

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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WHAT'S IN A NAME

I suppose that it is because we encounter so many unimaginative names in Britain that we conclude that there is not much in a name. Indeed some have said that there is nothing in a name and yet whenever a baby is born there is great excitement and serious discussion over the matter of choosing a name. In other countries such as China, Africa etc. (and at one time North America) names are more meaningful. In like manner names given in bible times carried real significance and were even sometimes quite picturesque. I understand, for instance, that Noah's name meant 'Rest'; Abram meant 'Exalted Father'; Abraham meant 'Father of a multitude'; Elisha — 'God is Salvation'; Samuel — 'Asked of God'; Daniel — 'God is my judge'; Jacob — 'A Supplanter'; Israel — 'Princely'; and so on. The derivation of names is, of course, a study in itself and as every schoolboy knows names were at one time acquired according to one's trade or profession, e.g. Baker, Butcher, Cartwright, Barber, Gardener, Smith, Wheelwright etc. etc. There are many organisations who trace name origins (so important do they regard names) and there is also, in the U.S.A, an organisation which reckons that any lack of success we have in this world is due to us having been given the wrong name (they have the interesting theory that there is only one name destined for each person entering the world) and for a not-so-small fee the prescribe one's 'true' name and arrange the legal formalities to have the change made.

There are no such difficulties surrounding the name of Jesus because God Himself chose that name. The apostle Paul states, "Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him and hath given Him a name which is above every other name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in the earth, and things under the earth." (Phil. 2:9,10). When Joseph and Mary were expecting their child they were spared the responsibility of finding a name, for had not Mary been informed by the angel Gabriel that she would bear a son and that she was to call his name Jesus 'for He shall save His people from their sins.' 'Jesus' was thus the God-appointed name commonly given to our Lord during His earthly ministry and denoting His function as *Saviour of men*. He was also called God's 'Anointed' (in Greek 'the Christ' or in Hebrew 'the Messiah') and sometimes He is referred to as 'Jesus the Christ' or 'Christ Jesus' (the Anointed Saviour). The term 'God's Anointed' refers not so much to His role as Saviour but rather to His *kingly* authority and meditational position as 'Servant of the Lord.'

This God-given name is so important that all that we *say* and all that we *do* must be *in His name* — “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.” (Col. 3:17). When the police bang on a door and shout “Open up in the name of the law” we understand them to be claiming to carry the whole weight and authority of the law behind them. Similarly if ambassadors sign treaties of agreements in the name of their king, president or parliament we understand that they act with the authority of that titular head. Likewise those who speak or act *in the name of the Lord Jesus* act by His authority and by His sanction and in deference to His instructions. Indeed all that we say or do, and all that we dare hope, is contingent upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our very salvation is irrevocably linked with His name and Paul limits those who shall be saved to those who call upon His name (Rom. 10:13) and Peter said, “Neither is there salvation in another: for there is none other name under heaven, given amongst men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12). John says that Jesus came to His own and His own received Him not, “But as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them *that believe on His name.*” (John 1:12). Remission of sins can only be received through the merits of Christ’s name. Did not Jesus tell His apostles to tarry in Jerusalem until they be endued with power from above and then to proceed to preach, to the end ‘that repentance and remission of sins should be preached *in His name* among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’ (Luke 24). In accordance with these instructions the apostles duely proclaimed the gospel and commanded their hearers to “Repent and be baptised every one of you *in the name of Jesus Christ* for the remission of sins and he shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38). Notwithstanding the casual approach even religious people have to baptism we read that Paul did not share any such attitude and when at Ephesus he encountered several who had been baptised with John’s baptism he explained the temporary nature of John’s baptism saying, “John verily baptised with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on Him which should come after Him, that is on Christ Jesus. When they heard this they were baptised *in the name of the Lord Jesus.*” (Acts 19).

It was Shakespeare who made Juliet to say, “What’s in a name? A rose by another name would smell as sweet” and I suppose this is a view widely held but it was not shared by the wise Solomon who said, “A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches ...” and repeated the sentiment in (Ecc. 7:1) by saying that a good name is better than precious ointment. Indeed the general public recognise this and while sometimes calling their children by the name Jacob, Abraham, Ezekiel, Mary, Martha, rarely call their children Jezebel or Judas. God certainly thinks that there is something in a name and that, of course, ends all disputations. God gave Adam his name and instructed Adam to name all other creatures. God also changed Abram’s name to Abraham (for the reason given in Gen. 15:5) and similarly changed Sarah’s name for Sarai; and sent an angel to change Jacob’s name to Israel (Gen. 32). James, in his epistle remarked that the poor seemed to embrace the gospel more readily than the rich and said, “do not they (the rich) blaspheme *that worthy man* by which ye are called.” The worthy name by which we are called. Paul likewise abhorred any attempt to place any human name into competition with that worthy name of Christ Jesus or to mention any puny little human-being in the same breath especially if his (Paul’s) was the name referred to. To the Corinthians he said, “Now this I say, that every one of you sayeth, I am of Paul: and I of Apollos: and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptised in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptised none of you, but Crispus and Gaius. Lest any should say that I had baptised in mine own own.” (1st Cor. 1:12). To Paul, names mattered.

