

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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THE RESURRECTION

Some things *demand* an explanation. Think of all the incidents which confront us daily which call for investigation and explanation. A broken window; the key won't turn in the lock; no water will come out of the tap; a tyre on the car is losing pressure; an employee hasn't turned up for work; the cooker in the kitchen won't heat up, etc. etc. Doctors in their surgeries are bombarded each day with symptoms and questions from frightened patients requiring explanations — one is losing weight; one is unable to breathe properly; one is losing the sight in one eye; one is passing blood; one has an alarming rash, and so on. The police are no strangers to situations requiring an explanation. They deal each hour with bizarre events and mysterious goings-on which all have an explanation, if it can be found. Perhaps the most serious situation is when a dead body is found — such a thing certainly requires an explanation. When was the person last seen alive and how did they die? Has a murder been committed? A blood-stained knife is found nearby and serious wounds are visible on the body. Enquiries and a search is made, witnesses are interviewed, clues and fingerprints are sought. Once foul play is confirmed the police move on to identify the suspects; consider the motives and ponder the opportunities. *No one actually saw* what took place but the facts testify to what must have happened. The police and the lawyers try to discover the most likely explanation from the facts.

Deductions must be intelligently made. Someone who was alive and is now dead is a circumstance which demands an explanation. We are no strangers to such situations. Jesus' empty tomb equally demands an explanation. Someone who was quite dead and is now certainly alive is surely a matter which requires an explanation. Jesus was murdered but threw the dead process into reverse.

Jesus is unique in having risen immortal from the dead. No one *actually saw* Jesus emerge from the tomb but certain facts require an explanation. Deductions *must* be drawn from the facts and must account for *The Predictions; The Death; The burial; The empty Tomb; the Appearances and The Impact.*

THE PREDICTIONS — Apart from the Old Testament predictions that Jesus would be redeemed from the power of the grave and that His soul would not be left to Sheol, or see corruption (Ps.16:10; 71:20; Ho. 13:14), Jesus Himself predicted long before His death that He would rise again from the grave. His predictions may have fallen on deaf ears as far as His disciples were concerned but Jesus made these predictions regularly. "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His

disciples, how that He must go up to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day (Matt. 20:19). A few chapters later Jesus informed His disciples that *after He had risen* He would go before them into Galilee. When He came down from the mount of transfiguration with Peter, James and John He told them not to say a word of what they had seen "until He had risen again from the dead." He also challenged the Jewish leaders with the assertion, "Destroy this temple (His body) and in three days I will raise it up." These many predictions are most worthy of mention because they illustrate that Jesus had every confidence that He would conquer death and the grave (a confidence apparently not shared by His disciples) and that the resurrection was not therefore a clever but hasty stage-managed fraud perpetrated by His disciples (as is alleged by sceptics and Higher Criticism). To rise from the dead the third day after burial is an achievement defying description — to have *predicted it* many times beforehand multiplies the marvel a hundred times.

THE DEATH — I understand that few sceptics nowadays attempt to deny that Jesus was certainly dead prior to being laid in the tomb. At one time it was argued that Jesus was but unconscious when He was interred and the spices and coolness of the tomb brought Him out of His 'swoon.'

It was never explained, however, how He got out of the tomb and how he moved the 'exceedingly great' stone which blocked the tomb entrance, especially without any blood in His veins. The Roman soldiers may have been rough but they were also known to be efficient and when instructed by Pilate (at the request of the Jews) to hasten the deaths of those on the three crosses by breaking their legs, we read that they broke the legs of the other two but did not break the legs of Jesus because He was '*dead already.*'

THE BURIAL — Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus wound the dead body of Jesus in linen clothes, with spices, and buried it in the manner of the Jews in a tomb hewn from the rock and rolled a 'very great' stone against the entrance. The disciples of Jesus may have forgotten the forecast of Jesus that He would rise the third day but *the enemies* of Jesus remembered it and took it more seriously. They were alive to the danger that the disciples could easily remove the body of Jesus from the tomb and claim a resurrection. They therefore set in motion several precautions to make sure that this could not be done, and in all the measures they took they unwittingly created a situation which served later to provide unassailable proof of the resurrection.

Truely God works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform. The chief Priests and Pharisees went to Pilate and explained their fears saying, "Sir we remember that that deceiver said *while He was yet alive* (They believed He was dead), after three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure, until the third day; lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away; and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead. So the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: Go your way: make sure it as sure as you can. So they went, and *made the sepulchre sure*: sealing the stone and setting a watch." The only way for Jesus to emerge was by moving the stone so the Jews sealed the stone and placed a guard. It was now quite impossible for the disciples to take the body without detection. The first line of defence was the seal of the stone; the second was the guard. Had the Jews not taken such elaborate precautions they could, at a later date, have accused the disciples of having stolen the body. By making the sepulchre 'sure' (or lockfast, or thieftproof) the Jews unintentionally, and to their later chagrin, succeeded only in highlighting the fact of the resurrection.

THE EMPTY TOMB — Jesus had assured His disciples many times that although He would suffer many things in Jerusalem at the hands of the Jewish

elders and Chief Priests, and ultimately be killed, yet He would emerge from the tomb on the third day. We might expect, therefore, that these same disciples would have all congregated at the tomb on the third day to watch Jesus break out of the sepulchre. *Not so*, nor did it seem that the disciples had even the haziest notion of trying to steal the body.

