

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

Vol. 59 No. 3

MARCH, 1991

CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS

After many years of debate the Church of Scotland has, at last, published its draft **Statement of Faith**, in which it proposes to up-date its official Creed. Apparently the Church of Scotland feels that it is time to re-affirm its religious convictions and message, in a way, "faithful to its historic traditions" but, at the same time, more easily understood by this present generation. They recognise that the task is considerable because of godless conditions outwith their church: disunity and controversy within their church. The difficulty lies in trying to produce a statement which will be popularly received and will not ruffle too many feathers. This is, to them, a current necessity both for clergy and laity. It is also hoped that the up-dated Creed will give potential members (as well as existing members) a quick assessment (in this busy world) of what the Church of Scotland believes and stands for. At the moment the Church seems to lean heavily upon the Westminster Confession but does not regard it as sacrosanct: and many other Presbyterian communities have already amended it.

It seems that the 'up-dating' process has not been easy and, as we can imagine, many obstacles have been encountered. For instance, it has obviously been difficult to produce a Creed, the Articles of which will be profound enough to please the clergy and the theologians, yet simple enough to be easily comprehended by the average church member. Again, in view of the partisan elements within the Church it has, understandably, been difficult to produce a document readily acceptable to all, and one which does not appear to be biased or a reflection of sectional interests. In view of the ecumenical climate of recent times, the draughtsmen of the up-date have had to try to express formal doctrines in very temperate language, with an eye to 'Christian Unity' and better relations with other faiths. One added problem has clearly been the need to produce a Creed which would take account of controversy within the Church on doctrinal matters, such as the virgin birth, original sin, trinity, actual bodily resurrection etc., and also take cognizance of the fact that some of the clergy and members do not believe certain parts of the Bible.

The Panel of Doctrine of the C. of S. have been labouring for four years on their Creed, trying to string together just 24 extremely short Clauses (for Creeds, by their very nature, have to be short), and clearly they have not satisfied everyone. Even now the Creed is still in Draft and discussions are continuing: after all this up-dated Confession of Faith will have to stand alongside, if not usurp, the Westminster Confession, and be acceptable to all the vested interests. This historic venture by the C. of S. is surely of great interest to us because it throws some light upon the perceived

nature and relevance of religious creeds, and exercises our minds upon the subject. I can't remember ever having read any articles on Creeds and certainly I have never seen one. I suppose there may be other readers in the same boat, and offer these following few remarks.

VERY BRIEF HISTORY OF CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS

Some obvious questions present themselves, e.g., **When and Why** did Creeds begin, and what utility do they serve: what sustains them? One would have imagined that this subject would have been fairly simple and straightforward; but not so. It is surprisingly complex and a matter upon which many books have been written: with research ongoing. "Creed" comes from the Latin *credo* and means "I believe." The purpose of a religious Creed was, and is, to express in a few words the body of doctrine believed by a particular church, and what the members would be prepared to swear to, or avow. Creeds have existed for a very long time and go back historically almost to the early church: **but not quite**. They certainly did not exist in the times of the apostles. It seems that Creeds started off as baptismal confessions, i.e. formulae spoken by the recipients of baptism, or responses to questions put to the baptismal candidates. Later, by a process of evolution, these confessions were enlarged and enhanced to become Creeds used in the liturgy (ritual) and theology of the main churches. The oldest Creed is believed to be that of the Roman Church written in Greek around 250 AD (and later translated into Latin). Since the famous Creed produced at the Council Of Nicaea (Ad. 325) Creeds have served as formulae for dogma, and for the dogmatic decisions of ecclesiastical councils. In the Middle Ages, in Spain and Gaul, Creeds began to be ceremoniously recited in Sunday worship (much like, I suppose, the way in which the 'Lord's Prayer' is intoned in some places of worship today). For the benefit of those of us who have never seen a Creed, the following is the very earliest, that of the Roman Church. It runs thus:—

I believe in God, the Father, the Almighty;
 And in Jesus Christ His only begotten Son, our Lord;
 Who was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary;
 Who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and was buried,
 on the third day rose from the dead, ascended into the
 heavens, is seated at the right hand of the Father,
 whence He will come to judge the living and the dead.
 And in the Holy Ghost, the holy Church, the forgiveness
 of sins: the resurrection of the flesh.

Of all the multitudes of Creeds written subsequently to the one above, most have been **basically similar**; some have been slightly longer; some have incorporated particular points of doctrine (and even the one proposed by the C. of S., though longer, is not so greatly different). The Nicæan Creed (325 AD) already mentioned, which followed on the heels of the one above was also similar, but, after much debate and controversy, was allowed by Constantine to incorporate Clauses to refute the doctrine of Arianism (i.e. that Christ was only a created being) which was rife at the time. All Latin Creeds of the west, from Africa, Spain, Gaul, Britain and Germany were derived from the Creed (above) of the Roman Church, with minor alterations.

Middle Ages And The Reformation

There was no diminishing of interest in Creeds in the run-up to the Middle Ages or thereafter and during that time the **Apostles Creed (Apostolicum)** had become the most important descendant of the original Roman Church Creed. It began around the 7th Century in Gaul and spread to Spain, Ireland and Germany. The Apostles Creed (a misnomer) was widely used by Roman Catholic Churches and non-Catholic churches alike, and it stressed the Trinitarian nature of God. Not only in the western world did Creeds subsist but in the east as well, with a Creed in Egypt as early as 370 AD.

