

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

VOL. 38. No. 10

OCTOBER, 1971

## WE DIED IN BAPTISM

IN July 1971 S.S., pages 71-73 appeared an article "BAPTISM: In the Epistles of Paul". In the second paragraph, under the sub-head Romans 6:1-11, we stressed that in our baptism we *died to sin*, THAT WE WERE BAPTISED INTO CHRIST'S DEATH. Arising from those statements, although agreeing with them, a correspondent thinks they may be misunderstood unless further enlightenment were given. The writer says:

"I wonder if you would expound a little more on the statement... 'How can we who have died to sin live any longer therein?' i.e. Baptism was our dying to sin. Is it possible that some readers may get the idea that we cannot sin? It is the word 'death' — in what sense? Is it that a dead person cannot be active in committing sin?"

We appreciate the letter and the reasons given for its having been written. We can so easily take it for granted that our hearers or readers have only to have Bible truths stated to them, without explanation, to grasp their meaning. This teaching of having died to sin when we were baptised is so vital that our understanding of it will completely revolutionise our lives as Christians. Hence it is absolutely essential that we grasp its meaning.

### **Does it mean that a Christian cannot sin?**

There are some who claim this. The doctrine is based upon the statement in 1 John 3:6-9, which says: "No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him... No one born of God commits sin; for God's nature abides in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God." But if the passage means that the Christian *cannot* sin, it is a direct contradiction of what the same writer has said earlier in his epistle (1:8-10) — "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned we make him a liar and the truth is not in us."

No writer, especially of the scriptures, could be guilty of two such completely contradictory statements, if we accept the belief that a Christian *cannot* sin. Accepting that, one or other statement is untrue. We believe that both are true. In the former passage John says that a Christian *can* and *does* sin; but he shows the way of forgiveness if and when we do — confession of our sin to God. How can the same

writer cancel out this way of forgiveness by stating in the second passage (3rd chapter) that it is impossible to sin, and that therefore no forgiveness is necessary? Now much of the New Testament written to Christians warns and exhorts us not to sin, and sets before us the holy way of life we are to live. No such warnings or exhortations are needed if, after all, sin cannot touch us.

But what does this second passage mean? The note on the passage in the Rev. Standard Version *Study Bible* is clear and succinct: "From the Greek tenses used here in 3:9 the verse might well be paraphrased, 'Whoever is born of God does not make sin the *practice* of his life.' So while believers do sin, it is not their common custom nor are they confirmed in the direction of sin, for their nature is no longer the old sinful nature, but one given by God. The thought is expressed further in 5:18: a child of God does not live a life of sin because the Son of God keeps him."

To the Christian sin is not an accepted way of life. When he sins he knows it: his conscience, his whole being protests against it. He knows that in the sinning he is not acting and living worthily of Christ, and that he must not act so again. He knows, too, that the way to renewal of holiness and strength lies in his confession to God through Jesus Christ. But each time he yields to temptation he becomes weaker, for he is more and more stifling and silencing his protesting conscience. If persisted in, to continue sinning will issue in his conscience ceasing to protest and his becoming "dead in sin" (Eph.2:1). That is the awful state depicted in 1 Tim.4:2, where Paul speaks of the one whose "conscience is seared", branded, made without feeling.

In Romans 6:2 the Christian is declared to be "Dead to sin". That death occurred in his baptism: indeed the very act depicts death, burial and rising again. Whether the Christian realises it or not this new state, new outlook, new relationship came about through baptism. To keep him from sinning Paul reminds the Christian of his "death to sin" by pointing him back to what took place in that event and act. Ideally sin must have no more effect in and power over the Christian than anything that takes place is noticed by those who are dead.

What really does this mean? This is one of the scriptures where Commentaries prove of help to us. We give some brief selections from their expositions:— F.F. BRUCE: PARAPHRASE OF THE EPISTLES OF PAUL: "We died as far as our relation with sin is concerned; how can we go on living in sin?"

C.K.BARRETT: EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS: "We, who in our essential nature, *i.e.* just because we are Christians, died. We cannot as Christians go on living in sin because, as Christians, we have died to sin, as far as sin is concerned we are dead. The definite past tense, 'we died' points to a particular moment; conversion and (as the next verse shows) baptism, must be in mind."

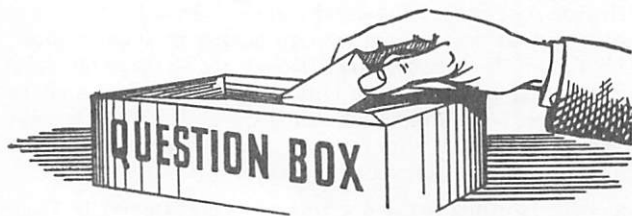
SANDAY: ROMANS (Internat. Critical Comm.): "we being what we are, men who (in our baptism) died to sin."