Indeed when the few women who first discovered the empty tomb, and had seen the Lord, ran back to tell the disciples, they 'believed not' and "Their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not." The empty tomb was, therefore, to the disciples, *a complete surprise*. To the enemies of Jesus, the empty tomb was *a frightening embarrassment* — frightening because it called for an explanation (indeed a public explanation) and the true explanation could only be that Jesus had risen from the dead. However Public Relations men in every age can work wonders with a few lies and a few 'handouts.' Thus the guards who had been watching over the tomb (and who had understandably quaked and fainted 'like dead men' when they saw the angel, and earthquake) had to be bribed 'with large sums of money' to say that they had slept on duty and the disciples had, as feared, stolen the body. Thus *the explanation of the empty tomb* was clear to the Jewish elders and Pharisees (if to no one else); i.e. that Jesus had, as He had predicted, risen from the grave on the third day.

THE APPEARANCES — those sceptics who still feel that they can explain the empty tomb have now to come with the appearances. It is difficult to take seriously the usual explanation offered by those who doubt the resurrection, that those who saw Jesus after his death suffered from delusions or hallucinations. When we recall the many appearances Jesus made (over a period of 6 weeks), even to five hundred brethren simultaneously, one hesitates to believe that all suffered from hallucinations. Indeed when Jesus appeared to the disciples and Thomas He invited Thomas to thrust his hand into the wound in Jesus' side to prove there was no apparition. Jesus also called for food that in the eating thereof He might assure all that He was no 'spook' or spirit. The appearances of Jesus (bodily) not only indicate the completion of Christ's redemptive work but also shed some light on the *nature* of that redemption, i.e. the inclusion of man's body in the scheme of salvation or, as Paul puts it, "the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body." (Rom. 8:23). The whole transaction of the resurrection centred around the tomb because that's where the body was. The only kind of resurrection is a *bodily resurrection*, hence the necessity for Jesus to show Himself alive with many (infallible) proofs and essentially to show his re-animated body. His appearances can not therefore be explained other than by conceding His resurrection.

THE IMPACT — Two thousand years later the impact is still reverberating around the world. Perhaps the most compelling evidence of the resurrection, apart from the empty tomb and the personal appearances, is the transformation of the Lord's disciples. After Christ's death the disciples were numb with depression and disappointment. Had they not watched Him die and heard his awful death-cry, "Why hast thou forsaken Me." They were like soldiers of a defeated army; disconsolate and in hiding, wondering perhaps how they might pick up the threads of their former lives again, and start looking for jobs.

Then came the transformation, when they 'had seen the Lord.' Their weakness is supplanted with courage; their depression with confidence; their sorrow with joy, which no future tribulation would ever diminish. Their abandoned interest was now replaced by a boundless and consuming zeal, ever prepared to die a martyr's death. To those who say the resurrection is a legend or folk-lore it should be evident that a legend takes many, many years to mature but the transformation of the disciples was immediate. Within a few weeks, Peter, who had denied the Lord,

was preaching the resurrection, in spite of all threats against him, within a stones throw of the tomb and scene of the crucifixion. "Therefore, let all the House of Israel know assuredly that God hath this same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ ... whom God hath raised up, having loosened the pains of death; because it was not possible that He should be holden of it ..." This was the theme and bedrock of every gospel discourse proclaimed in Jerusalem to those who had condemned Jesus, those who had seen Him die and perhaps even to the guards sent to guard the grave. Those in authority, the elders and Pharisees, fumed, threatened and even beat the disciples for preaching the message but never, it seems, thought it feasible to *deny* the resurrection. Even some 30 years later, Paul said that most of the 500 witnesses to the Lord's resurrection were still alive and could be cross-examined. The *silence* of the Jews is therefore more eloquent testimony than the preaching of the apostles. After all, the Jews could have quickly silenced the preachers by going to the tomb and bringing out the body, and they would dearly have loved to have been able to do so, but they could not because, in the words of the angel, "He is risen, He is not here."

Everyone who sees the light of day requires, sometime or other in their lives to produce an explanation of the events surrounding the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. The only true explanation is that Jesus, as He had often predicted, "suffered many things of the elders and chief priests, and was killed, and was raised again the third day." His resurrection (like the sign of the prophet Jonas) is the only sign God gives to an evil and adulterous generation. The founders of other religions have beautiful and well-tended graves but Christians can but point to the empty tomb. This measures the difference between Jesus and all others.

EDITOR.

SAINT

O.E.D. M.E. (a. of: — 1 sanctus, prop. pa. pple. of sancire to consecrate).

The word for 'SAINT' in the Greek is HAGIOS. This is the same word that is translated HOLY in the N.T. Scriptures.

The word 'SAINTS' in the O.T. is a translation of the Hebrew words CHASID (kind, pious); QADOSH (set apart, separate, holy); QODESH (separation, holiness). From the first word we get the term 'Hasidism' which is a pietistic movement within Judaism that began in eighteenth century Poland and has influenced millions of Jews, and persists today in small but vigorous groups, especially in the U.S.A.

"SAINTS is an unfortunate translation, because nowadays that word paints the picture of a long-robed, long-haired, pale-faced figure in a stained-glass window, a model of piety and propriety. We have only to read the history of the early church to see that the Church members were in fact anything but like that, and that they were just as liable to get into trouble and just as liable to cause trouble as Church people are today. But we have already seen the basic meaning of this word HAGIOS. Basically it describes that which is different. Therefore the Church member, the Christian, is the one who is different. And wherein does that difference lie?