Some Creeds incorporated Clauses on baptism and the nature of the resurrection, i.e. "With what body do they come?", which was at that time a common preoccupation.

In 1563 the great and fundamental Creed of the Church of England was produced. It had begun as the 10 Articles compiled by 'Henry VIII in 1563 but eventually stretched to **The 39 Articles** when confirmed by Queen Elizabeth. Many other denominations, including Methodist communities, have adopted, and sometimes adapted, the 39 Articles. John Knox, about the same time, composed and produced the first truly Scottish Confession of Faith in 1560, which was legalised by the Scottish Parliament and embraced by the General Assembly of the C. of S. It had 25 extensive clauses mainly Calvinistic in character. A second one was produced in 1581 but neither became the permanent Confession of the Scottish Church: the permanent Confession was produced a few years later in 1647, and was **The Westminster Confession**. The Westminster Confession extended its influence to most Presbyterians in the U.K., Canada and America, and to some Congregational Communities. As we can imagine the Reformation caused all kinds of hectic religious activity and some of the Clauses in most Creeds underwent radical transformation. Strong words were said about the Papacy, and the Pope being the anti-Christ. Luther produced his own Creed, stringing together a small number of Articles, and the Lutheran Church produced **The Augsburg Confession** in 1530. Calvin also produced his own version of a Confession of Faith. Much more use was made of CATECHISMS at this time. Catechisms differed from Creeds in that they were not statements capable of recitation, but rather were interrogative: with question and answer; designed to educate the masses. Luther's Larger Catechism was produced in 1529 and a Geneva Catechism was compiled by Calvin in 1545. Most Catechisms stressed man's duty to give glory to God. The R.C. Church had always had Catechisms but intensified their use to counter the Reformation. These Catechisms in no wise interfered in any way with Churches in the production and use of their Creeds but were really just a small addition to fierce evangelical spirit and activity during and after the Reformation: a time indeed when interest in the wording of Creeds became even more vital and intense.

It is evident, even from these sparse comments that Creeds have had, and have maintained a firm, and even a vital place in the life and worship of most religious communities since 325 AD, and that is a very long time indeed.

No Creed But Christ

And so: where does all this take us? How would we reply to those who ask us why the Churches of Christ have never had a formal Creed or Confession of Faith? Why do we not have a Creed? Should we have one? What purpose does it serve? What advantage has accrued to those who have one? Very little, it seems. Perhaps, at one time, Creeds may have had some slight relevance, i.e. amongst the illiterate, in that although they could not read the scriptures, they could perhaps recite their Creed, parrot-fashion, and thus identify with some common belief. However most of the world's population can now read, and can, therefore, read the scriptures for themselves; if they have a mind to. Other than that there would seem to be no good reason for having a Creed, but lots of reasons for not having one.

Reasons given to justify a Creed, given by members of the C. of S. (in their proposed up-date of their Creed) are rather thin on the ground, but consist mainly in the assertion that the Bible, taken alone, is subject to misinterpretation. One wonders how a Creed can be of any help in this. It is also claimed that a Creed not only provides a yardstick with which to measure candidates for the ministry, but also allows members (and potential members) to know what the C. of S. stands for. But surely the N.T. itself is quite capable of telling men and women what the Church stands for: and surely Creeds are just as liable to misinterpretation as is the Bible. Creeds, at best, are

man-made and as such are fallible. The Scriptures, by contrast, are infallible and the only safe guide. Creeds need to be up-dated: the Scriptures never change. History shows how Creeds have been used as a vehicle for publicising some new doctrine, or some new slant on an old doctrine, whereas the Scriptures contain all doctrine and the only doctrines. Again Creeds, at best, have no binding authority (or any authority at all) and 'Conscience Clauses' exist in some Creeds (e.g. The Westminster Confession) whereby the clergy are not obliged to agree with everything contained therein. Some Creeds can also be subscribed to publicly but rejected by the members, privately. From the foregoing it seems clear that Creeds are not unscriptural, but unprofitable and often absurd.

Creeds are also divisive. Since 1927, and even before, a search has continued to find a single unifying Creed, to which all Christians could subscribe, but little progress has been made. Each religious community seems to prefer to hang on to their own particular tailor-made Creed in preference to all others, and this maintains a partisan atmosphere. Creeds identify, define and perpetuate religious differences and preserve sectarian boundaries. Among the more evangelical denominations members need only accept their Creed insofar as they consider it scriptural. Again, what good is that?

In view of all this, surely it is quite fair to say that Creeds are man-made and fallible; unauthorised by scripture; unnecessary because of easy access to the scriptures themselves; temporary and in continual need of repair and revision; open to misinterpretation and misunderstanding; can be accepted or rejected by members and therefore serve no useful function; are divisive and preserve sectarian boundaries. Consequently: why would we want to have anything to do with Creeds? Prior to 325 AD the Bible was the only Creed: why not use the same today. Paul said, "All scripture is given by the inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. 3:16). Who could want more than that?

I suppose the slogans of the Restoration pioneers still apply today: e.g. "No Creed but Christ: No Book but the Bible". Benjamin Franklin is credited with saying that any Creed containing less than the Bible contains too little: any Creed containing more than the Bible contains too much; any Creed which differs from the Bible is objectionable, and any Creed which contains the same as the Bible is superfluous: because we already have the Bible. Perhaps this sums the matter up perfectly. "The holy scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus," (2 Tim. 3:15).

