bible study and private devotion*. In other words, think about your spiritual needs. There are some versions that present the scriptures in plain and simple language which many readers find satisfactory because this meets their needs; and there are other versions that are clearly designed to meet the requirements of the more serious Bible student who is prepared to make the effort to discover the deeper, subtler shades of meaning that are to be found in the vast richness of God's Word. An Elder in a certain congregation once said to me, "*Frank, do you think that an Elder should know Greek?*" My reply was, "*Yes – if he wants to*". In other words, among the many versions, there are some that offer the plain milk of the Word for the young in faith, and there are others which provide 'strong meat' for those of greater experience and riper years. There is a version to meet the need of each individual. Not everyone wishes to study the original Greek text. But everyone can derive a blessing from the scriptures in good, simple English.
2. If it is a question concerning the choice of *the version most suitable for congregational use*; that is, for the reading of the scriptures in public worship, I suggest that this is where sound judgment and 'sanctified common sense' needs to be used.

Leaders of congregations should reach a carefully considered decision as to which version will be of the greatest benefit to those who listen when the scriptures are read in a service, and, in my view, this would mean ruling out the use of unfamiliar or unusual versions which the congregation cannot follow and to which it cannot relate. If the majority of the church-members are most familiar with the K.J.V, so be it! Read from the K.J.V.! But if the leadership decides to use a different, more modern version, I suggest that it has the responsibility to provide enough copies of that version to enable the congregation to follow the reading.



It is most frustrating – and confusing – to try to 'read along', when the reader has chosen to use an unfamiliar and little used version of the scriptures.

All Versions have Shortcomings.

Having said all of this, I must point out that, no matter which version we use, in private or in public, we are likely to find things which make us feel uncomfortable and perhaps even downright annoyed! (I must confess that I personally experience annoyance with certain modern versions, because of their improper use of English grammar).

But, if you think about it, the reason why some versions disappoint is obvious. We acknowledge that the books of both the Old and New Testaments were originally written by men who were inspired by the Holy Spirit, and what they wrote was the infallible Word of God. But we must also recognize that the men who *translated* the original scriptures into English in order to produce the versions we use today, were *not inspired*, and therefore the work they published inevitably contain the evidence of human fallibility.

Indeed, the translators themselves have always been the first to acknowledge their own limitations. I know of only one exception to this. The exception was Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism.

I have before me, as I write, a bible, published in 1867, which, on its title-page claims to be, "*The Holy Scriptures, Translated and Corrected by the Spirit of Revelation, by Joseph Smith, Jr., The Seer*". I should point out that Joseph did not possess either Hebrew or Greek manuscripts from which to translate. And even if he had, an insurmountable problem remained. He knew neither Hebrew or Greek!

So, there are no divinely – inspired translations. Not even the revered K.J.V. escapes this fact, and we are unwise if we think otherwise.

Consider its History.

The version we know as the '*King James Version*' was not the first English version to be produced, by any means. The names of Wycliffe and Tyndale readily spring to mind.

There was, among the better-known versions, the '*The Great Bible*' – 'great', because of its size. This was a translation made by Miles Coverdale on the orders of Thomas Cromwell and published in 1539, which, co-incidentally, was the year in which Thomas became the 'Lord Great Chamberlain' to Henry 8th. It was this 'Great Bible' that was securely chained in each parish church and which could be read freely by anyone who had the ability to read. I mention this version, because this was the Bible which, the following year, when a new edition was printed, stated on its title-page, "*This is the Bible appointed to the use of the churches*".

It is in this sense that it became '*the authorized version*', but there is no historical evidence to show that *any* English version was ever 'authorized' by either King or Parliament, and, certainly, none was ever 'divinely authorized'!

It is not surprising, therefore, that when, in 1611, the 'K.J.V.' was produced, it also carried the same declaration on its title-page, indicating that it was '*permissible to read it in churches*'. Furthermore, we should note that the connection between the 1611 version and King James himself was a very loose one! He neither commanded the translation to be made, nor did he provide any money to pay for the work to be done!

James - (*the 1st of England, but the 6th of Scotland!*)- merely agreed with a proposal made by John Reynolds during the Hampton Court Conference of 1604 that, in view of the general dissatisfaction being expressed with existing versions, a new translation should be made, and it was this new Bible that made its appearance in 1611 which perpetuates the name of King James.

