

The **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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THE RESURRECTION

IT would be completely impossible to over-emphasise the importance of the resurrection of Christ. It is the very bedrock of the faith in Christ and all that stems from that. The apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 15 has a great deal to say on the subject and these are some of the conclusions he draws from the suggestion that there be no such thing as the raising of the dead, "Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead how say some among you that there be no resurrection of the dead. But if there be no resurrection of the dead then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain. Yea and we are found false witnesses of God; for we have testified of God that He raised up Christ; whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised your faith is vain: ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men most miserable". The resurrection is, of course, by its very nature something we either believe or disbelieve and we must never be surprised to find that it will be something to stick in the throats of many. Neither is it surprising to find that amongst religious sects there are various versions taught as to what is meant by the term 'resurrection' and each group has a definition tailor-made to suit their own requirements. Jehovah's Witnesses, (so-called) for instance, while believing that man does not have a soul, believe that Christ's actual body did not rise from the tomb but that He 'materialised' a likeness to convince men that He was rising from the grave. This theory leaves us with the perplexing question that if He had no soul to rise, and His body did not rise, what did rise? 'With what body do they come' has always been a subject guaranteed to promote heated discussions.

We know, of course that the Saducees taught that there was no such thing as a resurrection from the dead and on one occasion tried to make Jesus look foolish on the subject by asking him whose wife, in the hereafter, would the woman be who had married the seven brothers. We know too, that, some years after the resurrection, when Paul preached at Athens he was mocked and ridiculed when he mentioned the resurrection of the dead, Surely most surprising of all however, must be the fact that Jesus' own disciples were perhaps the most sceptical of all and Thomas was not prepared to believe unless he could actually see and handle the body of the Lord. When the two Marys told the disciples that they had seen the risen Christ, we read "And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not" (Luke 24). Are we as hard to convince as those?

The resurrection carries vast and earth-shattering implications and if true means, of course, that death is not the end but merely a beginning. The preaching of the resurrection by the first preachers was a most startling and unique characteristic and set the early disciples apart, at once, from all religions then in existence. On three occasions Jesus brought people back from the dead

(daughter of Jairus; son of the widow at Nain and Lazarus) but those died again and were more of a resuscitation than a resurrection to life eternal – Christ was the "firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:20). Jesus predicted before death that He would rise again the third day and He was the complete Master of the situation – it was no coincidence that He rose after three days. The gospels tell how Jesus was put to death by crucifixion and then buried in a new tomb with a large stone sealing up the entrance. On the third day the stone was rolled away by angels who remained at the scene long enough to show the first visitors the forsaken shrouds and bandages and to ask the question, "Why seek ye the living amongst the dead". The tomb was certainly empty. The empty tomb presupposes, I believe, only three basic possibilities; (1) that Jesus' friends took His body; (2) that Jesus' enemies took His body, or (3) that Jesus rose.

If we consider (1) we might find it difficult to believe that the disciples took the body from the tomb. The disciples were disappointed and disillusioned men. They were downcast and frightened and virtually in hiding from the Jewish leaders lest they be put to death as well. They forsook Him at His arrest and in any case didn't believe that He would rise from the dead. They could not have taken the body because of the very strong armed guard set at the grave to prevent any such thing.

(2) It is just as difficult to maintain that Jesus' enemies took the body. They really wanted the body to remain secure in the grave and it was in their interests that it did so. For years the Jewish religious leaders had tried to contrive the death of the young Messiah. They were consumed with jealousy over His popularity with the common people, with His wisdom and His many triumphs over them in debate, with His goodness, with His doctrine and with His miracles. No doubt they danced with joy at the news of His eventual death and this proof that He was, after all, a mere mortal. It was in their interests that His body remain in the grave. To remove it would have started rumours of a resurrection and, just in case the disciples decided to try and steal the body and claim a resurrection, the Jews placed a strong armed guard over the tomb to prevent the body being taken. Thus the removal of the body was the very last thing the enemies of Jesus wanted and it was to prevent its removal that the guard was placed. If indeed the enemies of Christ had taken the body they would have produced it later, when the news of the resurrection was abounding, and would have been able to confound the assertion that Christ had risen. The doctrine of the resurrection of Christ would surely have died a quick death had the Scribes and Pharisees been able to produce the corpse. The silence of the Jews therefore, on the claims of the resurrection, is much stronger testimony to its occurrence than the preaching of the apostles. The failure of the Jews to disprove the resurrection only goes to show that they did not have the body. As it was they had to bribe the armed guard with a very large sum of money to explain the absence of the Lord's body by saying that while they slept on guard the disciples stole the corpse.