There is a story told, unlikely though it may be, of a rich lady who had a gentleman caller to the door collecting for the fabric-fund of his particular church. She said that she was sorry but she did not give money to any church but to her own and added that the gentleman's church did not even bear the scriptural name. The man replied, "Oh the name doesn't make the slightest difference, after all there is nothing in a name." She asked him if he was sure about this and he urged her that it was so. "All right," she said, and wrote a cheque for £100. The man was speechless with delight and pleased with his own powers of persuasion. When he took the cheque to the bank the cashier refused to pay the money. The man insisted and reminded the cashier that the woman was rich and her account must be in good shape. "Oh her account is very good" said the cashier, "But you see, it's her maid's name that's on the cheque." Is there nothing in a name? Many in the religious world may find that their spiritual cheques will bounce on Judgment Day, not having Christ's name on them.

"Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow ..."

Take the name of Jesus with you

Child of sorrow and woe

It will joy and comfort give you

Take it then, where'er you go.

EDITOR.

LOVE: THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD (No. 1) I Cor. 13

WHAT makes a thing great? It can be purely monetary value. To some ladies a £1,000 fur coat would be considered "GREAT," as might a Rolls-Royce car to the men. Some things of extreme beauty or that which is very rare are also considered to be "GREAT", without reference to the actual value. The magnitude of many public schemes makes them "GREAT" when the benefits to mankind are assessed. Water, purified and piped is perhaps the greatest of all the assets we enjoy. If we lose this service through severe cold or drought we soon realise how "GREAT" the blessing. So we could go on, but our subject is far more important than mere material blessings.

In chapter 12 of his Corinthian letter. The Apostle Paul speaks favourably of those Christians who had the ability, through the Holy Spirit, to do miraculous works. He urges his readers to seek to acquire the ability to perform the "Greater" works. (If any would ask, what are the greater gifts to which he refers, while this is not consequential to our subject, may we suggest the ability to raise the dead, restore sight, cure the more deadly diseases could be considered). (For reference that some miracles require much greater devotion see Mark 9. 28-29). After Paul has exhorted to, "Desire earnestly the Greater Gifts, he continues, "A STILL MORE EXCELLENT WAY SHOW I UNTO YOU." How many poor deluded souls today, pretend to possess the lesser, even the least of the miraculous gifts of apostolic times and have no time, or thought, for the greatest gift of all. "LOVE."

Some years ago "Cherry Blossom" boot polish had a type of advertisement which fascinated me. On the hoardings one would see a picture of some grotesque bird or animal. The figure was composed by blending various animal features from different beasts to form the subject. May-be a lion's head with an elephant's trunk and the body of a mouse. Beneath the picture was the simple caption, "THERE'S NOTHING LIKE IT."

How well Paul says just that about Love. There's Nothing Like It.

Paul sets out love as the acme of all the spiritual gifts and graces. Many of the abilities bestowed by the Holy Spirit were of necessity only temporary. Apart from Cornelius' household, only the Apostles had the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Only the Apostles could pass on the gifts, which were never dispensed by the Spirit to all and sundry, before or after immersion. (Read Acts 8. 14-24, for evidence of this). These minor, physical abilities passed from men as Paul says, "Prophecies shall be done away, tongues shall cease, knowledge (as an unlearned gift) shall be done away." These props, supports, promotional aids completed their useful existence when the Will and Word of God had been revealed in all its fullness. "When that which is perfect Is come!" These "Gifts" were all held incompletely. No one person knew it all.

No one person foretold it all and No one person spoke it all. "For we know in part and we prophesy in part." All these aids were — UNTIL — That which is perfect is come. (The original of this word "perfect" has no reference to something malformed and which required correction, but to a complete gathering together; what was always faultless, into a Perfect whole). Jude refers to "The Faith, once for all delivered;" Now that the world has, in its hand, the complete revelation of God's Will and Word, all these temporary necessities have passed away. As the need disappeared so did they vanish from the earth.

Even though these wonderful abilities have gone from the Church and the Earth yet there are still three ALL-TIME GREATS.

Faith, hope, love

Faith is the essential all-time great. Whosoever cometh to God must believe that He exists and that He is a rewarder of them that dilligently seek Him. Heb. 11:6. The first ingredient of faith is belief. I believe — therefore I do. That is FAITH. (Note Mark 2:5) "And SEEING their faith." Not miraculously knowing they believed by SEEING! Or James, "I, by my works will shew you my faith." An ALL-TIME great because, (Rev. 2:10), "Be thou Faithful unto death." Faith is required in a Christian throughout life, for the Christian this is for all his Time.

Hope is the "all-time great" of encouragement. Rom. 8. 24:25. "We are saved by hope!" Hope is an equal combination of eager desire and reasonable expectation. As such it has stirred many men to gallant bravery, undivided devotion and stimulated to the utmost sacrifice. To the Christian it is a prime essential, for by its power they are able to withstand the Devil and the World. Paul describes the "Hope of Salvation" as the helmet in the Christian's armour. (I Thes. 5:8). It is this hope — not for wealth, or power or prowess, but as John writes, "Everyone, who hath this hope, purifieth himself." What hope? "We know that when He shall appear we shall see Him and be made like Him". (I John 3:2). The eager desire and reasonable expectation of salvation.

The third all-time great is Love. *Of the three it is "the greatest."* Jesus, when speaking of the Kingdom of Heaven, used the illustration of the pearl of greatest price and advocated selling all in order to purchase it. How well the same parable could be used of this greatest of all gifts, LOVE! It is impossible to comprehend it in quantity, in extent, nor in the magnitude of its influence both on earth and in heaven. It was love which moved Almighty God to send His Son into the world. (John 3:16). Its practice is the surest, purest way to solid pleasure. It is the greatest thing in Heaven and on earth. Greater than Faith and Hope because these will eventually reach their glorious consumation. Faith will be lost in sight and Hope vindicated in attainment, at the end of time; yet Love goes on beyond time. Love was before time began and will lose nothing when time ends.