EDITOR.

GLEANINGS

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

"THERE IS SOMETHING MORE"

"The Bible asserts from end to end of it that there is a respect of far greater importance in which we are nearly all blind, namely, to the fact that there is really far more in life than we can see or handle or measure. There is a spiritual realm beyond and around the visible, and not a great many have eyes for that. The Bible does not seek to prove that. It simply states that it is so. It takes it magnificently for granted. And now and then it lets us see what happens when men make the discovery that they are living in an unseen spiritual environment. Jacob, for example, at Bethel, made that discovery; learned in his dream that even from where he lay there stretched a ladder up to heaven. Elisha's servant at Dothan, mortally afraid of the encompassing hosts of Syria, became a new man when his eyes were really opened and he saw round about him armies that were mightier still, the chariotry of Heaven."

“MAN LIVETH NOT BY BREAD ALONE”

“Over against our buying and selling and our immersion in the affairs of this world, this witness stands declaring, “There is something more.” Across the world’s self-satisfaction, its love of comfort and its scramble for wealth, it writes with a calm assurance, “Man liveth not by bread alone.” And the only person whom Jesus ever called a fool was a man who thought he could.”

“AT OUR BETHELS AND OUR DOTHANS”

“Speaking about Ruskin, A. C. Benson says that he saw the light ON things so clearly that he did not see the hidden light that falls THROUGH them. But does not the light ON things blind, and, for a while, content us all? Then why bother about the unseen and spiritual at all, some one says? Because, my brother, we cannot help ourselves. As well tell the plant in a cellar not to bother for the light of the sun. We were made for it. That is the fact. The trouble began far back when God created man “in His own image.” And in spite of ourselves, our instincts come out sometime or other and set us groping for God. Materialism would long ago have become the universal creed, as it is the most obvious one, but for the fact that it goes all to pieces at our Bethels and our Dothans.”

Archibald Alexander.

LESSONS FROM JACOB AND ELISHA

“Behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.”

(Genesis 28:12).

“Behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”

(2 Kings 6:17)

JESUS SAID: MUCH MORE

“Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not **much more** clothe you, O ye of little faith?”

(Matthew 6:30)

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how **much more** shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”

(Matthew 7:11)

“Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how **much more** are ye better than the fowls?”

(Luke 12:24)

THE BIBLE SPEAKS — MUCH MORE

“**Much more** then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”

(Romans 5:9)

“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, **much more**, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

(Romans 5:10)

“But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, **much more** the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.”

(Romans 5:15)

“For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; **much more** they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.”

(Romans 5:17)

MORE WISE WORDS FROM W. RILEY

“You put a thing like a little onion into dirt,” Millie went on in the same ruminating tone, “and after a bit there comes a lovely yellow daffodil. And you put some peas into the dirt, and after a bit they grow into bushes, and you get hundreds and hundreds of peas. I think dirt is the most wonderful thing there is . . . ”

HOW MUCH MORE !

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts, how much more shall your Father, which is in heaven.” If these things pervade the common home life, If affection sometimes denies, and if affection sometimes restrains, and sometimes expresses itself in severity, **“how much more”** will the all-wise affection be constrained to act in apparent antagonism to our own blind and petty desires. Our Father will give “good things.” I may ask for freedom; He may increase the restraints. I may ask for the sweet, and the response may be found in intensified bitterness. I may ask for fish, and there may come an apparent scorpion. But the antagonism is apparent. The thing that comes is “good.” **“Thou art good, and doeth good.” “It is good for me that I have been afflicted.” “He satisfieth our mouth with good things.”**

J. H. Jowett.

Selected by Leonard Morgan.

“CHRIST, OUR ADVOCATE”

(1 John 1:8-2:2)

In John’s day false teachers known as Gnostics were troubling the Churches of Christ, Gnostics derived their name from *gnosis* the Greek word for knowledge. They taught that they had superior knowledge to that of other Christians due to a special enlightenment which they had experienced. Further, under the influence of Eastern religions, they considered all matter evil. Only the spirit was regarded as good. Since the human body is material, Gnostics reasoned, it is evil. It therefore mattered little what one did with his body. He could commit all manner of immorality with it and yet maintain purity of spirit. The logical consequence of such reasoning was the denial of sin or the possibility of a Christian committing sin and a rejection of the need for the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. In the passage under consideration and its broader context, the aged apostle John refutes this erroneous and deadly heresy.

The spiritual posterity of Gnostics can be found today in groups such as Christian Scientists who deny the reality of sin, and certain Holiness groups who affirm that Christians are incapable of sinning. It is also found in some Calvinistic groups who, in order to bolster their doctrine of “once saved, always saved,” affirm that whatever a saved person does with his body does not affect his spirit at all. He can, if once saved, actually engage in acts of immorality and never lose his salvation.

Denial of Sin

Some were saying that they had no sin (1:8). Sin here is spoken of in an abstract sense, not in the sense of specific acts committed in violation of God’s will. John said that two consequences stem from such a denial of sin: 1) **“We deceive ourselves”**, and 2) **“The truth is not in us.”** It is sad for a person to be deceived by others but sadder still that one would deceive himself. Those who say they have no sin actually fly in the face of the facts to the contrary. They have persuaded themselves that they are sinless. For one to lie to himself is for him to be utterly devoid of the truth.