We are therefore left with possibility (3) that Jesus did indeed rise from the grave, and of that there can be little doubt. His appearances are irrefutable and are about ten in number. Sometimes He appeared to one or two people and sometimes to a larger number, such as the eleven disciples, and to five hundred persons at once. Specially important, I think, is the evidence of the Apostle Paul. Paul was a clever and educated man, very hostile to the early Christians and to the idea of a resurrection, yet during the remainder of his life he continually asserted that he saw the Lord and talked with Him. He was on more than one occasion laughed to scorn when he preached the resurrection of the dead and eventually, it seems, he died a violent death, in part at least, because of his unshakable belief in the resurrection. The other disciples were transformed, after the resurrection, from dispirited disarray to fearless men of purpose, ready to die for their Master – and men don't readily die for a cause known to be based on a hoax or swindle.

At the beginning I quoted a passage from 1 Cor. 15:12-19 and I can do no better than to close by continuing the quotation from v.20 – "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits: afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming" "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit" (v.45).

THE WAR IN OUR MEMBERS

IT is commonly cited that when an individual responds to the gospel of Jesus a new life of peace, joy and happiness commences. Listen again to the earnest pleas of eloquent gospel preachers. Certainly the Christian life is a life of peace, joy and happiness but the experience is also one of pain and despair and sadness. The writer asks you to meditate upon every blessed attitude that you have witnessed since your spiritual birth. Feast your eyes upon the worried, Strained, wrinkled faces of your beloved brothers and sisters as they assemble for worship. I suggest to you that corresponding to every blessing in Christ there will probably be an opposite. Undoubtedly we strive to climb the spiritual peaks and yet so often we descend to the valleys.

Paul argues that saints "walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" Romans 8:4. However living in the twentieth century the church is caught up in a transition period between the ascension and return of Jesus. In Pauline terminology the Christian lives in the flesh but according to the spirit. We live in Great Britain and abide in Christ. We exist in the present and dwell in the future. Now obviously this creates a tension. The decisive battle has been fought but the war is not over. The work has commenced but is not yet complete.

I submit that you have experienced this tension: I hope so. Let me explain. It is only when there is hostility in your life that the Spirit of God is fighting the flesh on your behalf. The absence of inward strife marks the departure of the Spirit. The spirit is absent when we stop fighting not when we lose.

The intriguing feature of this conflict is that the christian witness is the scene of the battle. In addition, the child of God is involved on both sides of the battle ... he encourages the flesh and exhorts the Spirit. Basically the tension is frustration. We appreciate that we ought to walk according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh. In fact, we resolve to live in the Spirit rather than the flesh. But our noble intentions are very often short lived. How many times do we cry with Paul, "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" Romans 7:24.

It is precisely when you are in this frame of mind that Paul's reply assumes added potency, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord" Romans 7:25. "The victory is ours" provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with Him" Romans 8:17. Yes the triumph is eternal "To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace" Romans 8:6. In the meantime we must tolerate the present when, "I of myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin" Rom. 7:25

I.K. PARKER, Wigan

CORRESPONDENCE CLASS

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST or THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Chapter 10:11 verses 1-19.