LOVE IS THE GREATEST — for GOD IS LOVE.

PAUL JONES.

GLEANINGS

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

Forgiveness

“The forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.” Ephesians I:

“What riches of grace does free forgiveness exhibit! To forgive at all, to forgive fully, to forgive freely, to forgive forever! Here is a constellation of wonders; and when I think of how great my sins were, how dear were the precious drops which cleansed me from them, and how gracious was the method by which pardon was sealed home to me, I am in a maze of wondering worshipping affection. I bow before the throne which absolves me, I clasp the cross which delivers me, I serve henceforth all my days the Incarnate God, through whom I am this night a pardoned soul.”
C.H.S.

But Ye Were Washed!

“Let us fasten our attention here for a little while, in the contemplation of this man’s amazing confidence in the triumphant powers of grace.

He stands before sin and proclaims its possible destruction. It is not only that he proclaims the general ministry of pardon and the general removal of sin. He finds his special delight in specialising the ministry, and in proclaiming the all-sufficiency of redeeming grace in its relationship to the worst. There is about him the fearlessness of a man who knows that his evangel is that of a redemption which cannot possibly fail. Turn to those gloomy catalogues which are found here and there in his epistles, long appalling lists of human depravity and human need, and from these estimate his glowing confidence in the powers of redeeming grace. Here is such a list: “Fornicators, idolators, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with men, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners.” Such were some of the foul issues upon which the saving energies of grace were to be brought. And then he adds — “And such were some of you. But ye were washed!” And when the apostle uses the word “washed” he suggests more than the washing out of an old sin, he means the removal of an old affection; more than the removal of a pimple, he means the purifying of the blood; more than the cancelling of guilt, he means the transformation of desire. Such was this man’s belief in the saving ministry of divine grace.”
J. H. Jowett.

Someone Has Said

“You can write the word forgiven over the catalogue of your sins, if those sins have been washed white in the blood of the Lamb.”

“He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean:
His blood avails for me.”

C. Wesley.

What Is Forgiveness?

“A little blind boy was asked what forgiveness was. He replied, “It is the odour that flowers breathe when trampled upon.” T.W.T.

Gleanings

“King Henry VI of England had it said of him: “He never forgot anything but injuries.” And to Cranmer it was said: “If you want to get a favour from him, do him a wrong.” The highest eulogy ever paid President Lincoln was that of Emerson, when he said: “His heart was as great as the world, but there was no room in it to hold the

memory of a wrong." Luther said: "Whenever I look at Peter, my very heart leaps for joy. If I could paint a portrait of Peter, I would paint upon every hair of his head, "I believe in the forgiveness of sin." "C. H. Spurgeon gives the following advice: "Cultivate forbearance till your heart yields a fine crop of it. Pray for a short memory as to all unkindness." B.T.I.

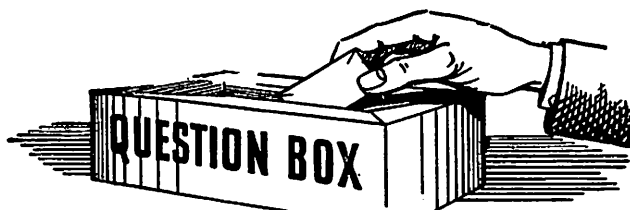
Him Teach Me To Forgive You, Massa

"What can Jesus Christ do for you now?" said an inhuman slave-master, when in the act of applying the lacerating whip to an already half-murdered slave. "Him teach me to forgive you, massa." was his reply." — Philips.

The Bible Speaks

"And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Acts 22:16

Selected by Leonard Morgan.



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

"We are considering appointing Elders and Deacons, and we know that they must have certain scriptural qualifications before they can be appointed, but are there any other qualities which we ought to look for in these proposed leaders?"

Over the years there has been a school of thought which argues that the scriptural qualifications are the only ones that matter, but I have long held the view that if such brothers purport to lead communities of christians, then they should possess qualities of leadership in addition to the scriptural qualifications which are so essential. In our search to find enough scripturally qualified people, we have perhaps neglected to look for these other qualities, and indeed, it may very well be that we are not fully aware of the other qualities which may be desirable in the more efficient management of the Church; if this is so, then a little investigation may help us.

What is the Local Assembly?

On the face of it, this may seem a ridiculous question to ask, but I believe that we need to answer it if we are going to say anything useful on this subject.

The so-called local assembly, as I understand it, is a community of christians who have been 'called out' by the gospel and who assemble together for worship, teaching and proclamation of the gospel. The community is comprised of individuals who, when assembled, comprise a corporate body. That body has a task, namely to carry the evangel to people in surrounding areas. Because there is an objective to be achieved, and because that objective has to be achieved by people, both individually and corporately, leadership is absolutely essential. Moreover, christians have a further goal, that of living their christian lives in such a way as will be pleasing to our Heavenly Father; in an alien and sometimes hostile world, they will need guidance. Many times such guidance will be spiritual by nature; sometimes it will need to be of a practical nature, but whichever may be necessary, it will be best given by informed leadership.