"When we took the decisive step and became Christians, we may be said to have died to sin in such a way as to make it flat contradiction to live any longer in it."

ELLICOTT: BIBLE COMMENTARY: Rom. 6:2: "We that are dead.—Rather, *that died*...Paul regards this change — from sin to righteousness, from bondage to freedom, from death to life — as summed up in one definite act of the past...to each individual man when he accepts Christ, is baptised into Christ. Then...he dies once for all to sin, he lives henceforth for ever to God. ...An entire change came over them when they became Christians — they are not, and cannot be, their former selves...it is a contradiction of their very being to sin any more..."

The above are typical of many other commentaries we have consulted on this text. Some are compiled by Anglicans, Congregationalists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans. But whatever their religious persuasions, although most of them are infant-sprinklers, they unite in showing from scripture the vital importance of baptism, its significance and meaning, and that these lessons are conveyed only through that baptism taught and practised by Christ and His apostles, and so clearly set forth in the New Testament — immersion. No other "form of baptism" contains or can convey these lessons.

EDITOR




---

 Conducted by  
 James Gardiner
 

---

**"WHAT is 'original sin' and what justification is there in the scriptures for the doctrine of original sin"?**

To the best of my knowledge and belief "Original Sin" is a theological doctrine which propounds that every man and woman born into the world is not only born totally depraved but has also inherited at birth the guilt of Adam's sin. "Original sin" is imputed sin—God imputing to us the sins of other men—principally Adam's. In my view there is absolutely no justification in the scriptures for such a doctrine — rather the reverse. The theory of "imputed sin" or "original sin" is very often used in justification of baby baptism, the idea being that because babies are sinners when born they must immediately be baptised to appease God. There are many scriptures quoted in support of the doctrine, some of which we shall look at in a moment. But perhaps the main text is found in Romans 5:12. This verse says "wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned..." The whole of the chapter must be read to get the verse in its context, of course; and verse 12 taken in conjunction with the other verses, especially verse 19, is reckoned to give a basis for the theory of imputed sin. Verse 19 says "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous". Anyone desiring to study Romans 5 will find that many volumes have been written (on both sides of the issue) by theologians over the centuries, and that the subject is too complex to be dealt with in this brief column. What can be said, however, is that other scriptures apart from Romans 5 show beyond doubt that God does not impute sin and that each of us will answer on the Day of Assize for our own personal transgressions and for no one else's. Again in Rom. 5:12 the language, to my mind, clearly shows why each man stands in jeopardy with God — "for all have sinned". This verse is talking of adults who have sinned, not babies born with Adam's guilt "imputed" to them. Sin is a violation of the laws of God, either by commission or omission. Concerning *commission* of sin we read "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1st John 3:4) Newly born babies are incapable of sin as meant by this definition. Concerning *omission* we read (James 4:17) "To him therefore that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin". Again infants are unable to sin by this definition. Actual sin cannot be attached to newly-born babies. How then can they be classified as sinners? We are informed that because of Adam's sin all men and women born into the world have his sin upon them, according to Romans chap. 5. As a matter of interest a clergyman here is writing upon this subject just now in a local paper, and describes babies as

"guilty, hell-deserving sinners". Such is the doctrine. To use Rom. 5:12 as a basis for the theory that babies are born with Adam's sin imputed to them, is in my view, a failure to distinguish between the *consequences* and the *guilt* of Adam's sin. The verse says that because of Adam's sin *death* passed upon all men; it does not say that *sin* passed upon all men. Thus the *consequences* of Adam's sin (the legacy we have inherited) is death; physical death. Thus we all shall die. It is quite another matter to say that we all inherit *the guilt* of Adam's sin and are thus sinners (at birth) in the sight of God. Nowhere does the Bible say, as far as I know, that we inherit *the guilt* of any man's sin. An illegitimate child inherits the *consequence* of its parents' sin (*i.e.* illegitimacy) and so the child must go through life in that condition and could suffer in various ways (even through having no legal status). However, although the child suffers the *consequences* it does not share in *the guilt* of the parents' sin (in having an illegitimate child). Thus it is quite easy to inherit the consequences of another's sin without inheriting the guilt. In like manner we inherit death as a consequence of Adam's sin, but we do not share in the guilt. It is as groundless in scripture as it is repugnant to the mind.