1. Write what you know concerning Cornelius prior to his conversion.
2. Re-read Acts 1:8 and show from succeeding chapters the instances of the fulfilment of these words of Jesus.
3. Describe the means used to bring inquirers after the truth into touch with a preacher.
4. Does verse 43 teach justification by faith alone?
5. Does verse 45 suggest that pouring is a mode of baptism?
6. Why was the Holy Spirit given to Cornelius and his household before baptism?
7. Give Peter's argument, in your own words, in defence of his going to the Gentiles.

Answers, which should be written on one side of the paper only, should be returned to Edward Jess, 34 Charles Street, Penicuik, Midlothian, Scotland.

ASK

Teach me, O Lord, Thy holy way,
 And give me an obedient mind,
 That in Thy service I may find
 My soul's delight from day to day.

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Ephesians 3:20.

ASK.....WHAT DO I ASK?

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MAY I remind you that the Apostle Paul wrote this letter, "to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus" Ephesians 1:1. The passage therefore which we have under consideration is written for those who are God's children, who belong to Christ, and who are striving to serve Him faithfully. Being members of the body of Christ, we must be concerned about those who do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and who are at the present time on the broad road, which the Lord said, "that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat" Matthew 7:13. What can we do for the masses of people who know not God, who have no time for the Lord Jesus, and who have no desire for His word. Time and again we are discouraged by the lack of progress in our work for the extension of His kingdom, yet I suppose we can take encouragement by reading the words of the world's greatest teacher, when He further said in the Sermon on the Mount, "and few there be that find it" Matthew 7:14. Of course we must keep on — keeping on, in the glorious task of trying to win souls for Christ. Remember He also said, "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" John 4:35

Ask What do I ask? for those outside of Christ?

ASK WHAT DO I ASK? DO I PRAY FOR THEIR SALVATION?

Let me give you just two examples from the Acts of the Apostles, to show that two of our Lord's servants who had the task of preaching Christ and Him crucified, did not according to the word, pray for their salvation. The Apostle Peter did not pray for "the multitude that came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them in his own language, Acts 2:6. In no uncertain manner did he fail to bring Jesus of Nazareth before them, and reminded them: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it..... Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" Acts 2:23, 24, 36. Peter preached the gospel so effectively, that the record said: "they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Acts 2:37. Please note that the preacher did not tell them to pray, and also note on this occasion they were not told to believe, because they already believed, so the apostle went on to say what they had to do. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" Acts 2:38.

ASK WHAT DO I ASK? DO I PRAY FOR THEIR SALVATION.

Our second example is the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, He had been to Jerusalem to worship, and was returning to his own country. The angel of the Lord spoke to Philip and gave him instructions to go "unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. The eunuch was sitting in his chariot reading Esaias the prophet, and the Spirit told Philip "Go near, and join thyself to this chariot" Instead of praying for the Ethiopian eunuch, we read "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip

and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing" Acts 8:35-39. Philip did something better than pray for the eunuch, he preached unto him Jesus, and that preaching was the result of the conversion of this man. Pray by all means, we are exhorted to pray for all men, but do not let it end there, we must lead men and women to "the place called Calvary", and tell out the old, old story, of Jesus and His love. The apostle Paul also has a message for us in Romans chapter 10: 13-17 "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved". How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God". If we turn to Romans chapter one, and verses 14 to 16, we shall see that the apostle knew that there was something more required than praying, and that was to preach the gospel. "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek".

GOD DESIRES OUR SALVATION

An Opportunity Given

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved". John 3:16,17.

"But God commandeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us". Romans 5:8

[1 John 4:14

"And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the Way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring man, though fools, shall not err therein" Isaiah 35:8

"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon". Isaiah 55:6,7.

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST DESIRES OUR SALVATION.

The Price Paid

"For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" Luke 9:56.

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" Luke 19:10.

"But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" Matthew 9:12,13.

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" 1 Timothy 1:15.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest, Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; oft I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" Matthew 11:28-30.

"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" John 6:37.

THE HOLY SPIRIT DESIRES OUR SALVATION

Trust and Obey

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:..... Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself but whosoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. John 16:7,8,13,14.

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" John 14:26.