Confession of Sin

One must acknowledge that he is a sinner and confess his sins, specific acts of disobedience, to the Lord (1:9). The pioneer preachers used to emphasize that God has two laws of pardon, one for the alien sinner which requires faith, repentance, confession of Christ, and baptism in order to the remission of sins, and one for those

who have obeyed the gospel thereby being added by the Lord to his Church but who have wandered back into sin. This "second law of pardon" requires repentance and confession in order to receive God's forgiveness (Acts 8:12, 13; 18-24). If an erring Christian in penitence comes to God confessing his sins, he has the assurance that the same blood of Jesus which washed his sins away in baptism will now cleanse his sins committed as a Christian.

To deny that one has sinned is to call God a liar, for God in his word has warned numerous times that a child of his can sin and fall from grace (1:10). Please note the following passages which clearly teach the possibility of apostasy (1 Cor. 10:12; Gal. 5:4; 1 Tim. 1:19,20; Heb. 6:4-6; 2 Pet. 2:20-22).

Christ, Our Sinless Advocate

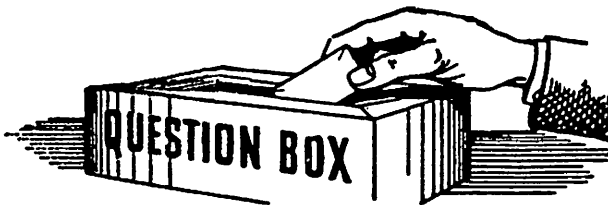
John, the aged apostle, writes to Christians, his beloved children in the faith, and pleads that they keep themselves from sin, yet knowing the frailty of human nature, he is aware of the possibility that they can and may sin (2:1). In that case he points them to our Advocate, Jesus Christ. An advocate is a lawyer who represents one on trial in a court of law, He stands before the judge to plead his client's case. Jesus, not Mary, not any human being, be he called pope, priest, preacher, or president, stands between God and the Christian. Jesus is our Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5). He is our High Priest (Heb. 4:15). He is Deity, yet has lived as a man and understands man's weaknesses and temptations. "... He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).

Not only is Christ our Advocate, he is also the propitiation for our sins (2:2). To propitiate means "to appease, to render favourable." By his atoning death, Jesus has taken away our sins, thus removing the barrier to fellowship with God. Jesus died not only for Christians but for the sins of the whole world. However, the benefits of this salvation are available only to those who comply with the conditions which he himself has laid down (John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Matt. 10:32; Mark 16:16).

In the Church of the third and fourth centuries there arose a false teaching based on a misunderstanding of the purpose of baptism. Because baptism is for the remission of sins, some taught that if a Christian sinned following baptism, there was no more forgiveness for him. It is said that it was for this reason that the Emperor Constantine put off his baptism until the day before his death. Somehow believers in that time had missed the wonderful teaching of First John in this passage and did not avail themselves of the "second law of pardon."

As Christians, we are privileged indeed to have continual access to the cleansing blood of Jesus knowing that we can approach our Advocate and High Priest and find grace to help in time of need!

R. Rutherford.



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

"I am not sure how the Holy Spirit works in my life. Does it take over my life and lead me in the right way in spite of myself, or is there something expected of me? Could you please help?"

This question was asked of me by a young Christian after one of our mid-week meetings. There had been some discussion during the meeting about the Holy Spirit, but what had been said seemed quite confusing to me, let alone to someone young

in the faith. As a matter of fact, I personally am amazed at the paucity of teaching given in the Church concerning the subject of the Holy Spirit, so if the few comments I can make will lead to better understanding in some minds about this vitally important subject, then I am willing to take up the question and see where it leads us.

The Godhead

The 'Godhead' is a perfectly scriptural expression. In Colossians 2:9 Paul says, **"For in him (Christ) dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"** (A.V.). The N.I.V. renders this, **"For in Christ all the fulness of the Deity lives in bodily form"**. The R.S.V. states, **"For in him the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily"**. J.B. Phillips renders this verse, **"Yet it is in him that God gives a full and complete expression of himself in bodily form"**. Therefore, I believe we can safely conclude that God and His Christ (Jesus) would be essential components of the Godhead. But that is not all. It is a well known fact that the Spirit of God was active operationally in O.T. times, for Peter says, **"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit"**. Furthermore, when Jesus gave what we call The Great Commission to His disciples, He said, **"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"** (Matt. 28:19). So it seems that the Holy Spirit is conjoined with the Father and the Son in the Godhead. We now need to ask briefly if these 'components' of the Godhead have personality in their own right.

The nature of God was revealed by Jesus to the Samaritan woman during His discourse with her at the Well of Sychar, when He said, **"God is Spirit (not 'a' spirit, as in A.V.): and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth"** (John 4:24). Therefore, if God was to be known to created man in the flesh, and if He had to deal with the guilt of sin in the flesh, then it seems reasonable to assume that He would need to manifest Himself in the flesh: this, of course, He accomplished in Christ Jesus, His Son. It is interesting to note what Paul says in his Philippian letter about Jesus, **"Who, being in the form (morphen) of God ... took upon him the form of a servant (morphen doulou)"** (Phil. 2:6,7). It is important to note that the construction of the words in this section of the scripture would indicate 'an eternal existence in the form of God, and a becoming, in time, in the likeness of flesh' (form of a servant). The eternal existence in the 'form' of God was real, and the temporary existence in the 'form' of a servant (flesh) was equally real; this was no 'phantom' humanity as the Gnostics claimed. We are now led to the inescapable conclusion that Jesus was a Person in the 'form' of God eternally (no matter what we may conceive that 'form' to be), and that even though Spirit, God has 'form', and is therefore also a Person. But what about the Holy Spirit?