The "Original Sin" doctrine is allied to the doctrine of "Total Depravity" and often the two are confused. The following "proof verses" advanced in support of the "Original Sin" concept are often advanced by those who believe in the total depravity of man. Space allows for only a brief notice:—

*Psalm 51:5*: "Behold I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me". This is by far the favourite text. It of course was an anguished cry from the tortured conscience of the Psalmist, David.

David's parents could have been offended at his words, for David had a good pedigree and was the offspring of lawful and honourable marriage; his mother being a "handmaid of the Lord". David here is referring to man's evil propensities from the very earliest age. His late dreadful fall evinced the depravity of which he was capable. Man certainly has a bias to evil, and sin is thoroughly ingrained in his nature.

The apostle Paul says something similar in Eph.2:3: "...and were by nature the children of wrath, even as the rest." Man by reason of his physical nature has the inclination to sin but, at the same time, it is not true to say that man is totally depraved or entirely evil, for Paul also says (in Rom.2:14) that the Gentiles "do by nature the things of the law." They had not received God's law, as the Jews had, but by their own good nature had endeavoured to observe the wholesome laws of God. Man indeed has a tendency to evil from even the tender years of infancy but he is certainly not *guilty* of sin until he commits it.

*Psalm 14:2,3*: "Jehovah looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek after God. They are all gone aside, they are together become filthy there is none that doeth good, no not one."

This is another verse which is reckoned to show man's total *hereditary* depravity. But surely the verse shows that the children of men *went astray* — they were not born that way. They were not wayward or filthy *at birth*. "They are all gone aside..." "They are together *become* filthy..."

*Psalm 58:3*: "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies."

The obvious comment is that this verse should not be applied to new-born babies because they can't, at that stage, "speak lies". The verse refers to "the wicked", not to everyone and to persons old enough to consciously tell lies.

*Gen. 8:21*: "Jehovah said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground for man's sake, for that the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." Again the



meaning confronts us and merely reiterates the tendency of man to go astray and rebel against God. Man has a bias to evil which no sane person would deny, but this is a quite different thing from saying that man is *born* in that condition, and is a condemned sinner before he can open his eyes or walk on his own two feet. This verse says that man's heart is evil from *his youth*, not his birth.

There are, of course, various other "proof texts" employed in support of the doctrine under discussion, but they certainly are no better than those already quoted. On the other hand, we might for our part quote some passages of scripture which certainly would seem to deny the theory of original sin or total hereditary depravity. For instance, Jesus said in Matt 18:3, "Except ye be converted *and become as little children* ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" Jesus also said, "Suffer *the little children* to come unto me for *of such* is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 19:14)

If little children are totally depraved, is Jesus advocating that we become as little children — *i.e.* totally depraved? Surely Jesus was referring to the innocency of little children.

Paul, in Acts 17:28, referring to God says "for we are also His offspring". Are the offspring of God totally depraved? Man has a propensity *to do good*, just as he has a tendency to do evil. Paul talks of the constant war in his members between evil *and good* (Rom. 7:15-24).

Jesus was deity yet he was as human as any other man — he was born in a manger, of his mother Mary. When He died He was without sin. When he challenged His accusers and asked who was able to convict him of sin, no one answered. No one, apparently, had heard of "original sin" or the theory of "total hereditary depravity". No sin of Adam's was imputed to Jesus because He was born of Adam's race, and in like manner no such sin will be imputed to us. The New Testament is plain and emphatic concerning the scope of our responsibility on Judgement Day: *i.e.* each man will answer for *his own sins only*, and Paul even envisages that some men will be adjudged "good" on that day. "For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done *in his body*, according to that he hath done, whether it be *good* or bad." (2 Cor. 5:10).

There appears to be little support in the scriptures for the doctrine of "Original sin", and to my mind the idea has arisen from failure to draw a distinction between the *consequences* of Adam's sin and the *guilt* of it. Man is not guilty of sin until he has committed it.

(Questions, please, to James R. Gardiner, 88 Davidson Terrace, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland.)

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

OCTOBER 1971

|                     |               |
|---------------------|---------------|
| 3—Numbers 10:1-13   | Acts 20:1-16  |
| 10—Exodus 16:10-27  | Acts 20:17-38 |
| 17—Proverbs 23:1-23 | Eph. 4:1-24   |
| 24—Jeremiah 13:1-19 | Acts 21:1-19  |
| 31—Numbers 6:1-21   | Acts 21:20-40 |
| 7—Isaiah 6          | Acts 22:1-22  |

## THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM

PAUL is concluding his third missionary journey through Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece. He is going to Jerusalem to be present at the feast of Pentecost. We are not told just why he has this urgent desire, nor whether he did get to Jerusalem in time. We have no doubt the journey was connected closely with "the collection for the saints" (1Cor. 16:1). This bounty of the Gentile Christians for the Jewish Christians was to be a unifying gesture dear to his heart. He is "bound

in the spirit"—we assume his own spirit, yet surely supported by and related to the Holy Spirit Himself. The first intimation of trouble to meet must have come when the Jews laid wait for him in Greece, compelling the much longer journey through Asia Minor (Acts 20:3), but the warnings were repeated all along the route (20:23).