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by 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 Timothy 3:14-17.

Let us approach the scriptures with an open mind, so that we may know what the will of God is for each one. The writer to the Hebrews tells us that the Word of God is living: "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" Hebrews 4:12 (RSV). That word is vitally important for our soul's salvation, we neglect it at our peril, may we treasure it more and more as the days go by.

May the Lord's richest blessing be your portion.

LEONARD MORGAN

The Great Commission and You

WHEN Christ gave His great commission to the apostles (Mt. 28: 18-20; Mk. 16: 15-16; Luke 24: 46-47), He placed upon every scripturally baptized believer the individual obligation of teaching others. Jesus said those who are immersed are to be taught to do what Christ told His apostles to do. He told the apostles to teach and baptize, therefore, every Christian who is properly taught should also teach and baptize.

Paul instructed Timothy in 2 Tim. 2: 2 saying, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." The Greek word here translated "men" is *anthropos* and it is a generic term including the whole of the human race—men and women, boys and girls.

The exhortation in 1 Pet. 3: 15 to be ready always to give an answer for the reason of our hope, is directed to the individual Christian, and there is no more urgent need in the church today than for Christians who can and will talk to people about their souls' need and about the Christ of the gospel who satisfies that need.

Every Christian, regardless of sex or age, should feel the same burning passion for men's souls that Jesus and the first century Christian felt—every Christian, regardless of sex or age, should feel the intense desire for men to be saved because they are lost.

Jesus is pictured by the inspired evangelists as a great Preacher and Teacher and although He is often described in this role among the multitudes, the writers never lose sight of the personal interest He expressed in the individual. His work was always personal, individual, even among the multitudes, and His parting words upon ascending back to heaven cry out to the individual today: "GO . . . TEACH!"

Whom Shall We Teach?

EVERYONE, irrespective of race or religious affiliation. Paul, the greatest evangelist the world has ever known, taught the Jew in the synagogue and the Gentile on the street; he went from house to house, and he invited people into his own hired house. Christianity has no bounds. God is not willing that any should perish (2 Pet. 3: 9) but will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2: 4).

How To Make Contacts

Nearly everyone now-a-days lives in some kind of a house. It may be a semi-detached, detached, or a flat—nine times out of ten there is a house next door to you—in the majority of cases there is a house on each side of you—and the possibility is great that there is a house across the street from you. People live in all these houses and you probably know the names of many of them.

Write their names and addresses on a piece of paper—one name to a paper—and then sit down and think. Ask yourself this question: "Can I talk to this family about their souls, or should I ask someone in my assembly to approach them? Once your decision is made, ACT.

If you feel you cannot make the call yourself, you need not feel badly. Did not our Lord say "a prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house" (Mk. 6: 4)? Sometimes our neighbours and kin are hardest of all for us to teach, however; this does not mean that they are not potential children of God. Our own personality may not reach them, but we will never know whether or not another's will, until it has been TRIED! So, if you feel you cannot approach them, ask another to do so, and YOU take the name of the family your Christian brother or sister feels they cannot call on. In this manner, ALL FAMILIES in ALL NEIGHBOURHOODS will be approached.

Approached by a "stranger?" What of it? Everywhere Paul went, he went as a "stranger." The Gospel is MOST OFTEN carried by a "stranger." When the great persecution arose against the church at Jerusalem, the Scripture says that "they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8: 1-4), and they went as "strangers."

Assuming now that you have written the names and addresses of your neighbours on a piece of paper, and assuming that you have made your decision about whether or not you can make the call, next week, we shall consider HOW to make the call.

A Special Note To The Ladies

Are you working in the Lord's vineyard? If not—why not? What reason will you give your Saviour when you stand before Him in the judgement day? Because, just as surely as you read this today, just that surely you shall stand before Him in the final judgment and give an account of yourself (Rom. 14: 11-12).