"It lies in that phrase which occurs more than eighty times in Paul's letters, in the phrase IN CHRIST. The church member is different because he is IN CHRIST. The church member is different because he is IN CHRIST. He never forgets the presence of Christ; he walks for ever with Christ; he makes no decision without consulting the guidance of Christ; he attempts no task without the help of Christ; he is IN CHRIST just as really as he is in the air he breathes. The difference is that the life of the Christian is lived in Christ and with Christ."

William Barclay

“The most frequent title of all (for the members of the church) is the title SAINTS. In Paul’s letters, the members of the Church are called SAINTS almost forty times. The Greek word is HAGIOS ... and the basic idea in it is the idea of DIFFERENCE from ordinary things, that of being set apart from ordinary purposes. So the Temple was HOLY because it was DIFFERENT from other buildings; a priest was HOLY because he was SET APART and, therefore, DIFFERENT from other men; an animal destined for sacrifice was HOLY, because it was DIFFERENT from other animals in that it was SET APART for a sacred purpose; the Sabbath day was HOLY because it was DIFFERENT from other days; and God is supremely the holy One because he is different from men. So, then, to say that the Church member is HAGIOS, holy, a saint as the Authorised Version has it, is to say that he is different from other men.”

William Barclay

“Some years ago I was introduced to a lady called Mrs Christian. Intrigued by her married name, I asked her what her maiden one had been. Imagine my surprise when she answered ‘Miss Saint’!

“All unwittingly she has illustrated a N.T. truth too often forgotten. Every Christian is a saint! If somebody should demur that not a few Christians known to him are more like sinners than saints, the statement is still true. For the Greek word HAGIOS does not describe a paragon of moral perfection; it means someone ‘dedicated’ to God in Christ — a forgiven sinner, now numbered among God’s people and called to live according to his will.”

A. M. Hunter

(See Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1; Philemon 5; Hebrews 13:24; Jude 3; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:2; etc).

From: “Sound in Faith” by Ian Davidson, Motherwell.

GLEANINGS

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

“The old is better”

“Not always, it is true. Aged men are not always wise; neither are old things always the best. The reverse is generally the case in Science, Art, Commerce, Legislature, and Manners and Customs. Who would prefer the astronomy of Copernicus to that of Newton? or the stage coach to the railway car? Nor is this sentiment of universal application in religion. No enlightened mind can say of the Law of Bondage which thundered forth from Sinai, and the Law of Liberty which went out from Zion, captivating the hearts of Jesus’ murderers — the old is better. Yet there is a wide religious sphere in which our motto may be forcibly applied. When the new is human, and the old divine, then is the old infinitely superior to the new. I have said ‘the old is better!’ But this implies comparison; strictly speaking, it supposes that the new is good. Whereas in reality there is no comparison between that which is divine and that which is human, when the latter supplants the former. This is a peculiarity in the contrast we have drawn, to which our motto hardly does justice. Were man at liberty to construct creeds, to devise gospels, to institute baptisms, or to frame Church constitutions and governments, then we might draw a comparison which should suppose a man’s work good, though infinitely inferior to God’s. But when to invent the human, is to discard the divine; when to follow men, is to depart from Christ; when to ‘observe the traditions of the elders’ is to ‘make void the commandments of God’ — which must ever

be the case in all such instances as we have specified — then is the new positively and exclusively bad — evil, ‘only evil, and that continually!’”

Joseph Bryant, Rotherham

‘Let me take your painting’

“We must emphasise the fact that the life is pre-eminently important.”

“There were two artists, close friends, one of whom excellend in landscape painting, and the other in depicting the human figure. The former had painted a picture in which wood and rock and sky were combined in the artist’s best manner. But the picture remained unsold — no one cared to buy it. It lacked something. The artist’s friend came and said, ‘Let me take your painting.’ A few days later he brought it back. He had added a lovely human figure to the matchless landscape. Soon the picture was sold. It had lacked the interest of life.” Our religion may have a similar effect. We may have doctrine, ordinance, creed and polity all in their true perspective, but if these lack the interest of life our plea for the restoration of primitive Christianity will be robbed of its power. Let us have the landscape, but not without the life.”

H. G. Harward

Jesus of Nazareth

“The chief part of Peter’s address on Pentecost was respecting the Prophet of Nazareth. Having done what was needful to remove misapprehension and doubt, he proceeded to what may be called the subject of his discourse —

Jesus of Nazareth

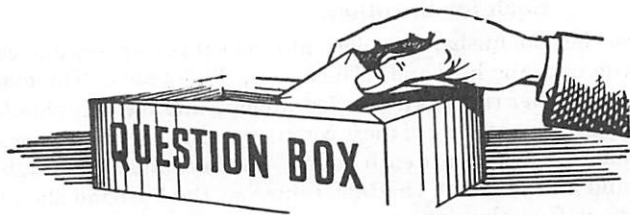
“Jesus a man. The opening words recognise the humanity of the Lord. It is not necessary to assume that Peter emphasised this thought. There was then no need. No one doubted that Jesus was a man. His birth, and growth, and dependence on the ordinary conditions of life, were all known as resembling that of others. His relatives were known to the people around as their own relatives were. The divine in Him was less known than the human. Divinity and humanity blended was a new idea, and difficult to grasp. The human was unmistakably visible; the divine was unrecognised. Many are now in a danger quite the reverse of the contemporaries of Christ. The divine is made so all absorbing that the human seems sometimes lost sight of. It will increase our appreciation of the Saviour, and intensify our love to Him and fellowship with Him, to observe how intensely human he was. Jesus was a man.”