We picture the concern of the disciples at each place. They all knew something of his destination and object, and knew Jerusalem as a dangerous place for him. Indeed the Lord had warned him in the words "They will not receive thy testimony concerning Me" (22:18). They would naturally try to dissuade Paul from his purpose, as recorded with emphasis at Caesarea (21:12). However, his heart was fixed, his mind made up and for him death had no terrors—"to be with Christ" being far better (Phil. 1:23.) The disciples in every place felt strongly the alternative "to abide in the flesh" was more needful for them—and little wonder! (Phil. 1:24).

#### Miletus

Paul's farewell to the elders at Ephesus sheds a vivid light on his life and character. It is generally thought that it proved not to be his last contact with at least some of them. His words are full of instruction and inspiration for us, especially those who have similar responsibility in the church. With these men is to be left the future of the cause in the great city of Ephesus, serving the inner regions and connected with the other churches mentioned in Revelation. We are concerned with his main points—his own example, his manifested love and his final commendation. He must have felt deep sorrow at the dangers facing them and the future failure of some. Departure from the "faith once and for all delivered" was already taking place. Some at Corinth, for instance, were setting themselves up as apostles (2Cor. 11:13; Rev. 2:2). Human nature so readily wants the preeminence (3John 9), and leadership (20:30).

His words brought deeply felt response. They knelt together with him in prayer. They wept together—we should

be ashamed at times not to be weeping. They embraced him, the natural physical outcome of their love: they kissed him. They accompanied him to the ship. They might well have watched that ship until it was out of sight.

We think there is significance in the seven days at both Troas and Tyre—the first day of the week would be one of them. Here there was happy and profitable fellowship, and loving concern and entreaty against the visit to Jerusalem. Inspired by the Holy Spirit they assured him he was going into trouble, and when he was determined to go, lovingly accompanied him and his fellow travellers to the ship. They knelt together on the beach and prayed, men, women and children. What a heart-warming experience of Christian love! The holy kiss is not mentioned but it would be strange if it were not exchanged.

The next port of call was Ptolemias further down the coast. Here only one day was spent, but it was spent with the brethren in holy fellowship. It was a great privilege to have such heavenly company even for one day, and we have no doubt the same love and concern was shown to the visitors, Paul in particular. No note of farewell is given, but we are sure both prayer and greetings were exchanged.

Probably the journey to Caesarea was by land, and what a real joy it must have been to be entertained hospitably by Philip and his consecrated family! The joy was somewhat marred by the visit of Agabus with his dramatic demonstration of "bonds and imprisonment". The consequent effort again to dissuade Paul caused him anguish of heart. His companions and the local people were feeling the nearness of crisis deeply, and could not refrain from dissuasion. He was not to be turned aside from his purpose and begged them to desist. So they concluded a higher will must take over the apostle's peril and safety. A sense of doom filled their minds but this last thought must quiet it.

#### Paul's Companions

It is interesting to consider Paul's companions, probably all those mentioned

in Acts 20:4 and 2Cor. 8:19&22. We know for certain that Trophimus was in Jerusalem, and Luke himself (the oft-repeated "we"). Luke's statement indicates that all the travellers went in with Paul to James (21:18), and were therefore present when Paul spoke to the elders about his work among the Gentiles, to which they could testify. So we list them: Sopater of Beroes, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius of Derbe, Timothy, Tychicus and Trophimus and Luke. We can safely add Titus with his special interest in 'the collection for the saints'. We do not know who was the well-known brother mentioned in 2Cor. 8:18—probably one of those already listed. Whatever money or goods they were bringing for distribution, they shared the burdens and responsibility with their leader. What a blessed privilege to be associated in labour with Paul.

R. B. SCOTT

### JESUS AND THE INDIVIDUAL

TOO often these days the individual is lost in the crowd. Classes in our day schools are too large for individual attention. In many lands young men don a uniform and take a number. The uniform which looked so attractive on the poster becomes in very truth a uniform. Hundreds exactly alike and the men numbers.

Standing outside a factory at leaving time, two little children are looking for an individual man. Hundreds pass by but at last they see their father and run to him.

This lack of individuality may enter into Church life.