Perhaps you are not working because you do not know what you can do. The questions are often asked: "What is a woman's work in the church? What work can a woman do?" The answer is simple and it is clear. A woman can (and must) do any work a man can do, except take the place of leadership. The headship of man is absolute, and it is his by virtue of priority in creation (1 Tim. 2: 13), and by virtue of the woman being first deceived (1 Tim. 2: 14).

However, Scriptural subjection does not involve superiority in point of ability; dependence does not indicate inferiority; and difference in function does not mean difference in status. Paul's words in 1 Tim. 2: 12 are a clearly expressed declaration of woman's ability to teach, as well as a clearly expressed declaration of the headship of man—"A woman will not usurp authority over a man."

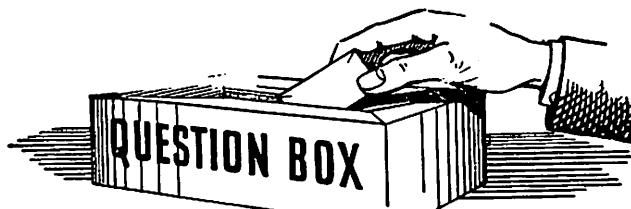
It is not TEACHING that is forbidden in this passage, but teaching "over a man". A woman "CAN" teach (has the ability), and she is commanded to teach (Tit. 2: 3-4), but she is commanded not to teach over a man.

In short, a man's place is one of "authority," and a woman's place is one of "loyalty," and the woman who is not at work in the church, whether she be teaching, helping the sick, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked—is not loyal to the man nor to the Christ. And the man in a local assembly neglects or refuses to join hands with a woman in a local assembly and all go to work for Christ, is guilty of failing to exercise his God-given authority. He is closing his eyes to the greatest working potential he has and in the final analysis, he is hindering the cause of Christ!

SELECTED.

"Restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness" (Gal. 6:1)

Any brother may be overtaken by a trespass at any time. To restore a brother who has fallen is vital Christian service. God is always seeking volunteers for such work, but only the spiritual Christian has the needed qualifications to serve effectively. The carnal Christian would likely provoke the sinner to anger and make his restoration even more difficult (1 Cor. 3:1-4). Sin is like a festering boil. It must be handled gently. Only those with the spirit of the "Great Physician" can properly sympathise and convert the sinner "from the error of his way" (James 1:19). Only those with his love can know how much of another's burden to share and how much it is best for him to bear. Those who think too highly of themselves would likely annoy and discourage the one in error. We should seek to restore all those guilty of sin, but we should do it in a spirit of humility and gentleness.



Conducted by
Alf Madsen

"When Paul preached concerning the resurrection of the dead (Acts 17:32) the people mocked and laughed. What exactly is meant by the resurrection of the dead". "If the resurrection of Jesus was the model (the first fruits), will our bodies be raised as His was (see my hands and my feet that it is me)".

THE incident that the questioner refers to is the discourse that Paul had with the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers on Mars hill. These people were always seeking some new thing to debate and on this occasion they fastened on to the teaching of Paul concerning the resurrection. Paul had chastised them about their idolatry and their non-belief in the true God. He went on to say that these times of ignorance God had overlooked, but now He called upon all men everywhere to repent, "for He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; and He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30,31). This evoked the response which it has done ever since; some mocked and laughed, others said that they would hear him further on the matter.

What is Resurrection?

This comes from a Greek word ANASTASIS, which denotes a raising up, or rising. So when we speak of the resurrection of the dead we mean that those who were dead are now caused to stand; they are, in fact, made alive. Therefore, the resurrection of the dead means the rising of those people who are in a state of death, so it can be truly said that it is a resurrection from the dead also. Jesus was well and truly dead. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter affirmed that Jesus was held by the "pangs of death" but "God hath raised him up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2:24). Christ's resurrection was the means of restoring him to his true position, as Paul wrote to the Romans, "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4).

From the foregoing, we can see that death must always precede resurrection (except in one or two biblical instances of a special nature). Jesus was in the mainstream of humanity when he had to die; the Messiah shared the same fate as common mortals. But surely the resurrection of Jesus was the response of God to sin and death; it was the act of redemption. The redeeming death and resurrection was part of God's plan for the salvation of mankind. As Peter said, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).