The Leadership Role

In his approach to his task, he the leader, should appreciate certain things (i) what he himself should BE (ii) that he will need to control situations, and not let situations control him (iii) that in order to be more effective as a leader he must learn what he has to DO.

He should also know the main areas in which he has to operate. These are areas of need; needs which he as a leader should endeavour to satisfy at all times. These needs are relative to (i) the task (ii) the group (iii) the individual. In satisfying these needs he will have to plan, explain, control, support, inform and evaluate. In achieving the results which both he and God require, he will have to ensure that the community works well together as a group, and that each individual plays his maximum part. These are not inborn traits as some people may imagine, but they are skills which can be recognised, practised and developed.

Jesus as Leader

It is true to say that the Bible abounds with examples of men who had to exhibit qualities of leadership. We think of Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Saul, David, Peter, James, Paul, to name only a few. When we examine the ministry of the Lord Himself we immediately understand some of the problems with which He was confronted. The Lord had a task to perform; as He said when He prayed to His Father, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4). In order to assist Him in the accomplishment of this task, it was necessary for Him to choose people to help Him; initially, He chose a group of twelve men, and what a diverse group they were. What Jesus had to do was to weld this group into a unit which would travel with Him during His ministry, and also prepare them for the preaching of the evangel and the leadership of the Church through the difficult and turbulent years following its inception. We only need to examine the behaviour of some members of that group in order to understand the problems which the Lord had in explaining His work, controlling some of their irresponsible desires, supporting them in their obvious weaknesses, and planning and executing those things which He knew had to be but which they understood imperfectly. How those early disciples withstood temporal authority and cruelty, political exploitation, blatant opportunism from so-called spiritual men, and through it all led the Church to its future glory, is a standing testimony to and a glorious reflection of the excellence of the teaching, training, and leadership of the Lord.

Instructions from Paul

It is interesting to see how Paul maintains that which the Lord had already begun. In Acts of Apostles chapter 20 we have a record of him speaking to the elders of the church whom he had called to him from Ephesus. After recounting his own personal experiences and work to them, he gives them a specific instruction, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (v28). There are two important points which I want to draw out from this instruction, "Take heed unto yourselves", and 'Feed the church of God'. These, I believe are standing instructions to the leadership of the Church for all time, and the Church has suffered because of their non-observance.

'Take heed unto yourselves'. I wonder how many church leaders have set aside this instruction by Paul? Is it true to say that those who have fulfilled the scriptural qualifications see no need to improve themselves in other skills in order to meet the declared objectives of the Church. how long is it since such men asked themselves, "Am I clear about my own responsibilities and authority"; 'Do I know what the community is trying to achieve, and have I explained how we are going to achieve it'; 'Do

my own work and behaviour standards set the best possible example to the group of people I purport to lead'; 'Are there any inter-personal skills I need to develop in order to do the Lord's work more effectively'? I believe that questions such as these, coupled with the same desire as shown by the apostle in his care of the Church, will enable church leaders to analyse and measure themselves against the standard set by Christ.

'Feed the church of God'. How often have hungering souls asked for bread and have been fed a stone? It is the bounden duty of spiritual leaders to see to it that the flock is adequately fed. Obviously, this must be done from the Word of God, and as constant and regular feeding is a necessity in the physical sense, so this is true in the spiritual sense.

The leader, then, must have the capacity and the understanding to guide the flock through the lush, green pastures of God's Word. He must know the appetites of those he leads, and he must see to it that they feed on the right food. Some will need milk; others, strong meat. He must watch their growth as tenderly and with as much concern as the mother her child. He must be an able teacher.

In addition to this he must tend the flock. Paul said, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock" Tending embraces those other acts of which the leader must be capable; protecting, disciplining, restoring, giving material assistance and support to individuals, facing up to unpleasant issues. All of these things are embraced in the teaching, but the greatest task is to feed, because if this does not take place then the Church will not grow.

In conclusion I would say to the questioner, 'Search out men with the scriptural qualifications; these are primary and essential. Look for some of the leadership qualities I have mentioned; these are very desirable. Are you looking for very special men? My answer would be, 'Yes, you are'.

(All questions to Alf Marsden, 337 Billinge Road).

BEGINNING AGAIN

Did you ever wish you could rub out all your mistakes, blot out all your blunders and start life all over again? I believe you have. Well, God has favoured us with just such a privilege. Paul tells us: "But when the kindness of God our Saviour, and his love towards man appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we ourselves did, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:4, 5).

Note: "When the kindness of God our Saviour, and his love towards man appeared . . . he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit." The word "re-generation" literally means "beginning again".

When we obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine delivered unto us we came into the blood which purifies from every stain. So Paul said: "All we who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death" (Romans 6:3). Christ died by the shedding of blood. So in coming into Him and into His death we come into contact with the precious blood. Our bodies are washed in the laver not for putting away the stains on our flesh but for the answer of a good conscience towards God (see 1 Peter 3:21). Our tortured sin conscious soul cries out "What must I do?" The Lord's apostle answers "Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

When we yield our will humbly and submissively to the will of Christ, through our obedience of his simple commands, he washes us free from all our past, he blots out

all our mistakes, and takes away all our guilt. Thus we are regenerated — we begin life anew. We become “a new creation: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). Jesus said to Nicodemus “Except a man be born anew he cannot see the Kingdom of God” and went on to explain “Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:3, 5). This is what Paul had in mind when he affirmed we are saved “by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit.”

“All we who were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into his death. We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.”

Are you troubled over the mistakes of the past?