It is recorded that the King expressed the hope that the new Bible would be a work '*of such excellence that the entire church would be bound to it and to no other*'. But this proved to be a vain hope. There was great controversy and a great deal of criticism expressed, because the new version simply did not please the many divisions that existed both inside and outside of the Church of England. And it most certainly did not please the Church of Rome, whose leaders declared, "*If it must be translated into English, Catholics are the fittest to do it*"

There is no doubt that the K.J.V. of 1611 was far from perfect. One scholar of that period, William Kilburn, declared in 1659, that in the *six different revisions* of the K.J.V. made during the 1650s, he had found no fewer than 20,000 errors. Another critic, Hugh Broughton, said after examining the translation, that it was '*so poorly done that it would grieve him as long as he lived*'.

No doubt most of these faults were trivial matters – probably printing and spelling errors, but there were also some serious faults, and the version passed through many more revisions before it was decided to produce what became known as, '*The English Revised Version*' of 1881.

What I find rather strange is that, although the K.J.V. of today is very different from the original 1611 edition, some of these textual errors remain. Look, for example, at 1st Cor. 13:5. Modern versions have correctly removed the word '*easily*', because it is not found in the Greek text, and the '*English Revised Version*' was the first from which the word was removed. Another strange rendering is still found in the K.J.V. of Matt.23:24, where we find, '*strain at a gnat*', corrected, of course, in modern versions, to read '*strain out a gnat*'.

I think many of us are also aware of the fact that the translators of 1611, deliberately avoided translating the words '*baptismos*' and '*baptizo*' with the English '*immersion*' and '*immerse*', or '*dip*', because this would expose the practices of 'sprinkling' and 'pouring' for baptism, as

unscriptural. They chose, instead to 'anglicize' the Greek words, and translated them 'baptism and baptize', in this way hiding the correct action of the ordinance commanded by the Lord Himself.

Why did the faults appear in the 'K.J.V'?

It is important to bear in mind that the original K.J.V was based largely on the work produced by Erasmus almost a century earlier, who, in 1516, made use of medieval documents and did not have access to the Greek manuscripts that were available when the Revised Version was produced in 1881. Today, there are more than 5000 Greek manuscripts available to scholars. Two of the three oldest of these, the Alexandrian and the Sinaitic, are today in the new British Library in London.

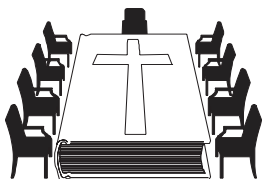
Do we Need New Versions?

Whether we like it or not, new versions will certain be produced from time to time, simply because unlike the Hebrew and Greek in which the scriptures originally appeared and which are now 'dead languages', English is a living language in which new words are constantly being created, whilst old words become obsolete, or even change their meanings. Look, for example, at the word 'yet' in Rom.1:13 of the K.J.V. In 1611 the word meant 'prevented' or 'hindered' It is surely commendable that biblical scholars are concerned to produce versions of the scriptures in language which can understand and with which readers are comfortable,

The New International Version

The most recent *widely accepted* version - (*I think!*) - is the 'N.I.V', which appeared in 1978. When this version of the entire Bible first made its appearance, the publishers expressed the hope that 'it would do for our time what the K.J.V. did for its day'. Considering the fact that it took many revisions throughout many years before the K.J.V. achieved popular acceptance, perhaps we should say that it is still too early to pronounce a verdict on this latest version. Let us say that 'the jury is still out', although I have noticed that it is being used in certain congregations when a reader is allowed to use the version of his own choosing.

If accuracy of translation is judged by the number of scholars engaged in a project, then the 'N.I.V', should be the most accurate Bible yet produced, because the largest group of translators in history was brought together to produce it. They were organized into 20 groups, whose work was examined by two committees, who then passed in on to another committee for final scrutiny, before it was approved for publication.



And yet, all this organization and care did not prevent the appearance of questionable translations. For instance, Psalm 51:5 is rendered, in a way which gives the verse an entirely different meaning. Instead of the familiar 'I was born in sin', we are given, 'I have been a sinner from my birth', which gives the verse an entirely different meaning.

Brother Foy E. Wallace, who was a very forceful advocate of the 'K.J.V'. was equally forceful in his condemnation of the 'N.I.V', in an article which appeared in the "*Gospel Advocate*" in 1975. Reviewing the work in progress, he accused the translators of producing a Bible 'tinctured throughout with the erroneous doctrines of original sin, hereditary depravity, the restoration of national Israel, pre-millennialism and predestination'.