Who was the Agent

Certain people have said that Jesus was the agent of his own resurrection. They point to the gospel of John who records Jesus as saying, "Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19). Furthermore John records "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down myself. I have power to lay it down myself. I have power to lay again. This commandment have I received of my Father". (John 10:17,18).

On the other hand there are many scriptures that indicate that Jesus was raised by God. In Solomon's porch Peter said, "And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; wherof we are witnesses" (Acts 3:15). In his wonderful gospel teaching to the Romans Paul said, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9). When Paul wrote to

Thessalónica he exhorted the christians "to wait for his Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1:10).

It seems to me that as Jesus was always subject to God in his life and death, that God would also be the motivating agent in his resurrection. This is in keeping with God's redemptive plan in salvation. It is in the understanding of this that the believer finds the key to unlock the seeming mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Jesus the Firstfruit

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits: afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (1 Cor. 15:20-23). In his Colossian letter Paul argues that Jesus has the preeminence in all things, therefore 'he is the firstborn from the dead' (Coll. 1:18). This means that Jesus was raised never to die again. In this he was the author of eternal salvation to all those who believe. Because Christ lives, the dead will live also. This at once extends the physical into the realms of the spiritual. Jesus lives never to die again, and because he is the first-fruits it means that all who are 'in' him will be raised never to die again. As Paul put it, "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom. 6:5).

The Resurrected Body

"But some man will say, How are the dead raised up and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body" (1 Cor. 15:35-38).

The Bible speaks of a bodily resurrection; what do we mean by this? Is it that Jesus lives only in the memory of men, or was he carried over entirely and in person into eternal life. Is the Jesus whom we preach in the gospel the same Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified, buried, and who rose again from the dead? We are taught that there is a natural body and a spiritual body, but what is the relationship between the two? When the dead body of Jesus was put in the tomb was it still he who had just died, or was it just inanimate flesh? The real significance of the empty tomb was that there was no body in view. The bodily resurrection of Jesus was not just an animated spirit but a true identification in bodily form of what Jesus of Nazareth had been. Therefore, the risen Jesus was a true communication of the dead Jesus of Nazareth whose body was placed in the tomb.

Where does this then leave us? It would seem that the immortal soul of Jesus was clothed again with his own body after three days. There was, however, one very distinctive feature; though similar in appearance, the risen body was not bound by the previous material and mortal condition, e.g. he could appear in a room when all the doors were locked. But nevertheless, as Jesus said, "Behold my hands and my feet that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke 24:39). I think we must have faith in what Paul said, "But God giveth it a body as it pleaseth Him".

So what about the question "will our resurrection be like the Lord's?" If Jesus was truly identified with the human condition, which he undoubtedly was but without sin, I see no reason for believing that our resurrection will be different from his. We either believe in a bodily resurrection or we don't. All the scriptural evidence suggests that the resurrection of Jesus was not just a reanimation of that which was put into the tomb, but it was that which was put into the tomb. This should not be too difficult for the christian to believe; with God, all things are possible.

I realise that this brings into view such things as decomposition of matter, and whether or not a christian should be buried or cremated, but these issues will have to remain until, perhaps, someone asks a further question about them.

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

SCRIPTURE READINGS

MAY 1977

1—Zech. 9:9-17	Matthew 21:1-22
8—Mal. 2:17 to 3:18	Matthew 21:23-46
15—Daniel 3:8-30	Matthew 22:1-22
22—Psalm 2	Matthew 22:23-46
29—Isaiah 59	Matthew 23:1-36