There is a feeling abroad among many Christians that the Holy Spirit is some kind of impersonal force, the origin of which they do not understand. This feeling is perhaps bolstered by the words in Rom.8:16 as recorded in the A.V., where it is said, **"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God"**. Now even though the words in the original text would appear to be in the neuter gender, I believe these should be contrasted with the words used by Jesus and as recorded in John 16:13. Jesus is speaking to His Disciples, later to be His Apostles, and He says, **"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come"**. Now here, you will notice, the reference by James to the Holy Spirit is in the **masculine gender; it is a grave error, I believe, to refer to the Holy Spirit as 'it'; He is a Person of the Godhead, as are God and Jesus.** It is necessary to understand the importance of this so that we should fully realise the grandeur of God's scheme of redemption and final consummation. I think I should also mention that we should not be led astray into the avenues of trinitarian

teaching; we mention God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit as they appear before us in the pages of God's word.

The Function of the Holy Spirit

The Scheme of Redemption, if we can use the phrase, belongs to God; it was in His determinate counsel and foreknowledge. The 'executive arms', if you will, of God's plan are Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit is the Sustainer of the new life in Christ. It is important for the Christian to understand that his salvation rests not just on obedience to textual exactness and ethical directives — vitally important though these are — but more essentially on an intimate relationship with the Godhead; we have, as Peter says, '**become partakers of the Divine nature**' (2 Pet. 1:4). It is this fact which marks out the Christian as a 'child of God' as distinct from the mass of God's created children. It is the Holy Spirit which makes the 'child of adoption' cry, "Abba, Father".

The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) tell us little more about the Holy Scriptures than we can read in the O.T. scriptures; it is to John's Gospel to which we must turn in order to learn more. Space does not allow me to quote the scriptures verbatim, so the reader will have to look them up. God was to send the Holy Spirit in the name of Christ (14:26,15:26). Here again we see the intimacy of the (Godhead). Jesus had to leave the earth in order for this to happen (16:7). Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would be given to those who believed on Him, but would only be given after He, Jesus, was glorified (7:37-39). When the Holy Spirit came, He came to reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement to come (16:8-11). He was to guide the Apostles into all truth, and was given miraculously to them on the Day of Pentecost (Read Acts 2). Peter then preached the inspired Gospel message, and told his listeners precisely what they had to do in order to be saved (Acts 2:37-40). During that message, Peter confirmed that those who obeyed should receive the 'gift' of the Holy Spirit (This was not a promise of any miraculous endowments, such as given to the Apostles. This pertained to the gracious indwelling of the Spirit, as a comforter). Thus we reach the crucial point of the operation of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian, and hence in the life of the Church.

He In Us

Many Christians are confused by the Holy Spirit being able to indwell individuals in any part of the world at the same time. The fact is, we are too accustomed to space and time. I suppose its like the old psychological question, "How many fairies can dance on a pin-head"? The answer given being an infinite number, because a fairy doesn't occupy space. Seeing that we are partakers of the Divine nature, it would seem to be no difficult matter for the Holy Spirit to bear witness with our **individual** spirits that we are the children of God in the saved sense; as a matter of fact, Paul asserts this in Rom. 8:16. But there must be an understandable way of doing this. If the Holy Spirit operates through the word of God, which He does, and if the word is a true revelation of God, which it is, then our conscious understanding will tell our spirits whether or not we have complied with the Divine requirements, and as these requirements are what the Holy Spirit expressly teaches through the word, then we **know** if we are following the Spirit's promptings. This is why the Bible is so important to the Christian and should never denigrated.

According to Paul, the chief manifestation of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian lies in the life of faith and love, which is the **supreme** life of the Christian. The fruits of that Spirit-led life are "**love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, etc.**," and these qualities should be common to all Christians, because if they are Spirit-led they will also be word-led, if I can coin that word. The body is also **sanctified** by the Holy Spirit because we are taught that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16). This is why I personally cannot

accept, as some Christians seem to do, that because we are 'in the flesh' that we must inevitably go on sinning; I find this to be degrading to our 'Divine Guest' who is seeking, through the word, to drive us ever upward to our Father. Christians today do not need the 'extraordinary powers' that many claim, such as speaking in tongues and healing; we have seen too often that such 'powers' would only tend to glorify **individuals**, when, in fact, the praise and the glory belong to God. He has used what 'extraordinary power' was needed in the establishment of the Church; such power will not be repeated.

What a joy it is to know that the Holy Spirit guides us and assists us in the 'upward call' by our Father through Christ, His Son. But the effort **must come from us**. God has never forced anyone into anything: He needs a positive response to His call. The comfort, joy, peace, He affords, He has revealed to us in His word, and He has also revealed that the resources of Heaven are at the disposal of the faithful Christian. Just reflect on it for a moment. The grace and mercy of the Father in making possible our salvation; the love and sacrifice of Jesus in dying for us; the comfort and guidance of the Holy Spirit in His attempts to mould and hone our lives to perfection. Such blessings!