If you are not a Christian let the Holy Spirit speak to you and obey Him: “Arise and be baptised and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16).

If you are a Christian who has become careless let the Holy Spirit speak to you and obey Him: “If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

(Title and thoughts suggested by L. R. Wilson’s article in Firm Foundation.)

SCRIPTURE READINGS

MAY 1981

3 Isaiah 50	Mark 10, 32-45
10 Zechariah 9, 9-17	Mark 10, 46 to 11, 10
17 Isaiah 56	Mark 11, 11-26
24 Isaiah 5, 1-17	Mark 11, 27 to 12, 12
31 Deut. 25, 1-10	Mark 12, 13-27

Prediction and Ambition

We assume the journey Jesus is now starting is from beyond Jordan and is the route taken by pilgrims from Galilee to avoid passing through Samaria. He has retired from immediate conflict with His enemies but crowds came to Him just the same and He taught them. However at this time He must have experienced the anticipation of conflict and cross in special measure. It was a foretaste of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. He was beginning the valley of the shadow, and thus His majestic mien struck fear into the minds of His disciples as He strode ahead of them and the crowd. The expressions used by Mark indicate this — “amazed”, “fearful” (“afraid” A.V. & R.V.). Then He

took His disciples aside and again told them plainly what would happen in Jerusalem, the city which they regarded as central and essential to the kingdom of God. They failed to absorb the facts (Luke 18, 34). How comes it then that James and John with their mother, moved by a mother’s care for her children, thought this a time to have assurance of high positions in the kingdom about to be set up? It must surely have been that they expected some miraculous takeover of everything to take place in Jerusalem perhaps involving violence and bloodshed. Their ambition was summarily and yet kindly dismissed. It was hopelessly “out”. There would not be a prime minister and chancellor of the exchequer in the kingdom of the Son of His Love (Col. 1, 13). Little did these brave men — for so they were already “sons of thunder” — what they were really to face, and when told, it was no clearer to them, nor could they in the least understand the “rising from the dead”. Does this not tell of the loneliness of Jesus — treading the winepress of the wrath of God alone? Anguish of mind and spirit is deeper and infinitely great when involving the impossible burden of the world’s sin, and this was the cup He was to drink and the baptism he was to suf-

fer. These two men were to share these in very different measure — the one an early and violent death, the other long years of service and suffering.

Bartimaeus

Jesus must have had innumerable applications for cure of blindness so there is something special about this one. The occasion was special as we have already noticed. Jesus was travelling His final road to Jerusalem and was striding ahead of the crowd of pilgrims to the feast of the Passover. This is surely why the crowd wanted the blind men to be quiet — “not interrupt” so to speak. The fact that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by was such an opportunity for healing, they could not be silenced, and their cry indicated their assurance that He was the Messiah — “thou Son of David”. His work was universally appraised, His power universally acknowledged. How different was His attitude to that of the crowd. Did ever a cry for help fail to arouse His compassion? Even the fearful anticipation of the cross made no difference to His compassion. We are apt to make excuses for not heeding difficult or inconvenient appeals. Not so Jesus; He stood still. The crowd then encouraged the blind. Was Jesus thinking of other things to ask what was wanted? A touch of that loving HAND was enough. There are differences in the narratives of the three evangelists which seem to need explanation. — it would appear that there were two blind men and we suggest that Bartimaeus must have been known among the first readers of the gospel or perhaps specially to Peter as Mark’s source of information. The other blind man must have been equally rejoicing but was overshadowed. Whereas Matthew and Mark record the miracle as happening when the crowd was departing from Jericho, Luke, “drew nigh” to Jericho”, and subsequently records the reception of Zacchaeus in the same town. We think this is probably explained by the straggling character of the “city of palm trees” in a place of luxuriant vegetation, and having old and new towns. We

remember the curse which would encourage building another place near the old city besides that by Hiel the Bethelite (I Kings 16, 34). We note that Luke particularly mentions the glorifying of God and the deep impression upon the crowd. It increased their expectation that the “kingdom of God was immediately to appear” (Luke 19, 11).

The Triumphant Entry

“Ride on, ride on in majesty, hark all the tribes hosanna cry! Thine humble beast pursues his road with palms and scattered garments strowed.”

The whole populace is roused to a pitch of tremendous enthusiasm, and those who knew their scriptures would surely understand a fulfilment but it was the “common” people. It was a common animal (though I dislike the new word “donkey”) associated with prophets and with peace, Have we appreciated the “minor” miracle that no man had ever sat on that beast, and it was faced with demonstration that the most experienced cart horse would have shied at? “In the east the ass is in high esteem. Statelier, livelier, swifter than with us . . . To the Jews it was equally valued as a beast of burden, for work in the field or at the mill, and for riding.” (Geikie). Five hundred years before, this ride was ordained (Zech. 9, 9). Yes! A colt too! It was an everyday thing to ride an ass into that city but note how all the circumstances would strike home to the apostles when they looked back, and saw the ass and the colt tied in an open place and the owners or standers-by giving ready permission — an acknowledgement of authority. It appears that the excitement extended into the city and some came out to meet the procession and welcomed the Saviour to take His throne there. The crowds must have dispersed disappointed, and Jesus went into the Temple where the crowd would not be allowed to follow in any case. He quietly surveyed the desecrated “holy place”, and retired to Bethany. It was on this journey into the city when Jesus came within sight of it He wept as

recorded by Luke (Luke 9, 41). It must have been with a sad heart He knew that the popularity would be short-lived. The fig tree symbolised the beautiful city — one of the seven wonders — in showing an apparent plenty of fruit with nothing, and the dreadful disappointment of a moral and religious emptiness. The disciples would face the same opposition in their work also, and needed the lesson of trust in God.