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

Here we begin the final days of Jesus's ministry. Some would belittle prophecy because Jesus planned this fulfilment of Zechariah's words. Jesus knew His time had come. The raising of Lazarus, the retirement to Ephraim, the journey to Jerusalem fulfilled His decision, setting His steps steadfastly towards Jerusalem. We must try to appreciate the shortness of the time. Perhaps we can summarise — Sunday — He rode into Jerusalem: Monday — He cleansed the Temple and cursed the fig tree: Tuesday — He returned to conflict in the Temple: Wednesday — He was anointed at Bethany: Thursday — He was crucified. The traditional day is Friday of course, but it remains uncertain. We cannot estimate the tremendous strain imposed on the tender heart and sensitive nature of Jesus by these days of crisis. There was some consolation in the companionship of the disciples, the love of the common people, the humble and yet fickle praise of the simple hearted, but what were His thoughts as He rode the un-broken colt through the shouting and demonstration down the road and up into the city. We do have a glimpse into His anguish of soul as He surveyed the beautiful city doomed by its wickedness to a siege of unexampled terror (Luke 19:41-44). The whole city was stirred, and He healed the blind and the lame as they came to the Temple where He taught and was praised. Here again where so many signs of His love and power had already been exhibited, the authorities were filled with jealousy, having already issued orders for His arrest but are now faced with His presence and the obvious approval of the people. To the authorities Jesus gave uncompromising response by quoting an appropriate psalm, indicating, what was so obvious — the truth was recog-

nised by the children, which was hidden from the 'wise'. Having surveyed the situation He went out to Bethany, surely to the home where He was welcome — to return to work and conflict the next day (Mark 11:11).

The Battle with Authority

There was to be no compromise now— so to speak the gloves were off. The first question was natural. The chief priests of course had charge of order and behaviour in the Temple precincts, and when Jesus attacked the traders permitted by them, He was taking precedence over them and defying their authority. His action was a rebuke to them as well as a hostile action towards the traders themselves. Moreover His restriction upon carrying vessels through the courts forced a further failure to their notice (Mark 11:16). In this He had the support of the people, and His teaching was accepted. The demand for authority was most skilfully and boldly turned back upon them. They would have to repudiate John Baptist to justify themselves, Jesus by a parable drives home their condemnation with praise for those members of society they so detested. This was followed by another parable so obviously referring to their rejection of Jesus Himself that they could not escape the conclusion. If any of them were to be brought to repentance here is the warning they need. We are assured that not all the chief priests and elders had failed to see the truth — but they were afraid (John 12:42 & 43) and the unscrupulous plotters had their way. The defiance of Jesus united His enemies. Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians would normally quarrel among themselves, but they combine against Jesus (Matt. 22:15 & 16) and endeavour to get Him into political trouble. To get their way - sentence of death they must involve Rome. Here again the question was turned against themselves. They could not dispute Caesar's ownership of money, and the other point was a rebuke to their lives of selfishness. The question raised by the Sadducees seems almost childish but Jesus dealt with it very efficiently from their standpoint as they insisted on the authority of the written law, and the answer was from that — "the God of Abraham". Naturally the Pharisees with their better ideas on the question of the resurrection felt more favourable towards Jesus on that point, and it is a striking pic-

ture we have of their gathering together (Matt. 22:34) in order to ask a question apparently with better motives (Mark 12:28 & 34). This is surely an acknowledgement of His power and authority as a teacher. The time for questions and argument came to a close with one question from Jesus to the assembled Pharisees. He asked them to say what they thought was the explanation of Psalm 110 where David speaking of the Messiah calls Him Lord. Undoubtedly they would regard the Psalm as referring to the Messiah, and the answer would have to be that David's Son was also David's Lord. Could the Pharisees at that moment recognise Jesus as having authority above that of David? They had reached the point of no return when they had joined the plot to destroy Jesus.

Denunciation of Hypocrisy

There is further teaching from this point in particular for the Apostles, but from His position, gained by true scholarship and superiority, Jesus turns attention of people and disciples to listen to the teachers of the nation and as they teach by authority of Moses to obey their commands, but not to copy their behaviour. It appears that the Rabbis of the time were eaten up with pride. Appearance was important in their view - but it is not. Hence to His disciples to accept terms of special respect is forbidden. One wonders where the "D.D."s the Holy Father and the Very Reverends come in on this if even the title "Father" is not right. It must be a very humble "Minister" required, and a servant rather than an official with a title.