Alexander Brown

It is too high, too severe.

“Remember that our Lord did not give the Sermon on the Mount to the outside world. He gave it to His disciples. The outside world heard it. They gathered about. But He was giving the Law of the Kingdom to those who were submitted to the King. The multitudes merely gathered and listened. We are to insist upon that standard of life, but to do that apart from the preaching of the Evangel, which brings something dynamic, is merely to reveal man’s impotence. You cannot run human life on the basis of the Sermon on the Mount, until people are born again. It is too high, too severe.

Selected by Leonard Morgan



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

“Is there anyone who can give marriage counselling in churches of Christ, or do we work on the assumption that all marriages in the Church are happy marriages. Can you please give any guidance?”

I have had questions similar to this one in the past but I have always avoided them for two reasons; first, I would not think it right that Q.B. should become an ‘agony’ column; and second, because I do not consider myself to be adequately qualified to give advice on these often-times difficult and complicated questions. However, on reflection I said to myself, “Though you may, Alf Marsden, lack technical and professional expertise in these matters, surely after 34 years or so of successful marriage you ought to be able to say something meaningful on the subject.” So on this occasion I will lay aside my reservations, and launch out into the deep.

Is it true?

Is it true to say that all marriages in which both partners are Christians are necessarily happy marriages? They should be, but all the indications are that this is not the case. Christian parents who work on the assumption that the relationship in Christ is the most important pre-requisite for a successful and happy marriage need to bear in mind that the marriage relationship is an amalgam of natural and spiritual values. It is no doubt true to say that these values will be catered for in the Christian ethic, hence the insistence on the teaching, “be not unequally yoked with unbelievers,” but it is equally true to say that both partners to the marriage, in the early stages of it, may not fully appreciate what the teaching entails (the statement, even if it does apply to marriage, does not do so exclusively). Which brings me to my first point.

The ability to cope.

During the marriage there will be many situations which will be difficult to cope with, but I am quite sure in my own mind that *the ability to cope* is one of the most fundamental aspects of marriage. Why do I say this?

In the first place, the two can have very different personalities. Many problems *within the Church* have arisen because of personality clashes, so how much more can these clashes be expected in the intimacy of marriage? Every person is a product of several important influences in earlier life, e.g. parental, environmental, educational and geographical; each of these plays a vital part in a person’s development, and if we are not aware of these differences then deep emotional conflict can ensue. I believe it to be important that conflict in marriage should be *accepted* and not treated as an outrageous intruder; after all, how can you reasonably expect two people of diverse backgrounds to achieve a bond of natural and spiritual maturity automatically. Maturity is developed in the crucible of conflict, and our ability to cope with it successfully will determine whether the marriage will sicken and die or flourish and mature.

Each for the other.

In 1 Cor.7:3 Paul says, "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband." The Living Bible reads, "The man should give his wife all that is her right as a married woman, and the wife should do the same for her husband." The stating of these conjugal rights leads me to pose the question, "How do married couples *use* each other?" The husband has no right to use his wife as he would his goods and chattels. Likewise, the husband should not be looked upon by the wife as the slave who is symbolic of her emancipation. The relationship in marriage is both significant and unique, and should be based on mutual love, trust, concern and understanding, particularly understanding.

The polarity of sex is a very important facet of marriage. Paul Teaches, "The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer" (1 Cor. 7:4,5. N.I.V.). 'Mutual consent' in some peoples minds means do whatever I want, when I want it done, irrespective of the consequences. This unrelenting attitude on the part of some husbands and wives has led to deep emotional crises which in turn have put tremendous pressure on the marriage relationship. Is it too difficult to discern when our partner may be tired, depressed, or anxious, or does the gratification of our sensual desires take priority over all other considerations? The equality of the sexes in marriage is clearly presented as the way to keep marriage undefiled, as the writer to the Hebrews says, "Marriage is honourable in all, and and the bed undefiled" (Heb. 13:4).

Modern social conditions are also tending to militate against successful marriages. Many husbands are being thrown out of work and wives are becoming the wage-earners. If the mutual obligation that both husband and wife have to the other is forgotten, then pressure is put on the marriage because the wife may want to assume the supremacy which she thinks her wage-earning capacity entitles her to. If the partners to the marriage are Christians, then the conditions which obtain in society, industry, or commerce must not be allowed to upset the Divine arrangement. When Paul spoke about the marriage relationship he referred it to the highest conception of which he was capable, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it;... So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself" (Eph. 5:25,28). The comments that some Christian wives make about their having 'inferior positions' is both mischievous and unhelpful; if some do genuinely feel like that then all I can say is that their husbands have a serious misconception regarding the teaching concerning the marriage relationship as taught in the Word.

Some points on counselling.

The art of counselling should be in the armoury of every good Church leader. Marital problems evoke the deepest emotions, and if Christians have not the confidence in the ones to whom they want to open their hearts then they will tend to keep matters to themselves with, perhaps, dire consequences. It should not be necessary to say that everything should be treated in the strictest confidence. What, then, should the counsellor do?

First of all he should establish mutual trust. Don't probe too much. Don't force the pace. He should not forget the basic rule, paradoxical though it may seem, that the best way to help two people who are in conflict or dispute is by helping *one* of them. He (or she) will then be able to project that help into the sick relationship. Remember, you are not a judge, nor are you a problem-solver. Let them work at it themselves, with you as the point of help if needed.