The obvious message therefore is, 'handle with care'. Compare version with version, and remember that translations made by individuals are more likely to contain serious doctrinal errors than those made by groups of scholars, whose work has been more closely scrutinized and corrected.

Questions please to : Frank Worgan, 15 Stanier Close, Corby, Northants. NN17 1XP

Word Study THIEVES

Ian S Davidson (Motherwell)

Theft is a sin. It was made the subject of one of the Ten Commandments. We read: **"You shall not steal."** (Exodus 20:15). There are clear passages in the New Testament scriptures forbidding theft: **"Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."** (I Corinthians 6:9,10); **"Let him who stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him who needs."** (Ephesians 4:28); **"Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Saviour attractive."** (Titus 2:9,10, N.I.V.); **"But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters."** (I Peter 4:15) Theft has been a problem in every age. It is a serious problem everywhere in the modern world. The costs to societies are incalculable.

ADDITIONAL PASSAGES

There are other interesting passages that refer to theft. **"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupts, and where thieves do not break through and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."** (Matthew 6: 19-21); **"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He who enters not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."** (John 10:1); **"The thief comes not, but to steal and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly."** (John 10:10); **"For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night."** (I Thessalonians 5: 2) See also 2 Peter 3:10, Revelation 3:3 and 16:15.

GREEK TERMS

The standard Greek word for a thief is *kleptes*. This is seen in the English word kleptomania. This is not the word that is used of the two who were crucified with Jesus. Each of these was a *lestes*, the term for a robber or a brigand. W.E.Vine points out that the Greek word is "akin to *leia*, booty, one who plunders openly and by violence". Clearly, a *lestes* was guilty of far worse crimes than a *kleptes*. Barabbas, whom the people demanded to be released at the time of Jesus' trial, was described by John as "a robber". (John 18:40) Again, the Greek word is *lestes*. Flavius Josephus, the Jewish historian, used the term to describe a Zealot insurgent. This is in line with Mark's description of Barabbas. We read: **"And there was one named Barabbas, who lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection."** (Mark 15:7) I think F.F. Bruce is right when he wrote: "The two bandits – *lestai*, as Mark calls them (15:27) – who

were crucified with Jesus were probably involved in the same incident". Now we see why these two men were crucified by the Roman authorities: they were guilty of crimes punishable by death. (Incidentally, Luke describes the two men as "malefactors" (23:32,33,39), which simply means evildoers).

Jesus was, therefore, crucified between two dangerous criminals, who had been involved in violent struggles against the Roman occupiers. What sort of trial had these men received? What was the evidence against them? What were their ages? Where had they come from? These are questions about which we know nothing. Certainly, they were guilty. Luke records for us: **"And one of the malefactors who were hanged railed on Jesus, saying, If you be Christ, save yourself and us. But the other answering, rebuked him, saying, Do you not fear God, seeing you are in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man has done nothing amiss."** (Luke 23:39-41).

SATAN'S LOSS

Satan tried to make things as bad as possible for the Master because He was numbered with the transgressors. (Mark 15:28) Later, Paul wrote that a crucified Saviour was a stumbling-block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. (1 Corinthians 2:23) He also wrote: **"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ..."** (Galatians 3:13, 14a) Satan tried to paint the picture that Jesus was just a common criminal. He tried to blacken His name, but, of course, was unsuccessful. One of the great things to come out of Calvary was that Satan lost one of the two malefactors to the Master. I am sure he never expected that. We read: **"And he (the malefactor) said unto Jesus, Lord remember me when you come into your kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto you, Today you shall be with me in paradise."** (Luke 23: 42,43) Could these words have followed a conversation not recorded by the Holy Spirit? In any event, Jesus saved the robber on the cross.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Salvation is available to all – to thieves, robbers, brigands, bandits, etc. The guilty might well be subject to capital punishment in many societies, but there is time for them to turn to God, who is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9b) Indeed, capital punishment very often concentrates the mind wonderfully on the spiritual and the eternal. It did in the case of the robber at Golgotha and his soul accompanied Jesus' soul to paradise of Hades. The soul of this famous "thief" is still there. He awaits the glorious return of the Lord, who will judge the world in righteousness and separate the sheep from the goats. The great tragedy in all this is that the second "thief" did not repent on the cross; and now, for him, it is too late. There is no second chance beyond the grave no matter what some men teach.