A minister of a London congregation tells of the fear of an applicant for membership. She said, "In such a large Church, I would have little or no opportunity to express my love for Christ, or do anything to help the work." This does not apply in our congregations! We need Christ needs, everyone — especially the young people, to prepare for the individual work waiting to be done. Everyone of any age is needed if the Church is to function as her Divine Head would love to see.

Jesus continually emphasized the value in God's sight of the individual. He taught it to the multitudes in "The Sermon on the Mount", saying, "For every ONE that asketh receiveth; and HE that seeketh findeth; and to HIM that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matt. 7:8).

In the parable of the lost sheep there were ninety-nine in the fold and ONE was missing. That ONE, said Jesus in effect, was God's concern. "It is not the will of your Father in Heaven, that ONE of these little ones should perish. Likewise I (Jesus) say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over ONE sinner that repenteth."

Have you ever walked among the crowds in the city streets, surrounded and yet alone; longing to meet someone you knew? There are several incidents in the Gospels of "two in a crowd", Luke chapter 8, verse 42; "but as He went the people thronged Him." A sick woman was in that throng, walking with difficulty, behind Jesus, but just near enough to touch the border of His garments. She was cured. Jesus stopped and said, "Who touched Me?" "Not me Lord. Not me," they all denied. Peter said, "Master, the multitude throng Thee and press Thee; and sayest Thou, Who touched Me?" "Somebody hath touched Me I feel it," and the woman kneeling before Him confessed. "Daughter, be of good comfort. Thy faith hath made thee whole Go in peace." Two in a crowd, — Jesus and a helpless sick woman; the Saviour and the Saved.

In Mark chapter 10, verse 46 we read that Jesus entered and passed through Jericho, an ancient city of Old Testament fame, eighteen miles from Jerusalem. He was with His disciples and a great number of people. Blind Bartimeus had taken up his position by the side of the highway, to beg. His keen ears caught the sound of many moving feet. Upon asking who was coming, he was told, Jesus of Nazareth and he began to shout, "Jesus Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." By-standers told Bartimeus to be quiet. Some shouted at him, while others tried to console him. Against their wishes and

advice, the blind man cried out still louder, "Thou Son of David, Have mercy on me."

Under the same conditions, any of our great men of the world would ignore the tumult, while watchful eyes of the security guards would open wider, but Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. ~~What~~ a change took place in the crowd! The very people who tried to subdue him, now encouraged him, "Be of good cheer. Rise! He calleth thee." Casting away his coat and probably his collection tin, Bartimeus came to Jesus. Once again "two in a crowd." "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" "Lord that I might receive my sight." Jesus said unto him, "Go thy way. Thy faith hath made thee whole." Immediately Bartimeus received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way. Knowing his need and having heard of Jesus, he allowed no one to stop his plea and nothing to impede his walk to the Saviour.

Suppose for one moment that either of these two people, the unnamed woman or Bartimeus, had hesitated on the grounds that each was but ONE in the company of a throng: they would have missed the blessing and would not have been healed.

The history of the Church, in the Bible and to the present day, is made up of individual surrenders to Jesus as Saviour. When the Church in Jerusalem was scattered through persecution Philip went to Samaria and preached Christ. In God's hands he was the centre of a great revival and it would seem to us, very necessary that he should remain so that his personality might help to continue this successful campaign for Christ. However, through an Angel, he received a message from God saying "Arise and go into the desert." The Holy Spirit was with him, as he went without hesitation. God knew that a dark-skinned man needed help so that he might turn from Judaism and become a Christian.

There is a prophecy in Isaiah, chapter 27 concerning God's dealings with the children of Israel. There were a lot of obstacles to be removed and a lot of sin

to be forgiven, but verse 12 tells us that "they shall be gathered ONE by ONE." In the Old and New Covenants that is God's purpose — to save ONE by ONE, but uniting together in the City of God.

A boy unable, owing to continuous snow, to attend his usual place of worship turned into a small Church nearer his home. For his text the preacher chose Isaiah chapter 45, verse 22: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I AM God, and there is none else." At the close of his message the preacher looked at the boy (the only stranger present), quoted the text again and appealed, "Have you looked my lad? Have you been saved? There is ONE God and none else beside." Impressed the boy sought further guidance and learned of God's gift of life through the death and resurrection of Jesus. He believed and preached his first sermon at the age of sixteen. That boy was none other than Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

God can use an individual life yielded to Him in humble service. Jesus loves the individual. Do not let thoughts of age worry you, for no one is too young or too old. And do not compare your possibilities with some one else, or underestimate your ability to serve Christ and His Church.

Will YOU do your part?