But can we throw these blessings away? We certainly can. We can, by our obstinate and impenitent hearts and minds, grieve and quench the Holy Spirit. (See Eph. 4:30-32). There are grave consequences for us if this happens. We can even go so far as to quench the Holy Spirit. This is tantamount to 'putting out the fire'. What cold and helpless Christians we would then be. God has given us eternal life through His Eternal Spirit. What sane Christian would want to return to the weak and beggarly elements from which he was saved?

Dear Reader, the indwelling Holy Spirit can enrich and ennoble your life. You, by your perversity and carelessness, can make all the grace, love and sacrifice of none effect **in your own life**. As always, the choice is ours.

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

WHAT IS THAT TO US?

Matt. 27:4

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

The same spirit of indifference that was manifested by the enemies of Jesus is being manifested by the world and by many members of the Church. Many members of the Body of Christ are indifferent and negligent, and seem to have but little interest in the Lord's work. **"What is that to us?"** This seems to be the attitude that many members manifest in regard to the work and to the welfare of the church. Many **"are at ease in Zion"** and are not concerned about their own salvation or the salvation of others. What is that to us whether the church prospers or perishes? If souls are saved or lost, what is that to us? If wicked men would try to destroy the church, what is

that to us? Many members are so indifferent that they would not utter a protest against the introduction of innovations and unscriptural practices that would corrupt the church. The same spirit of indifference that crucified Christ would crucify the church, if it were not for the faithful few in every congregation that bear the burdens and shoulder the responsibilities that every Christian should share.

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

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

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

Some day we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. There we shall be judged for what we have done and for **What we have failed to do.**

Geo. W. Butterfield.

SINGING

Eph. 5:19-20. **"Speaking to yourselves in Psalms and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."** (Col. 3:16-17). **"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing in Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."** And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him. (Matt. 26:30). **"And after they had sung a hymn they went out into the mount of Olives."** (Acts 16:25). **"And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God: and the prisoners heard them."**

It is apparent from the example of Jesus and his followers, and the Early Church, that to sing was an important part of worship. In fact, by so doing, God is praised and His followers are taught and admonished. Do we fully realise this implication of God's Word? In singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord, while the lips offer the fruit of singing, the heart must also supply the melody by an upliftment to God. Too much singing can be of the lips alone. As of prayer, so also of song. "I

often say my prayers but do I really pray; do the wishes of my heart go with the words I say." This must also apply to our singing.

Many great thoughts of God's Word are expressed in our hymns. Praise and prayer and thanks for blessings received. Many of the Psalms have been translated into Metric Versions which we call hymns; e.g. Psalms 23; 38; 46;84. "Spiritual Songs" are those that stir our emotions in order that we may exalt the Lord our God.

Let us remember that **the words** are more important than the music which, in itself, is speechless so far as words are concerned. God has so arranged it that our vocal chords are capable of making both words and music at one and the same time, so, wherever we are, we can sing to His Praise and Glory. There is always a danger of making more of the tune than what we are saying in Song.

May we always remember that God is **Worthy** of our praise and thanksgiving and endeavour to do it in the most worthy manner. We no longer have need of animal blood Sacrifices, Jesus has made atonement once and for all by His own most precious blood, giving us access to God through His most precious name, and as we are instructed (in Heb. 13: 15-16) "**By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of PRAISE to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.**"

Tom Kemp, Hindley, Wigan.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Apr. 7	Isa. 23:	Luke 10:1-24
Apr. 14	Deut. 6:1-15	Luke 10:25-42
Apr. 21	1 Sam. 28:5-25	Luke 11:1-26
Apr. 28	2 Chron. 24:15-25	Luke 11:27-54

THE SEVENTY

We read: "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come" (10:1). Why seventy? Adam Clarke has written: "Our blessed Lord formed everything in His Church on the model of the Jewish Church: and why? because it was the pattern shown by God Himself, the Divine form, which pointed out the heavenly substance which now began to be established in its place. As he before had chosen twelve apostles, in reference to the twelve patriarchs, who were the chiefs of the twelve tribes, and the heads of the Jewish Church, he now publicly appointed seventy others as Moses did the seventy elders whom he associated with himself to assist him in the government of the people — Exodus 18:19; 24:1-9." (I would, of course, question Clarke's use

of the term 'Church' in these statements, but he certainly made valid points).

The seventy, of necessity, had to travel light and to rely in many ways on the providence of God. Their task was to spread the news of the coming kingdom of God. Verses 10 and 11 are interesting: "**But into whatsoever city you enter and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, even the very dust of your city, which cleaves on us, we do wipe off against you . . .**" Shaking off dust was an ancient custom and used to indicate disapproval of a place.

THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

There was tremendous hostility between Jews and Samaritans in Jesus' day (John 4:9). In fact, the hatred was so great that the Jews would not travel through the land of the Samaritans, but always took a longer route. When the Master had that famous conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well (John 4:4-30), she was quite astonished that Jesus showed interest in her. Later the apostles were equally astonished. It is interesting to note that the lawyer when asked who "was

neighbour unto him that fell among thieves?" (11:36) could not bring himself to mention the name Samaritan.