He had the opportunity to repent, but turned it down. He will regret the decision forever. Not for him eternal life and eternal joy, but eternal death and eternal sorrow. The eternal destiny of these two "thieves" should make us all think. It is either heaven or hell for everyone.

Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, with his drawn sword in his hand;

Balaam's Ways (6)

(Brian J Boland)

Man places a great deal of weight on the image he presents to others. Youngsters demand the latest fashion in jeans and trainers; this progresses through hairstyles and jewellery through cycles and then to cars. They feel it is important that the right statement is made to those that are required to be impressed. Balaam was no exception. His choice of transport, a donkey [Num.22.21], was to provide a picture of a meek and lowly man of God. A few years before Moses had warned about relying on horses [Deut. 17.16]. But the donkey was the animal that Abraham used to carry the wood to sacrifice Isaac [Genesis 22.3]. It was a picture that was used to portray the humility of Christ [Zech 9.9]. What Balaam said to Balak, and the impression he gave by his appearance, was that of a true man of God. But God does not judge on outward appearances but on the heart [1Sam 16.7]. The real Balaam is seen when the donkey pressed Balaam's leg against the wall leading Balaam to lose his temper and savagely beat the animal. This was the true nature of Balaam. His loss of control of himself and cruelty to animals ran counter to all the teachings of God to his people at that time.

When Abraham sent his servant to his homeland to find a wife for Isaac [Gen.24] the servant set a test to quickly test the heart of the bride to be. After praying to God, he said in his heart to Him **"now may it be that the girl to whom I say "Please let down your jar so that I may drink" and whoever answers "Drink, and I will water your camels also: - may she be the one whom thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac".** It was Rebekah who met the challenge. She gave him a drink and set about watering his 10 camels. With a camel requiring nearly 30 gallons of water, this meant her drawing more than a ton of water for them until **"they had finished drinking"**. [Gen. 24.19]. Here was a young girl who had a nurse and several maids [Gen. 24.59-61] meeting the needs of the stranger and his animals without a second thought. The ten commandments even required that a donkey should not work on the Sabbath [Deut.5.14]. It was also considered that a righteous man should regard the life of his beast [Prov.12.10] even to the point of not muzzling the animal that tread the corn [Deut 25.4] or ploughing with a donkey and a ox together [Deut. 22.10] Rebekah passed her respect for animals on to her son Jacob as he sought his wife [Gen 29]. The complete respect for the animal kingdom was then built into the ethic of the founders of the Jewish nation. It formed an important principal in Jewish law even overriding a person's natural response to ones enemies whose animal required care [Exodus 23.4,5]. Jesus even granted that his enemies would care for their own animals by taking them out of a pit even on a Sabbath even though they held the day in high regard [Mt12.11] Yet here is Balaam having a burning desire to kill his very own donkey. Let us be continually on our guard, it is how we react to the everyday events in our lives on how we will be judged by man- and by God- not by what image we initially portray- however well prepared.

Peter reminds us that those who are like Balaam when he was rebuked by the donkey are **"waterless springs and mists driven by a storm"**. He also warns those that **"have escaped the defilements of the world through Jesus Christ, and then are entangled again in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness."** [2 Peter 2.16-21 ESV]. The consequences then of losing control of oneself and venting ones anger, even on a dumb animal, are enormous. Let us then, take to heart the words of Paul to the Ephesians **"do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you are sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another."** [Eph 4.30-32 ESV]

News and Information

Ghana Appeal

Over the years donations have helped to cure physical ailments as well as saving souls through the preaching of God's word and we pass on to donors the thanks of our brethren which we have received through their letters.

One example is the baby born with severe internal abnormality which was reported in the July 2002 edition of the Scripture Standard. We have now learned that, after enduring a series of operations, her final operation has been successfully completed. Her name is Christabel and let us pray that, with the loving care of her Christian parents, she will now grow to be strong physically as well as spiritually.

After paying as much as they can towards the bill for a sister who has been in hospital for three months a congregation is appealing for help to pay the outstanding amount. While churches help those in need, their resources are very limited and your donations save many desperate situations. A widower left with four children is unable to work due to an eye condition recently treated and these are just some of the cases that come to our attention.