The Week of Final Opposition

So the next morning saw a drastic attack upon permitted desecration, permitted by the guardians of its sacredness — the “disciples of Moses”, God’s servant and organiser of the “Holy Place” which was to stand before all nations as representative of a Holy God, the centre of true worship and a Holy Nation. It had become a hollow showpiece. Yet there was a recognition of moral standards unequalled in the ancient world and the Simeons and Annas and Zachariahs and Elizabeths who did cling to all that was good, and here was the nucleus of the kingdom which Jesus began on Pentecost. How foreign to goodness the nation had been, and how little it knew of the holiness of God. The sacrifices were formalities following the word in habit but not fulfilling it in life. So how resentful were the leaders of the “cleansing” of the courts of the House. Nothing hurts more than to have our sins exposed or our authority defied, and this is plainly what Jesus did in the parable of the wicked husbandmen, the question of tribute and the exposure of false teaching about resurrection. It is as though “the gloves were off”. His hour had come! So had theirs!

R. B. Scott.

“ONWARD CHRISTIAN SOLDIER”

Some things I know — some things I don’t know. Some things puzzle whereas others give everlasting comfort and joy. The eventual victory of truth over all error and apostasy should warm to a white glow the heart of every Christian. That righteousness should wear the

crown of victory — this I know!

In “the last day perilous or grievous times shall come.” It has always been dangerous and difficult to live for the Lord. Foes without and within bombard the fortress of devotion to Christ. Every diabolical means imaginable is exploited by that great deceiver, the Devil, to move the “little one” from his communion with the Lord.

Disappointments of the severest kind shall arise to rock the faith of many. Men claiming to be followers of God “holding a form of godliness” shall say but do not. The veneer of “Christianity” is there but underneath its slim covering, the power of godliness has been denied.

Every evil service conceivable shall be expended to take captive all who are “ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of truth.” Sin, shame and confusion rear a sceptre of quaking power. Men wonder in every generation will the truth survive this onslaught of apostasy.

Yet, in the blackness of every night of distress, the beacon light of God’s assurance bursts forth in brilliant array. It announces two magnificent, comforting facts. Those who teach otherwise reach an end, “but they shall proceed no further,” — “for the foundation of God standeth sure!”

Out of chaos, Christ; out of viciousness, victory; out of error, eternal truth! God’s way as intelligent men survey the field of battle shall always win. The victory of truth is constantly promised; so learn it, obey it, preach it, sing it, in face of whatever obstacles may arise — remembering always of error, “but they shall proceed no further” — “the foundation of God standeth sure!”

Jim Bill McInteer,
“Firm Foundation”

YE DO ERR, NOT KNOWING . . .
Matt. 22:29

by Darrell Cline

It has been said: “What you don’t know, won’t hurt you,” but the truth of

the matter is that what you don't know can very well hurt you. There are many, many errors in religion taught today that are the direct result of "not knowing." The tragedy is that this error is affecting the eternal destiny of a soul.

The Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection, tried to discredit Jesus with what they thought was an impossible question to answer. The gist of the question was this: a man married a woman, then he died; his brother then married her but he dies also and so it went until seven brothers had married this woman — finally she died also. "Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her." The reply to the Lord was very simple but it was sufficient to totally destroy their position. "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God." Just because the Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection by no means altered God's plan for a resurrection of the dead. They must have thought God would somehow treat them differently because they didn't believe in this part of God's plan.

Just because the majority of the world does not accept the Bible at face value does not change the importance of the Book. Even though modern theologians would tell you that God cannot possibly hold you responsible for those things you do not know about, does not change the thought Jesus passes on to us, "Ye do err, not knowing . . ."

We, as intelligent beings, are responsible for knowing what is expected of us. Acts 17:30 reveals a time God winked at ignorance: but not now. Why? Because all scripture is given by the inspiration of God . . . that the man of God may be perfect, *thoroughly* furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). If we do not take the time nor put forth the effort to find the truth, doom is our destiny!

Just because we do not know, and unintentionally break a natural law, the consequences are not suspended for us because of our ignorance. A child eats poison or drinks bleach and the tragic consequences are just as drastic, even

though the child is too young to know better. The accidental gunshot is just as deadly as the carefully aimed slug if it hits a fatal spot. The "theology" of many religious teachers today would suggest all is well for the unknowing child or the gunshot victim because they did not know. Oh! but they did err, not knowing!

Brothers and sisters, let each of us turn to our Bible and study it for all we are worth. We will be accountable to God and He is expecting us to know the truth. Do not be misled, study for yourself! The punishment for the sin of omission is in the "lake of fire" just like the punishment for intentional sin.

KNOW THE TRUTH — for ye do err, not knowing . . .

—Rt. 4, Box 76

Marshfield, Mo. 65706

HOW SMALL IS SMALL

Mark Twain told of a time his little girl broke her doll and he attempted to still her sobbing by making light of the incident. "You shouldn't cry over a little thing like that!" But she, looking up through her tears, said: "Daddy, what is a little thing?" He was unable to answer, for her broken doll was important to her.