It is important to realise that people generally *correct themselves* by talking about a problem. When they face up to it and talk about it you can rest assured that it will be about the first time they have examined the problem objectively. So let them talk; don't interrupt their train of thought but encourage them to go on. Let them go off at a tangent if necessary; it will probably all be relevant. Look for the factors which may lurk behind the problem and which may have been instrumental in leading up to it. What people discover for themselves can be crucial in the resolution of the problem.

Don't impose *your* values on others. Refuse to pass moral judgements. After all, if the people are Christians they probably understand quite well their moral responsibilities. The very fact that they are seeking help is indicative of this. The last thing that they need is for someone to pontificate on this when they are struggling to achieve it. Listen with respect; do not condemn or approve.

Don't be too anxious to rush in with your solution. Your anxiety may transfer itself to an already anxious person. Understanding is the key, and to suggest some form of action without understanding the problem can only result in further damage being done. Don't worry if you feel you aren't winning.

There is a fundamental point which the counsellor must *always* bear in mind; you can come closest to people by remaining aloof from them. This may seem a strange statement to make, but it has been proved over and over again that over-involvement with the problem is a sure sign that the counselling is failing. Keep detached; it is the *only* way to see the problem objectively.

Well, as I say, I am not an expert in this field, but I have listened to quite a number of marital problems. For myself, I have come to the conclusion that the greatest help that a counsellor can give is to make people face up to the problems and the answers *which they know themselves* but are unwilling to face up to without the help of someone else; you may be that someone.

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

THE EPISTLE PROGRAMME

We think it is a suitable time to look at the whole body of the New Testament epistles. Even the word "epistle" though a delightful one from the standpoint of language, is apt to hide from readers the plain fact that these "books" (another possibly misleading term) are *LETTERS* written by men (inspired by the Holy Spirit it is true) having a special initial purpose.

To accept them sensibly we ought to have this at the back of our minds. Surely this is rightly dividing the "word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). We are quite sure God intends us to apply commonsense to His revelation, and though there are difficulties and passages which are hard to understand it remains true that "the way-faring man, though a fool, shall not err therein" (Isa. 35:8), "even when the most learned scholars find the Hebrew unintelligible" (N.E.B.). One cannot help thinking of the Saviour's prayer of thanks (Matt. 11:25).

Our subject can be considered in the form of a table:—

James	James, the Lord's brother	Gal. 1:19; Acts 21:18	Jerusalem	50
Thessalonians 1	Paul	Acts 18:10 & 11	Corinth	50
Thessalonians 2	Paul	Acts 18:10 & 11	Corinth	51
Corinthians 1	Paul	Acts 19:10	Ephesus	54
Corinthians 2	Paul	Acts 19:21	Macedonia	56
Romans	Paul	Acts 20:3	Corinth	57
Galatians	Paul	Acts 16:6; 18:23	Corinth	57

Ephesians	Paul	Acts 28:30	Rome	62/3
Philippians	Paul	Acts 28:30	Rome	62/3
Colossians	Paul	Acts 28:30	Rome	62/3
Philemon	Paul	Acts 28:30	Rome	62/3
Peter 1	Peter	1 Peter 5:13	Babylon	64
Timothy 1	Paul	Acts 16:1	Rome	66
Titus	Paul	Titus 3:12	Nicosia	66
Timothy 2	Paul		Rome	67
Peter 2	Peter	2 Peter 1:12	Rome	67
Hebrews	Unknown	.Hebrews 13:24	Italy	67
Jude	Jude, brother of James	Jude 1	Unknown	67
John 1, 2 & 3	John		Ephesus	90
Revelation	John		Patmos	95
<i>Name of letter</i>				
<i>Writer</i>				
<i>Scripture reference</i>				
<i>Place</i>				
<i>Probable date of writing</i>				

We present the above, understanding that dates and other details are very approximate, and in some cases quite doubtful. We trust they open up however the picture of Communications among young churches. It is really necessary that Christians should know something about the way in which the final revelation of God's will came to be put into permanent form. There is some mystery about the gradual way in which the various sections of the New Testament reached a condition of permanence among the churches, and took the form we know, use and love.

New Testament Translations

We have heard of people "who believed that the Authorised Version came down from heaven ready bound," but they must be very few or exist only in the imagination. It is not surprising, however, that elderly saints, who have had such priceless help and consolation from it, do regard it with special reverence.

Certainly of all the translations made, it remains unsurpassed for beauty, and when rightly understood, for effectiveness in the Holy Spirit's work of bringing men into touch with God. I would not dare to detract from the scholarship and merit of later translations, which take out some archaic words and phraseology, and thus make the original words more easily understood. They also, like the Authorised Version, do of course, contain mistakes in translation, which fallible men cannot avoid. It is continual cause for gratitude that there have been so many good men, of all shades of opinion, who were anxious to present this generation with the nearest possible meaning to the "words which the Spirit teacheth" (1 Cor. 2:13). The earnest student longing for the "sincere milk of the word" (1 Peter 2:2) has better opportunity that ever to satisfy that holy ambition. May we all share it.

R. B. SCOTT

"THE LIVING BIBLE — PARAPHRASED"

This publication is by Kenneth N. Taylor. Webster defines a "paraphrase" as a "re-wording of the thought or meaning expressed in something that has been said or written before".