Evangelism continues and as we have mentioned before, this brings a need for Bibles, hymn books, study material and lanterns for evening meetings. Megaphones are also very helpful for outdoor preaching to a wider audience.

Those wishing to help please make cheques payable to: **Dennyloanhead Church of Christ Ghana Fund and send to treasurer: Mrs. Janet Macdonald, 12 Charles Drive, Larbert, Falkirk, Stirlingshire. FK5 3HB. Tel: 01324 562480**

Bro Albert Winstanley

I am sure that all of our readers are aware of the recent death of Bro. Albert Winstanley of Ulverston, Cumbria. I have not received any 'official' notice from the Church or the family for insertion in the SS and of course the special issue of the Christian Worker, devoted to reflections from Christians around the world on Albert's life and work, was a worthy testimony to his influence.

However it seems right that the SS should also acknowledge in its pages the remarkable influence for good that Albert was amongst the Churches in the UK and far beyond. His work in the many parts of the UK and overseas where he served the Lord was an inspiration to many.

I came to know him best during his time working as an evangelist in Skelmersdale during a period when a lot of co-operative work took place between the Skelmersdale and Albert Street congregations. He used his many skills – teaching us to sing parts; conducting, with others, training classes; engaging in public speaking and private study. He arranged a singing group to visit residential homes, hospitals, and aged members and without fail within minutes of arriving at any location he would have the 'audience' "eating out of his hand" – he simply made them feel special. When he felt that our singing group had grasped his instruction he would make us feel good as well often saying (tongue in cheek, I think), "that was so good I think we'll make a record", in his own inimitable style.

One abiding memory is of the Wigan Fellowship Weekend of 2002. Albert was asked to give a short address with very little warning. Typically, despite his increasing frailty, he rolled back the years and for 15 or 20 minutes or so he held the congregation spellbound as he

exhorted us to remain steadfast in the faith. It was a moving, impromptu "tour de force".

Sixty-five years ago in the April 1939 issue of the SS, under the heading **Bro. A Winstanley's Missions** was this report. "*Bro Albert Winstanley, of whose ability and promise of future evangelistic usefulness during his training under Bro. Crosthwaite, we have very good reports from Slamannan district, is to labour (DV) with the Hindley Church during April, another church during May, and Ilford (London) during June. We commend our young brother, and those with whom he will labour, warmly to the prayers of the brethren.* (CB)

Well, Albert was 19 years old then, and I think we can safely say that the early promise was resoundingly fulfilled to the glory of God.

Editor

Coming Events

Kentishtown, London

October 2nd and 3rd, 2004

ANNIVERSARY MEETINGS

Speaker: Geoff Daniell (Bristol)

Saturday, 2nd

3.00pm **Tea**

6.00pm **Gospel Meeting**

Sunday, 3rd – **Normal Services**

Newtongrange, Scotland

Saturday, October 9th, 2004

ANNUAL SOCIAL

Speaker: Graeme Pearson,
Dunfermline

Meeting will start at 1.00 pm

**** Please note earlier time ****

Peterhead, Scotland

2nd & 3rd October 2004

A weekend of fellowship and thanksgiving to celebrate the opening of our new meeting hall.

Saturday 2nd:

3pm Fellowship

(followed by refreshments)

6pm Evening meeting

Sunday 3rd

10am Bible Study

11am Breaking Bread

6pm Gospel Meeting

A warm welcome will be given to all. There is limited accommodation available which will be assigned on a first come first served basis. Please contact: 01779 473046.

On behalf of the Church,
Alex John Wedderburn

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is published monthly.

PRICE PER COPY – POST PAID FOR ONE YEAR

UNITED KINGDOM. £10.00

OVERSEAS BY SURFACE MAIL. £10.00 (\$16.00US or \$20.00Can)

OVERSEAS BY AIR MAIL. £14.00 (\$22.00US or \$28.00Can)

PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO "SCRIPTURE STANDARD"

DISTRIBUTION AGENT & TREASURER:

JOHN K. KNELLER, 4 Glassel Park Road, Longniddry, East Lothian, EH32 0NY.

E-mail: john@kkneller.freemove.co.uk

Tel: 01875 853212 to whom change of address should be sent.

EDITOR: ROBERT MARSDEN, 4 The Copse, Orrell Road, Orrell, Wigan, England, WN5 8HL. Tel: 01942 212320 E-mail: bob.rock@virgin.net