In every Gospel invitation in the New Testament there is an individual note. John chapter 3, verse 16 says, "For God so loved the world, (that's a sweeping statement — everybody!) that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever (that's you and me) believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

When a Sunday School boy was asked what whosoever meant, he replied, "Everybody and me."

A little boy in a Chinese Mission School had been taught enough English to read a few lines of the Bible. He discovered a special promise for himself when he read the closing words of Matthew's Gospel "Lo (his own name) Lo. I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

F. R. W. KIMBERLEY



**CHRIST: THE PERRENNIAL QUESTION****Only God Could Do This**

CHRIST assumed functions and claimed prerogatives which only a divine being could have done. He claimed, for instance, to forgive sins (Mark 2:1-12), to bestow life (John 5:21), and to judge the world at the end of time (Mat. 25:31-46). This last assertion was truly a bold claim; surely only a God could untangle the confused motives of men and peer with unadulterated vision into the tortured well springs of human behaviour and render an equitable verdict on a man's entire life. Certainly no human being could make such a claim (1st Cor. 4:5). If Christ is to be the world's judge he must necessarily be divine.

Here briefly are the claims of Jesus Christ, spread out over a ministry of some three years or more. The magnitude of these assertions is enhanced when we realize that these extraordinary claims were made by one who demanded humility in everyone else. No wonder the Jews of his own day tried to destroy him; and some men since have considered him a trifle arrogant.

**He Was What He Claimed To Be**

This charge of arrogance, however, becomes irrelevant if you consider that Christ did not just make claims. He went on to work miracles to substantiate them (John 14:11). His resurrection, furthermore, established his divine sonship (Rom. 1:4). It is not arrogance when a man claims to be something he in fact really is. If Christ was truly all he claimed to be, then the charge of arrogance is beside the point. The crux of the issue then becomes: did Christ give sufficient evidence to back up his claims? We feel, like Nicodemus, that he did: "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do, unless God is with him" (John 3:2).

**Here Are Your Choices**

Once an honest person is confronted with the claims of Christ in all their magnitude, he can have only three possible choices about Jesus:-

(1) He can say that the true "historical Jesus" never made these claims at all, but that they were merely attributed to Him many years later by his adoring disciples. This position used to be very popular among liberals in the last century, and it is certainly the most convenient and comfortable position to hold about Christ.

This view gets Jesus "off the hook": He never made such preposterous claims in the first place. Yet this theory is very difficult to maintain, since discoveries in this century have pushed all four gospels into the first century. It is now conceded that the earliest gospel (sometimes thought to be Mark) may have been written as close as fifteen or twenty years after the death of Christ. If this is true, it is very unlikely that such a fraudulent picture of Jesus could have grown up in one or two decades and been circulated as true while most of the eyewitnesses of his life were still around. Most students of the subject, therefore, admit that Jesus made the claims attributed to Him in the gospels.

(2) You may say that Christ made the claims, but they were false. If you take this line you *must* say one of two things: either He was the world's greatest liar, or He was insane or demented. For if Christ made the claims and did not believe them Himself, He was the greatest trickster and charlatan the race has yet produced; millions are still suffering from His mischief. Conversely, if Christ made the claims, and believed they were true when they were actually false, He becomes a pitiful example of the religious fanatic, the insane, but gifted Charismatic rabble-rouser. Neither picture fits well with the fact that Jesus Christ started the most ethical religion the world has ever seen.

(3) You clear up a lot of confusion if you simply admit Jesus *was* everything He claimed to be. In general, the greater a man is, the more he realises his limitations and the less likely he is to make preposterous claims about himself. But the meaner, smaller and pettier a man is the more likely he would be to make pre-

tentious assertions about himself. Christ fits into neither class : He confounds all our categories. He was truly a great man and belongs with Socrates, Gandhi, Buddha, But then HE claimed to be DIVINE, which none of these men did. Only fools like Nero and Caligula did that, and Christ does not fit with them. He fits in neither group. He was the greatest of men, yet claimed Divinity! The paradox is resolved only if we agree that His claims were true.

### "Life's Greatest Question"

If Christ is everything He claimed to be our attitude towards Him is the greatest question of history. No other issue—whether racism, pollution, population, sex, dope, ranks in import with this one. Christ can make us new creatures by His power and give us divine energy to solve all these problems. But, if Christ be not Divine, or if there be no God... well, it's very difficult to care about these other issues, or anything else for that matter. Jesus truly spoke to the ages when He asked "WHAT DO YOU THINK OF CHRIST"?