One recognises that a translator must at times be guided by this theology, and thus resort to paraphrase or 'margin' renderings, when he is faced with passages in which the original text is not clear. However, in dealing with a volume like "The

Living Bible" we must keep aware of the fact that its author acknowledges it to be wholly paraphrased. One cannot, therefore, find the fault with this that has been the case with the "New World Translation" and "Good News for Modern Man" (Jan. and Feb. issues), because Mr. Taylor admits it to be a "paraphrase" and does not make a similar claim as does the New World Translators — Viz.: Translation. If used properly it can be a worthwhile addition to ones religious library. It should be given no higher status than a Commentary which we all recognise to be "a re-wording of the thought or meaning expressed", and, as with all Commentaries, it expresses the author's theology and may be erroneous in vital areas.

There is one valuable contribution this publication can have to us. Let me quote here from Billy Graham — "In this book ("Living Bible" — R.J.M.) I have read the age aiding truths of the Scriptures . . . as though coming from God. I believe the paraphrase communicates the message of Christ to our generation. I pray your reading of it will give you a new understanding of the Scriptures". (Emp. mine — R.J.M.).

Mr. Graham, as do all Baptists and others, insists that a believer's baptism has no part in his becoming a child of God. He and his associates insist that the sinner is saved when he "accepts Christ as Saviour", or at the point of faith in Christ, and before being baptised in water. Read again what Billy Graham said about the L.B. and note my emphasis, then take careful note of these extracts from the L.B.

Mark 16:16 — "Those who believe and are baptised will be saved". **Acts 2:38** — ". . . each one of you must turn from sin, return to God, and be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; then you also shall receive this gift, the Holy Spirit". **Acts 22:16** — "And now, why delay? Go and be baptised, and be cleansed from your sins, calling on the name of the Lord". **Romans 6:3-5** — "For sin's power over us was broken when we became Christians and were baptised to become part of Christ" (Can one be a 'Christian' and not be 'a part of Christ?' — R.J.M.).

Galatians 3:27 — ". . . baptised into union with Christ". **1 Peter 3:21** — ". . . in being baptised we are turning to God and asking him to cleanse our hearts from sin"

Remember what a paraphrase is! Remember what Billy Graham said about this paraphrase! Recognise that this paraphrase ('Re-wording') expresses exactly what the authorised versions of the Bible have said all the time, namely, that one who believes that Jesus is the Christ must repent of his sins and be baptised (in water) to have his sins forgiven. He is then in union with Christ, in whom are all spiritual blessings — Ephesians 1:3, Billy Graham and others notwithstanding.

Roland J. McDowell.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

November

7 I Samuel 2,1-11 Luke 2,1-21
14 I Samuel 2,12-21 Luke 2,22-40
28 I Samuel 3 Luke 2,41-52
28 Isaiah 40,1-17 Luke 3,1-20 & 38

The Common People Heard it Gladly

Joseph was the carpenter at

Nazareth. To him was the honour given to take up his sacred charge of Mary, the innocent pre-marital mother. His first thought of kindly but necessary moral action according to proper standards of conduct, was over-ruled by divine information and instruction. He never questioned the message but acted upon it. The shepherds were faithfully carrying out their nightly duty with the sheep when they were honoured by a divine message also and accepted it without question — indeed how could they have doubted it? They were im-

mediately rewarded by finding a baby in the lowly circumstances of a stable, cradled in the humblest manner in a manger — of all places!! These humble folk believed without knowing all that was involved. We assume they could not forget the astonishing message that the baby was “Christ the Lord.” The flight into Egypt, and the obscure childhood and early manhood of Jesus must leave them and those all around to whom they communicated the wonderful news, wondering at the silence which lasted for thirty years.

They were among those probably “who heard Him gladly,” and witnessed or learned of the tragic conclusion of the ministry of the “Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord,” whom they had seen in the manger at Bethlehem. Some could have been among the three thousand who confessed Him at Pentecost. This may be “hidden romance” but we are allowed to think upon what is specifically revealed, and must bear in mind the three years of widespread public national and extra national fame of Jesus — which we are apt to overlook (Luke 6,17:8. 1,3 & 4:10, 1:12, 1:Mark 3,7 & 8:7,31 etc.). Under God the beloved doctor was honoured as were Joseph and the shepherds. His record was surely gathered from eye witnesses. We do not know how long it was before Herod’s murderous effort to circumvent the divine promise to David. The Magi found the baby in the HOUSE when their visit took place. Herod learned the revealed date of birth from them, and made his plan accordingly.

The shepherds spread the “glad tidings” and glorified God, but alas what awful grief came upon the local mothers, who suffered the cruelty of a king who was already a murderer in his own family. We hope the number involved was minimal but the crime was less horrible. There were then thirty years before the “people saw a great light” (Matt. 4,15).

Legal “Niceties”

God wanted a “peculiar” people, a treasure of His own. So He gave them laws to cover every part of life. Hence upon bearing a man child Mary was regarded as unclean for seven days, strictly clear of infection, and on the eighth day her baby was circumcised, something a mother might naturally object to, but a medically and hygienically correct operation at the right moment of life as recently proved by scientists. The mother’s separation continued for another 33 days, making 40. Had the child been a girl the times fixed would have been fourteen days “unclean” and a further 66 days of separation, making 80 days. Why this difference we may not know, but doubtless when we get up to date the prescription will be proved exactly right. The divine prescriptions have been the means of keeping the Jewish race remarkably healthy in the midst of gentile impurities and sometimes severe persecution.