One of the greatest utterances of the apostle, Paul, consisted of only four words. "Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thess. 5:19). There are more saints than sinners that need to learn that this is not a small scripture. We seem to miss some of its significance. Some would look no further than to realise that this scripture tells them not to resist discovered and revealed truths of the Bible. I think there is much more to this scripture than that.

Did you ever undertake to do some good deed only to have some sorehead effectively stop you short? If so, you know what it is to have your spirit quenched. It was a small thing to him. He didn't lose any effort. He probably never even entertained the idea that he quenched the spirit. But he did. Yours! We members of the church of Christ

have developed a real effective spirit quencher. If we are too lazy to participate in a good work, we can stop the work and ease our consciences in the bargain. Just find a scripture and by the tiniest twisting of it find legal grounds for opposing the work. More preachers have probably had their spirits quenched by lukewarm church members than by all the alien sinners combined.

Every time we resist a presented truth; every time we endeavour to support error; every time we are uncharitable in others; every time we frustrate someone's good efforts; every time we use vituperative language, we indulge in prejudice every time we violate our own conscience, we quench the spirit.

Such practices harden our hearts and kills us. It is a small scripture. But how small is small?

DON'T FEAR CRITICISM

"Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves"
— (James 1:22)

The galleries are full of critics. *They* play no ball; *they* fight no fights; *they* make no mistakes, because *they* attempt nothing. The DOERS are down in the arena.

Henry Ford forgot to put a reverse gear in his first automobile. Edison once spent two million dollars on an invention that proved of little value.

It is said that "the man who never makes a mistake never makes anything." The man who makes no mistakes lacks boldness and the spirit of adventure. He is the one who never tries anything; he is the brake on the wheel of progress. And yet it cannot truly be said that he never makes mistakes, because the biggest mistake is never to try anything except to criticise those who are DOING things.

Just One Mistake

He brushed his teeth twice a day; attended his clinic twice a year; wore his overshoes when it rained; always slept

with his windows open; kept to a diet of vegetables. He golfed, but only nine holes at a time. He took eight hours sleep every night. He never smoked, drank or lost his temper. He rested all day Sunday. He intended to live to be a hundred. He survived through the care of eighteen specialists, four health institutions and a great number of body-building foods and antiseptics.

But he made just one mistake. He forgot God. He lived as if this world were all. He is now with those who cry, "The harvest is passed; the summer is ended, and we are not saved." — (Jer. 8:20).

Selected

WHAT IS YOUR VALUE?

Think about this for a moment: You have a plain bar of iron worth about 35 shillings. If this is made into horse-shoes it is worth about 75 shillings. Made into screwdrivers it is worth about 1,875 shillings. Made into needles 22,750 shillings is its worth. Made into balance springs for watches it is worth 1,750,000 shillings.

Like the iron your value is determined by what you make of yourself.

— from "Tips."

God's work is often sidetracked, while social, business and domestic arrangements are thundering through on the main line.

The best thing to give:

- to your enemy, forgiveness;
- to an opponent, tolerance;
- to a friend, your heart;
- to your child, a good example;
- to father, deference;
- to mother, conduct that will make her proud of you;
- to yourself, respect;
- to all men, love.

The human race seems to be improving everything except people.

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

All too often we take for granted our blessings materially. As we continue to be more bountifully blessed, we are

prone to forget how bountifully God has supplied our needs. Did you realise that "Members of the church in America could give 98 per cent of their income to the Lord and still live as well as do 50 per cent of the world's population"? If you received only two per cent of your present income, you would earn as much yearly as half the people in the world. Did you realise that 10,000 people starve to death every day? So "count your blessings, name them one by one." Then **USE YOUR BLESSINGS** to the glory of God.

— Cecil Willis

(How far does this statement apply to Christians in Britain also? — Ed.)

AN APPRECIATION

I wish to pay tribute to the memory of Bro. Edward Jess who passed away on 8th February, 1981. To me he represented all that was fine and noble in Christian character. I first met him over thirty years ago when, working as a fisherman off the coast of Ayr, I used to travel up to Pennyvenie to break bread with the brethren there. From that early association I soon learned that the home of Bro. and Sis. Jess was a place of Christian fellowship and hospitality.

Edward was a true Christian, deeply concerned for the well-being of the Churches. He will be remembered by many for his ability with God's word as a preacher and teacher. Many Churches have benefitted from his labours and many more from quiet words of advice and encouragement. He was always active in the Lord's work.

When the Jess family moved to the east of Scotland and met with us in the congregation at Tranent we came to appreciate his abilities more. A natural leader he served the Church for several years as an elder. His experience and guidance will be greatly missed in the Church. He was interested in music and brought many new tunes and hymns to the Church services when he led the congregation in praise. We have been richly blessed by his presence and mourn his passing.

Probably his most outstanding characteristic was his patience. With failing health he must have suffered more than we realised these past few years yet he never complained. Such steadfastness came from a trustful dependence on Jesus. One of his favourite passages was 2 Corinthians 4 verses 16-18 which speaks more clearly of his attitude than any word of mine can do.

Deeply do we sympathise with Sis. Jess in her loss and pray God's blessing upon her. His family are all members of the Lord's body and we pray that their memories of a loving father and faithful Christian might help them in their Christian walk.

James Sinclair.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Hindley. Once again in the day of sorrow we have seen the fulfilment of God's precious promise in His Word, "I will turn their mourning into Joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow, Jeremiah 31:13.

On Tuesday evening March 3rd we rejoiced to witness the union of Allison Morgan, daughter of John and Jennifer; and Janet Smith, daughter of Keith and Brenda, with the Lord Jesus in the waters of baptism, the symbol of His death, burial and resurrection, and entering upon a new life with all God's children everywhere.