ARLIE J. HOOVER

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Blackburn, New Wellington Street:** The church rejoices in witnessing once again the power of the gospel in our midst. On Lord's Day September 12th two more were added to our Lord's Kingdom having confessed Jesus as Lord and Master: Kathryn and Gillian Jones, daughters of Bro. and Sis. Bill Jones of this assembly, were added to the church in baptism and so became numbered amongst those being saved. We pray the Lord's blessing upon our two sisters.

R. R.

**Dalkeith, Midlothian:** With great joy we announce the winning of another soul for Christ. On 13th September, Betty Sharp, wife of Bro. Andrew Sharp, proclaimed that great confession and put on her Lord in baptism.

This greatest of occasions, was during a mission held at Newtongrange with Bro.

Leonard Morgan. "Praise the Lord. To God be the glory!"

M. FERGUSON

**Nelson:** We rejoice in further blessings by the addition of three more young souls to the kingdom of the Lord. On Sept. 5th, Stephen Burrows, Pauline Burrows and Pauline Boocock made the good confession of faith and passed the waters of baptism in obedience to Christ's command.

**Peterhead:** The church has had much to rejoice about during August. Fourteen of our young folk went to the summer camp at Biggar, Lanarkshire. During their stay there eight decided to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. Under the guidance of Bros. W. Steele and F. Worgan, these souls put on their Lord in baptism. The names of these new Christians are:- Jennifer Buchan, Jane Brown, James and Helen Brown, Ian Cordiner, Heather McLean, Yvonne and Alexander Ritchie.

On the following Lord's Day Bill Davidson, who has been attending the meetings for some time, put on his Lord in baptism. We pray that God will help us all here in Peterhead to encourage and teach our new-found brothers and sisters of His wonderful love.

Alex. E. Strachan

### SIS. E.M. BAILEY, AYLESBURY: AN APPRECIATION

Precious memories were recalled by the writer upon reading in the *S.S.* of the passing to the higher life of Sister Edith Mary Bailey of Aylesbury.

I say "precious memories" because as quite a young man with little experience of the world, and owing to circumstances over which I had little control, I was privileged to spend a short time under the roof of the Farmstead which Bro. and Sis. Bailey occupied.

I refer to the first world war period when, because of personal convictions towards Military Service, and as a prisoner I was directed to several civil prisons etc, and ultimately allowed to undertake "work of National Importance" under the direction of Bro. A. Bailey at Peatling Farm (Leicestershire).

Apart from the interesting nature of the work my life was wonderfully enriched and spiritually enlarged by the sweet influence of our Sister: this influence made its mark upon my later years.

She was very gracious and indeed enabled me to face up to the challenge. Unfortunately since that period I have not been able to renew that happy fellowship but nevertheless I would repeat that the world is a much poorer place because of her departure.

"I thank God for every remembrance of her." Incidentally my sympathies are extended to both her son, Leonard and daughter Mrs Winnie Hollis.

SIDNEY W. COLLINS

## OBITUARY

[We have received the following notice of the death of Bro. Bill Britton, "Overdale", Shipley Common, Ilkeston. Bro. Britton was one of the brethren who withdrew from the congregation in Burns Street, Ilkeston last May, who agreed to meet for the time in Bro. Britton's home.]

The church has suffered the loss of our dear Bro. W.E. Britton, suddenly, in Nottingham General Hospital on August 25th, aged 74. Although he suffered illness for many years he attended the services as often as he was able. He was an Elder and a trustee for many years and found great joy in fellowship. He was a loving father to his family and through his influence and discipline they became teachers in the Lord's Day School. He loved to move around in the society of other people, making use of the opportunities of speaking a word for the Master. He had full assurance of faith, which was never daunted.

Bro. A. Winstanley conducted the final rites at the Markeaton Crematorium on August 28th in the presence of many brethren.

We commend his loving widow and family to our Heavenly Father, trusting that they will be given strength and grace to sustain them.

**Peterhead:** Katie and Jim Buchan wish to thank all the brethren who sent letters and messages of sympathy on their sad and sudden loss of their beloved son Sandy, lost at sea; also for the many prayers that went up on their behalf.

They have chosen to acknowledge them through this medium as they were too numerous to reply to personally.

We, the church at Peterhead, also thank the brethren from all parts for the love they have shown our Brother and Sister on their great loss.

"We share our mutual woes,  
Our mutual burdens bear,  
And often for each other flows  
The sympathizing tear."

We commend the Buchan family, also Sandy's grandparents, to the love and care of our heavenly Father who is able to do above all that we can ask or think.