One thing the parable teaches is that "help must be practical and not consist merely of feeling sorry", as one commentator has pointed out. Compassion, to be real, must issue in deeds. The spirit of Jesus is the spirit of helpfulness, humble service, kindness, sympathy, self-sacrifice and love. This spirit was seen in the good Samaritan. Brothers and sisters in the Lord, resolve to be like him and not like the priest or the Levite.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

This prayer (11:2-4) is familiar to all. Personally, I used to recite it each morning at assembly at my old secondary school in East Kilbride. I doubt if I and my fellow pupils ever gave much thought to the meaning of the words. William Barclay once wrote a book on the Lord's Prayer and commented in it: "What Jesus was doing was that He was giving His disciples a pattern of prayer far more than a form of words which they were to do no more than repeat, like children reciting a lesson." He went on to write: "In the Lord's Prayer Jesus says to us: When you Pray.

Remember that God is your Father and King and that, therefore, you go to One in whom Love and Power are equally combined.

When you Pray:

Do not hesitate to tell God about your daily needs.

When you pray:

Do not shrink from telling God about your mistakes.

When you pray:

Never forget to place the unknown future and all its perils in the hands of God."

The disciples of Jesus should pray because Jesus Himself prayed. In fact, He prayed in the mornings, He prayed in the evenings and sometimes He even prayed all night (Luke 6:12). If Jesus needed to approach His Father that often then how much more are we in need of daily prayer and supplication?

A GREATER THAN JONAH AND SOLOMON

Jonah was an outstanding prophet. God sent him to the pagan city of Nineveh (capital of Assyria) to preach repentance unto them. They responded to his message, which was clearly confirmed by Jesus Himself. The Lord said: "The men of Nineveh shall rise up in judgment with this generation and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and, behold, a greater than Jonah is here" (11:32). E. M. Zerr commented: "The point of this verse is one about responsibility based on opportunity."

Solomon was the son of David and successor to him as king of Israel. He is one of the wisest men who ever lived. The queen of Sheba (the queen of the south) once came to visit and question him because of his reputation. The scripture reveals: "And she said to the king, it was a true report that I heard in mine own land of your acts and your wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words, till I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, that half was not told me! Your wisdom and prosperity exceeds the fame which I heard. Happy are your men, happy are these your servants, who stand continually before you, and that hear your wisdom. (1 Kings 10:6-8).

Jesus said: "The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgement with the men of this generation and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon: and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here." (11:31). Think of that in the light of this statement: "And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the East country and all the wisdom of Egypt." (1 Kings 4:30).

SIX WOES

We have recorded for us six woes by Jesus in this portion of Scripture (11:37-54). The woes were against the Pharisees and the so-called experts in the law. The Master condemned them for their obsession with externals and details while

their hearts were far removed from God. They thought true religion consisted of going through the correct motions at the correct time while love, goodness, justice and generosity were realities to be ignored. As one writer has said: "No man is a Christian when he meticulously observes the conventions of religion and forgets the realities."

Frank Charles Thompson in his Chain Reference Bible has headings on this section of Scripture such as Cerebralism, Hypocrisy, Pride, Ambition, Corruption, Neglect of Duty, Legalism, Inconsistency, Sanctimony, Stumbling-blocks and False Teachers. These well sum up the matter.

Ian S. Davidson, Motherwell.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Another year's publishing has been successfully completed.

We have had a small increase in circulation due mainly to brethren sponsoring copies to Africa. We are glad of this support and hope it will encourage our brethren there. We would equally like to see more copies taken within the U.K.

I would like to record my thanks for the assistance given by a number of brethren. Bro. Jimmy Sinclair assists greatly with the laborious task of wrapping, stamping and posting the magazine each month. Bro. Jack Nisbet very generously gives me access to his home computer each month to print the address labels – a great boon compared to typing them out each time. Bro. Joe Currie audits the books and appends his name to this report. My thanks to these brethren and their wives for all their help.

You will notice in the Balance Sheet the large element of gifts we receive and which enables us to keep our subscription rate at £6.00. I am conscious of the pressures on our finances and it may become necessary to increase our rates for 1992.

One last thing. Let me remind you to check the expiry date given on the top line of your address label. This will be in the form of month and year, e.g. DEC. 90 means you have paid up to December, 1990 and your subscription is due from January, 1991. It really does save a lot of time and effort making lists up for renewal, preparing and remembering to enclose reminders if you will renew your subscription promptly.

I hope you enjoy your Scripture Standard through 1991 and that it leads you to a deeper appreciation of God's word.

BALANCE SHEET 1990

INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
Bank Current A/c	£206.38	Printing (12 issues)	£3404.70
Bank Deposit A/c	63.32	Reading Cards	42.00
	—————	Postages	470.66
Subscriptions	2182.27		—————
Gifts	1656.76	Bank Current A/c	151.55
Bank Interest	78.58	Bank Deposit A/c	118.40
	—————		—————
	£4187.31		£4187.31
	—————		—————

J. K. KNELLER, Treasurer.

I have examined the books, receipts, etc. and find them to be correct and in good order.

J. H. Currie, (Auditor), 11th February, 1991.

Christ is not valued at all, unless valued above all.

Even the devil can quote scripture.

Horse sense is something which prevents horses betting on men.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Kirkcaldy: On the 27th January, 1991, Anine McDonald, was baptised into Christ. Many of the Sunday School children came to the Sunday morning Service to watch.