May they find the peace that passeth all understanding; the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory; and the life that never ends.

We thank God for this encouragement, and press onward with renewed strength to work in His vineyard until our Lord's return.

Tom Kemp

Kirkcaldy: On Lord's Day 22nd February, 1981, David and Gregor Anderson confessed Jesus as Lord and

were baptised for the remission of sins. Please pray for them as they begin their new life that they may grow into stalwarts for the Lord.

R. W. Hughes.

Slamannan District: The quarterly "Mutual Benefit" meeting of the Slamannan District of churches was held at Tranent Meeting-house on Saturday, 7th March when the subject was (roughly translated) "The Sabbath or the Lord's Day — should they be observed" (It should be explained that both speakers amended the subject title when they stood up to speak). In the chair was Andrew Scobie, Dennyloanhead, and the speakers were John McLuckie, Haddington and Hugh Davidson, Motherwell.

A few moments silence were observed in a token of respect for the passing of brother Edward Jess, who was to have been one of the speakers. After tea, both speakers dealt ably with the subject and lively discussion ensued for an hour thereafter. Some brethren expressed the view that the first day of the week was "a day of rest" and a "holy day" but when challenged there seemed no scripture to substantiate any such view and the danger of regarding the first day of the week as the "Christian Sabbath" was mentioned.

Much was said and some professed to have learned something new — altogether a very enjoyable afternoon was spent. The next "Mutual Benefit Meeting" will be held, God willing, at Haddington, when the subject will be "Has the purpose of Miracles really been fulfilled" — Speakers Wm. Black, Dalmellington, and John Colgan, Tranent — chairman James Moncrieff, Haddington.

H. Davidson

OBITUARY

Hindley. Sister Evelyn Bradley fell asleep in Jesus on Monday February 16th. The attendance at the funeral ser-

vice on the Monday following was a fitting tribute to the high esteem with which she was held, and a commendation to her kindly loving disposition and hospitable nature.

Formerly the wife of Bro. Tom Dootson who died some years ago, she married Bro. James Bradley after the death of his wife, three and a half years ago and they lived very happily together. Although she passed through a long period of sickness which she bore with patience it still came as a shock to hear of her decease which greatly upset those who were so close to her.

Her faith and confidence was in the Lord Jesus and we are assured that we need not sorrow as those without hope, for when our Lord returns He will bring our loved ones with Him.

May the God of all consolation strengthen the hearts of our dear brother and all whom she loved and may their journey through the valley of the shadow soon be replaced with the mountain top of rejoicing.

Tom Kemp

Kirkcaldy: Sister Jessie Brown 'finished the course' and was called home on 2nd February, 1981. Many in the community have been blessed by the help she gave during the 80 years of her life.

R. W. Hughes.

Tunbridge Wells: The work here has suffered the loss of a faithful 'soldier of the cross'. Sister Ruth Styles graduated to glory on the 5th February. Though in poor health for a long time her passing was unexpected and is a great loss to her husband, our brother Jim. A. Winstanley led a service of thanks-giving at the church, when about seventy family and friends and brethren gathered on 13th February. Sister Ruth was one of the first members of this congregation and was influential in bringing others to the Saviour she loved. It can be truly said of her that she was a virtuous and Godly woman who has now gone to await us on that 'Great Day'.

Derek Daniell

COMING EVENTS

Social at Peterhead, Saturday 2nd May, 1981 to be held in Community Centre (Queen Street), time 3 p.m. Speakers: W. Mair, Buckie, M. Gaunt, Peterhead.

Sunday 3rd May, Bible Class 10 a.m., Worship 11 a.m., Gospel Meeting 6 p.m. A welcome is extended to all the brethren to be with us on this occasion.

May 16-24th Gospel Campaign, speaker — M. Gaunt, Peterhead.

Sept. 19-27th Gospel Campaign, speaker — A. Gardiner (Edin).

Oct. 8-13 Gospel Campaign, speaker — A. Winstanley (Corby).

Slamannan Social: Saturday 16th May, 4 p.m.

R. B. SCOTT

Present address 34 North Farm Road, High Brooms, Tunbridge Wells. Tel. No. 0892/23864.

Opportunity has hair in front: behind she is bald: if you seize her by the forelock, you may hold her, but, if suffered to escape — not Jupiter himself can catch her again. — Latin proverb.

LEAFLET

Church at Peterhead have a limited number of leaflets entitled "What To Expect When You Visit A Church of Christ" — price £10 per 1,000.

APOLOGY

The editor tries to take all reasonable steps to clearly mark all items for insertion in the 'S.S.' and regrets that the printer inserted in the Obituary column the baptism report from Kirkcaldy, in last month's issue.

WANTED

Copy of 'God's Prophetic Word' by Foy Wallace, and any bound (or loose) volumes of the 'Scripture Standard', or 'Bible Advocate' or 'Millennial Harbinger'. Also wanted, copy of James Anderson's 'Outline Of My Life'. Prices and details to: A. J. Wedderburn, 37 Ripley Walk, Corby, Northants. Thank You.

A DAY

Regard each day as a fresh start, a new beginning, a precious gift as yet unsullied, from the hand of God. Every rising sun shines on a day gleaming with infinite possibilities. Rain or shine come what may, resolve that for at least, this one day, you will find contentment in the path you must tread. — Selected.

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