Alex. E. Strachan

**Tunbridge Wells:** Sister Edith Collyer passed from this life July 29th, and has entered into the "rest for the people of God". Any who have been to Tunbridge Wells would have known Edith, as a faithful member of the Lord's church. She was in her 89th year and had been a Christian since her teens. Her father had been a pioneer for New Testament Christianity in this town. Edith was, like Dorcas of old, "known for her good deeds" and had been instrumental in bringing others to her Saviour. The writer has been blessed indeed to have known her over the last 14 years and it was he who conducted the service of committal, knowing that she had gone to collect "the crown of righteousness which fadeth not away."

D. L. Daniell

**Newtongrange, East Lothian:** It is with great sorrow we record the "passing" of Sister Isa Allan, beloved wife of Willie H. Allan, of the church at Newtongrange, after an illness patiently borne for many years.

Our thoughts at this time are with Willie and her family, who feel the loss of one so dear. We commend them to the comfort that only Our Lord can give.

M. FERGUSON

## COMING EVENTS

Kentish Town, Prince of Wales Road,  
100th Anniversary of opening of chapel  
Saturday, October 9th, 3p.m. and 6.30p.m.

Tea provided

Bro. Leonard Morgan (Hindley) speaking.  
Visitors very Welcome

## CHANGE OF MEETING PLACE

The Church of Christ, Mayfield and East-  
houses announce that they now meet at  
Lothian Drive, Easthouses, Dalkeith,  
Midlothian.

## CHANGE OF SECRETARY

Church of Christ, Jackson's Square,  
Scholes Wigan, Lancs, Carlton Melling  
133 Long Lane, Hindley, Via Wigan.

## BIRTH

To Norma and Joseph Layland, "Seton",  
10 Carr Lane, Worsley Mesnes, Wigan:  
a son Andrew James. September 14th,  
1971. Thanks be to God.

## BIRTH

To Fred and Dorothy Proud, a daughter  
Sally Jane on August 14th. - 58 Little-  
brook Gardens, Cheshunt, Herts.

## THE VOICE OF CHRIST

"HIS voice as the sound of many waters"  
(Rev. 1:15). This is poetry, but inter-  
pretation on the highest level. It is im-  
possible for me ever to forget the moment  
when that came to me with singular power  
for the first time. It was when I stood by  
the falls of Niagara and I listened to the  
voice of the waters. As I listened my  
mind worked backwards from the point of  
the falling of the waters to the sources  
whence they had sprung. Immediately  
behind me was the great lake, pouring  
itself over; but farther back the rivers  
were pouring themselves into the lake;  
and yet, to travel by the route of the  
rivers was to find them being created by  
brooks and rivulets, all emerging in the  
river's waters, and so proceeding by way  
of the lake to Niagara's voice of many  
waters. God had spoken in times past in  
divers portions and manners. The streams  
had moved on until at last He spoke in  
His Son, whose voice was "as the voice  
of many waters". The voices of the past,  
through prophets, all uttered the speech  
of God, but finality came in the Son, in  
whom all the streams met and merged.

G. Campbell Morgan.

*First Century Message to 20th Century  
Christians*

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is published monthly.

## PRICES PER YEAR

| HOME COUNTRIES & COMMONWEALTH | 1 Copy                              | 2 Copies | 3 Copies |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| (through Agent) ... ..        | £0.90                               |          |          |
| (posted direct) ... ..        | £1.00                               | £1.88    | £2.75    |
| CANADA & U.S.A. ... ..        | \$3.00                              | \$5.00   | \$7.00   |
| (payment in dollar bills)     | 1, 2 or 3 years pro rata in advance |          |          |

AGENT & TREASURER: PAUL JONES, 3 St. Laurence Crescent, Slamannan, By  
Falkirk, Stirlingshire. Tel. Slamannan 200.

EDITOR: CARLTON MELLING, 133 Long Lane, Hindley, Via Wigan, Lancs.

NOTICES. (Coming Events, Births, Engagements, Marriages, Thanks), 3 lines  
(minimum) 20p; each additional line 5p. Repeats (if notified when sending original  
notice) half price.

DISTRIBUTING AGENT: RONALD MAIDEN, 41 Comberton Park Road,  
Kidderminster, Worcs., to whom change of address should be sent.

EVANGELISTIC FUND: Contributions to R. McDONALD, "Aldersyde," 10  
Mardale Road, Bennett Lane, Dewsbury, Yorkshire.

CONFERENCE SECRETARY: TOM WOODHOUSE, "Jesmond," 8 Shoulder-  
of-Mutton Hill, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Notts. NG17 7DX.

Hymn Book Agent and Treasurer: FRED HARDY, 73a Bridge Street, Morley,  
Leeds, Yorkshire. Tel. Morley 3255.

"The Scripture Standard" is printed for the publishers by Walter Barker (Printers) Ltd.,  
Langley Mill, Nottm. Tel. 2266 Langley Mill