I remember hearing of the “nonconformist conscience” in days gone by, and we do not know to what extent the blessings of good behaviour in Britain have preserved the nation through the nameless horrors of two world wars, and, in spite of recent loosening maintained a general standard of good behaviour. Mrs Thatcher wants to be honest whatever her politics as do many others in public life. Having fulfilled their legal obligations Joseph and Mary offered the sacrifices as kindly provided for those of small means. This was spiritual cleansing by obedience with a physical accompaniment, a presentation of the child to God to Whom all children are owed.

Inspiration and Providence

If we want special blessing from God we shall have to be like old Simeon. He was righteous and devout, clean in heart, instant in prayer, honoured by REVELATION THAT HE WOULD SEE THE CHRIST. How many years had he waited for this sight? It finally satisfied his soul, and called forth that

beautiful poetry — “Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.” That thrilling moment of life came when he took up the baby in his aged arms and blessed God, pronouncing the future — now fulfilled. Both Jews and Gentiles of this age have the light of life inspired by the same Spirit. Then what about Anna of the “lost” tribe of Asher? She “happened” to come into the Temple at that “instant” with the same message. All these things Mary pondered (2,12), and surely Joseph as well. While shaping the yokes or sharpening the ox goads, he was entrusted with the discipline of a family of boys and girls, among whom was the growing Son of God. Joseph must have thought of the honour he was sharing so intimately. Our doctor historian simply writes “the child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom.” Children in the same family often show big differences in disposition as in physique, and Jesus excelled, displaying a divine grace.

“Thy Father and I”

Was there a measure of blindness in those two folk? It is delightful to see the unity of husband and wife in this incident — no claims for precedence on Mary’s part on account of her very special divine favour. How natural was the worry expressed by the loving rebuke, but they had missed something about HIM, which was evidenced later also (Mark 3,21 & 31). They had grown accustomed to His respect and obedience, and thus overlooked His absolute sinlessness. The rebuke they received was clear “MY FATHER’S HOUSE.” It is incomprehensible to us that the ALMIGHTY GOD could become “flesh and blood,” and dwell among us. When we prostrate ourselves spiritually and physically before God in worship, we are not low enough! What if He were in our home with us? He was in their home in their likeness, and subject to them. So, how dare we question Joseph and Mary. Unnecessary worry is one great enemy of ours. We do want to realise that Jesus is with us in the Spirit. What

a stimulus to christ-like behaviour! Joseph and Mary had suffered four days of heart-breaking anxiety.

John Baptist’s Service

Here is a very extraordinary man by birth a miracle, by genealogy a priest, by choice and appointment a prophet after the pattern of Elijah and Elisha, men of outstanding character, having a mission among unbelieving and wicked people. They were lonely in their greatness. So was John but he was not endowed with miraculous power as they were. His weapons were truth and righteousness. The Word of God came to John in the wilderness, and that Word he preached. He was the supreme prophet of the Old Covenant as he was the last. His message was the final warning of its replacement by the New and Better Covenant of Grace and Truth (John 1,17), giving the least under its arrangements a closer relationship with God. His message was one of forgiveness through baptism (dipping of course), repentance *with turning away from sin*. Repentance involves that but there is a very necessary emphasis upon the vital and revolutionary change in behaviour, nay more than that, a complete change from old ways of thought to new! The initial decision and act must be overshadowed by what follows in the life. Too often is it the seed sown in the shallow soil.

John puts plainly, “bear fruits.” Do not think anything else will do. A change into clean clothes? No! A CHANGE OF HEART! He was a powerful preacher. Herod Antipas did a little changing by John’s influence but became his executioner (Mark 6,20). There was no real repentance, but it was against his real wish to fulfill his dreadful vow (Mark 6,26). John was foretold to prepare, level the way, for Jesus, and this he did by arousing the whole nation to expectancy. All sorts and conditions of men were brought to penitence, and sought instruction from John, receiving it with all simplicity.

His work seems to have been contemporary with that of Jesus for a short time only, being cut short by imprisonment and death. What a noble and unselfish character he was — content to serve, to take the lower place. Read John 3,30 and preceding verses.

The Genealogies

It is impossible on the surface to reconcile Matthew and Luke in this respect, but we have no doubt differences are due to the main consideration that Matthew wrote for Jews, and Luke for Gentiles. The general explanation must be there. How natural that Abraham should stand first with a Jew, and ascent to God through Adam be the thought of a Gentile. Differences in detail are explainable by Mosaic genealogical rulings.

R. B. Scott.

MISCELLANEA

To live for today is in the noblest sense to live for eternity. To be my very best this very hour, to do the very best for those about me, and to spend this moment in a spirit of absolute consecration to God's glory — this is the duty that confronts me.

Knowledge of God in the mind produces love in the heart, which leads to obedience in the life. (Col. 1:9-10; Rom. 5:5; Heb. 5:8-9).

There is not enough darkness in the world to extinguish the light of one small candle.

It is recorded that almost the last words of the great first President of the Czechoslovak Republic, President Masaryk, were to the man who officiated at his funeral: "Brother, give the Republic the gospel."

The vows of elders of the Paulician Christians in Armenia: "I take on myself scourings and imprisonment, tortures, reproaches, crosses, blows, tribulations, and all the temptations of the world which our Lord the Intercessor and the Apostolic Holy Church took

upon themselves, and lovingly accept them."