Anine has been coming to the Ladies' Class for some time, and after much study, decided to give her life to Christ. We give thanks to God for her decision.

Ruth Moyes (Sec.).

COMING EVENTS

Tranent Social

To be held on Saturday, 16th March, at 4.00 p.m. in the Loch Centre.

Speakers: John Morgan, Hindley.

Bill Mair, Buckie.

All Welcome

Kirkcaldy Social

Saturday, 6th April, at 3.30 p.m.

Speaker: Joe Nisbet

August Mission (Kirkcaldy)

12th-16th: Holiday Bible School.

14th-18th: Mission with M. Gaunt as Speaker.

GHANA REPORT

By the time you read this report, brother Bill Cook should, God willing, be in Ghana. Bill is booked to fly out on 17th February from London. When Bill arrives in Ghana he will set up a bank account and the funds here will be transferred and distributed as directed, e.g. medical, building, eyecare, gospel work, etc.

After Bill has got settled and found accommodation and furniture he will be able to start visiting the various congregations and it is hoped his first report will be in the April issue of the *Scripture Standard*.

In view of the above circumstances this month's appeal will be for a general fund to be held until Bill has established priorities.

Cheques should be made out to "Graeme Pearson (Ghana Appeal)" and sent to G. Pearson, 13 Fairways, Dunfermline, Fife. KY12 0DU.

NIGERIAN APPEAL

On behalf of all the people in Nigeria who have received Bibles, correspondence courses, tracts and literature including the many who are sending the *Scripture Standard*, I would like to thank everyone who contributed. We are now beginning to receive confirmation that the first ones have arrived.

The process of sending out Bibles is continuing, some second-hand ones mixed with new so that more can be sent.

As we are still receiving requests every week, we would be grateful for any further donations to this work. Some just need one Bible, such as one old man who can't read the print in an ordinary Bible and has requested a large print one, but others need many more. To give you a couple of examples, there is one congregation that has grown from 3 to 28 in the space of six months, many of whom don't have Bibles. Another has written to say that they are 50 - 100 short.

Another thing still being asked for is literature such as, the life of Jesus, helps in preparing sermons, or anything written on the Bible. If you have any books or booklets, no longer needed, the smaller the better because of postage costs, we could put them to good use.

For those in Scotland to save postage, if you would like to pass any books on to the church at Motherwell, our sister Nancy Wardrop will hold them there for collection by us.

Margery Purcell,
3 Dale Avenue,
Bramhall,
Stockport, Cheshire. SK7 2JP.
Tel. 061 439 1758.

"IT'S O.K. SON"

When caught for speeding one day, Johnny saw his dad give the policeman a \$5.00 bill with his driver's licence, "It's O.K. son," the father said as they drove away, "everyone does it."

When Johnny was eight years old, he watched his Uncle George fudge on his income tax return, "It's O.K.," the uncle said, "everyone does it."

On his first trip to the theatre at the age of nine, the seats were all sold out until mother produced a crisp new ten dollar bill and gave it to the usher. "It's O.K. son," she said "everyone does it."

When Johnny was twelve he broke his glasses through carelessness, and his Aunt Florence persuaded the insurance company the glasses were stolen and collected \$17.00. "It's O.K. son," she said "everyone does it."

On the football team at 15, the coach showed Johnny how to block the opponent and grab the shirt illegally at the same time. "It's O.K. lad," the coach said, "everyone does it."

When Johnny was 16 he took his first summer job at the market. His assignment was to put the over-ripe or half-rotten tomatoes at the bottom of the basket and good ones on top. "It's O.K. lad," the manager said "everyone does it."

When Johnny was 19 he was approached by an upper class-mate who offered the final test answers for ten bucks. "It's O.K." he said "everyone does it."

Johnny was caught and sent home in disgrace, "How in the world could you do this to your mother and me?" the father said. "You couldn't have gotten these ideas from home." The aunt and uncle were likewise indignant; "If there is anything the adult world can't stand, it's guys who cheat."

Many a Johnny is wandering around in this world waiting for someone to come up and say that old familiar line one more time . . . "It's O.K. Johnny, everyone does it."

QUIPS AND QUOTES

Some people have family reasons for not fighting the devil.

A sickly saint often makes a healthy hypocrite.

About the worst thing about being a "Yes man" is that he will be told "No" at the judgment

A stitch in time also saves thread and unnecessary embarrassment.

The way a man lives, not the way a man dies, makes dying hard or easy.

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is published monthly.

PRICE PER YEAR — POST PAID BY SURFACE MAIL

UNITED KINGDOM and COMMONWEALTH	£ 6.00
CANADA & U.S.A.	\$10.00

AIR MAIL please add £1.50 or \$3.00 to above surface mail rates

DISTRIBUTION AGENT & TREASURER:

JOHN K. KNELLER, 4 Glassel Park Road, Longniddry, East Lothian, EH32 0NY
Telephone: Longniddry (0875) 53212 to whom change of address should be sent.

EDITOR: JAMES R. GARDINER, 87 Main Street, Pathhead, Midlothian,
Scotland EH37 5PT. Telephone: Ford 320 527

"The Scripture Standard" is printed for the publishers by
Lothian Printers, 109 High Street, Dunbar, East Lothian. Tel: (0368) 63785