There is little hope of children finding a home in the church unless they have previously found a church in the home.

Enter, O Lord, this house with me, that I may enter Thine with Thee.

The men who move the world are the men whom the world cannot move.

It is well to keep unspotted from the world, but at the same time, we should try to clean up some of the world's spots.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always **abounding** in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. 15:58).

"To him who knows to do good and does it not ..."

A priest or a Levite might admit that a man who had fallen among thieves had a claim to succour without admitting that the claim applied to himself. No doubt the poor fellow had some relation who might be informed of his plight. If no relative was likely to come by then the obligation would lie on some wealthy traveller, who could well afford the money, or some leisured person, who could well afford the time.

"APT TO TEACH"

Paul declares that one who has the desire to be a shepherd of the souls of men shall be "apt to teach" (1 Tim. 3:2). He also declares that "the Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing" (2 Tim. 2:24). This requirement simply means "skilful in teaching". According to the *Englishman's Greek Concordance* these are the only two places where it appears. In one place it is the requirement of the Shepherd; in the other, the Evangelist. But isn't it strange that the Shepherd of today can hire someone else to do HIS OWN WORK FOR HIM? It would be unthinkable for a gospel preacher to hire out his work to some-

one else, yet this is what the Shepherds have done today. What would your opinion be of him who was hired by the preacher? Jesus said that the hireling "careth not for the sheep" (John 10:13). The Lord has given each of his servants work to do. They alone are responsible to fulfill their duties. No one else can be hired to do it for them.

DEAN SPURLOCK

THE WILL OF GOD

WHEN you give in to God do not do so with a sigh. You would think to hear some say: "Thy will be done" that they were submitting to the worst kind of evil. God is not your enemy: He is your Friend. God's will is everywhere, always and only good.

C. A. Gilbert

Prayer:

"Do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be strong men! Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks.

Phillips Brooks

Self-interest:

The man who lives for self alone, lives for the meanest mortal known.

Joaquin Miller

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Slamannan District; Scotland — The Quarterly Mutual Benefit Meeting was held at Haddington on 4th September, 1982, when a goodly crowd attended and, after tea, discussed the question, "Should the churches in the Slamannan District establish a Christian College or Bible School?" An interesting discussion followed the two speakers (who were Hugh Davidson, Motherwell, and John McLuckie, Haddington). The chairman was John Colgan, Tranent.

Both speakers expressed the belief that, while not denying the value of religious education, it was the duty of each congregation to educate itself, and particularly the elders were responsible for the teaching. Mention was made of the bad record Christian Colleges have historically, and the false teaching which emanates from many of them, some quite near home. A profitable and enjoyable time was had by all. God willing, the next meeting will be at Motherwell, on the 4th December when the subject will be "Do the work of an evangelist — what is an 'evangelist'?" the chairman will be Les Purcel, Motherwell, and the speakers will be John Colgan, Tranent, and James Gardiner, Haddington.

We preach almost daily on Radio Zambia and our range of languages has now increased (to six different languages) so more tribes are hearing the message in their own native tongue. However, Television Zambia has requested us to produce a half-hour Children's Religious Programme once a week. This is a great responsibility but we lack the resources, personnel or experience to do it. Anyway, we plan to try. How can you help us? Well, perhaps one of you could come and work on the programme for its three month tour. Or if you have access to any possible programme scripts or materials, send them to us. With best wishes.

Chester & Angela Woodhall

LOST SIMPLICITY

I wonder if we have not lost something valuable since the days of house churches in homes like that of Aquila, Priscilla and Archippus. Church houses have supplanted the house churches. Our Lord said that where two or three were gathered together in his name, he would be in their midst. It is a long jump from the simplicity of the New Testament house church to the elaborate church houses. — Lee Carter Maynard in *Mission Messenger*.

LIFE IS LIKE A BOOK

Your life is like a book. The title page is your name. The preface is your introduction to the world. The pages are a daily chronicle of your efforts, trials, pleasures, discouragements, ambitions and achievements. The principal subject of your book may be business, romance, tragedy, comedy, science, literature or religion. Day by day your thoughts and acts are being transcribed.

What you will record on the remaining pages is of vital importance. Hour by hour a record is being made which will stand for all time. One day "Finis" must be written. Let it then be said of your book that it is a record of noble purpose, generous service and work well done.

THE WORD OF GOD

The evidences of the characteristics of God revealed by the Bible should cause us to prize the written word as the Scriptures of Truth.

Only men inspired by the breath of God could speak of Him as the writers of the Scriptures do.

"Whence, but from heaven, should Moses and the prophets, and the unlettered men of Galilee, obtain those views of the divine majesty and glory which we have now contemplated."

They discovered and revealed what the philosophers of all nations never could discover.

Our children instructed in the teachings of God's Word are wiser than all the philosophers of the world, with all their vaunted wisdom.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom," (Col. 3:16).

"TAKE TIME TO BE HOLY"

Let me put by some hour every day
For holier things — whether it be
when dawn

Peers through the window pane, or
when the noon

Flames, like a burnished topaz in the
vault;

Or when the thrush pours in the ear
of eve

Its plaintive melody. Some little hour
Wherein to hold rapt converse with
the soul:

From sordidness and self a sanctuary
Swept by the winnowings of unseen
things

And touched by the white light ineff-
able.

The world says: "Get all you can".
Christ says: "Give all you can."

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