While the people themselves were responsible for rejection of Jesus, it was surely their leaders who bore the heaviest part of it. The reason for the denunciation by Jesus was the deep need that the truth should be spoken. Thus several aspects of the sins are pinpointed. They turned a blind eye themselves to the plain teaching of Jesus, and blocked the way for others. They made rules about simple things like making an oath as though swearing by one thing or another made a difference to its binding nature. They were meticulous about little things and forgot principles of action. They gave specific attention to washing and cleansing outward things while allowing impurity and wrong thinking invade the heart. What had happened to a nation trained to love and obey God by

application of His Word to their lives? He came unto His own and they received Him not! He was worshipped according to His Law, the sacrifices were for ever burning on the altar but when He suddenly came, He was rejected!
R. B. SCOTT

OUR LORD

OUR Lord hung on a robust tree,
why did he hang there? you ask me;
why did he suffer anguish so?
such pain, such sorrow, and such woe?

He bore it there to set you free,
to save you go to Calvary;
his heart was so intense with care,
he cancelled shameful burdens there.

What he suffered there was vast,
so vast his earthly body past;
'twas while he hung there from that wood,
some beheld, and understood.

So our Saviour op'd the door,
to give you life forever more;
if only you'll repent from sin,
while there's time he'll let you in.

And heed remember you'll stand alone,
before his spotless shining throne;
if you have failed him you will pay,
but if you please him with him you'll stay.

So follow repent, and him believe,
and you've got a friend who'll ne'er you leave;
he'll always watch and with you be,
from now, until, Eternity.

T. McGinn, New Cumnock

CHANGE OF TREASURER

I am sure that all readers of the 'S.S.' would wish to convey to brother Paul Jones their thanks and appreciation for the many years of devoted service he has rendered to this magazine, as Treasurer. Due to his other commitments he has relinquished his position as treasurer, a position held for some twenty-odd years or so, and such service can not pass without some attempt being made to assure brother Paul of the real debt we owe to him for all the work he put in on behalf of the 'S.S.'. We thank him very sincerely and extend to him every good wish for the future.

Brother John Knellor has kindly consented to take over the treasurer's responsibilities and we thank him and wish him well. Editor.

COMING EVENTS

Brighton, Oxford Street: Anniversary Services (D.V.) on 9th & 10th April.

Saturday 5 p.m. Tea, Evening Rally 6-30 p.m.
Lord's Day, Breaking of Bread, 11 a.m.

ALL VISITORS ARE WELCOME.

W.I. Ascough

Kirkcaldy Social: The church at Kirkcaldy are pleased to announce that they are holding their annual Social on 23rd April 1977 and that Brother John Morgan, Hindley, has agreed to be the speaker. The meeting will commence at 4. p.m. and all brethren and friends will be made very welcome.

Blackburn, Mill Hill: Weekend meeting on April 16th and 17th 1977.

Saturday 16th April at 7.30 p.m.

Sunday 17th April at 6.00 p.m.

Speaker: G. Gorton, Rochdale.

SPECIAL MEETINGS on

Saturday May 7th at 7.30 p.m.

Sunday May 8th at 6.00 p.m.

Speaker: Bro J. Diggle, Ilkeston.

All our brethren are invited to these meetings.

Tony Tyson.

Slamannan Social: The church here intend D.V. holding their annual Social on Saturday 16th, April 1977, commencing at 4 p.m. to which all members and friends are cordially invited.

Speakers:- Bro. Leonard Morgan, Hindley,
Bro. Jim Sinclair, Jr., Tranent.

Mary S. Neilson.

"BUILDING FUND"

Progress report from the Church of Christ Ulverston.

We are happy to report that on Feb. 24th the Church was able to buy premises which after much renovation and alteration will convert into a meeting place for the Church in this town. The price we had to pay for this building was £2,200. Of this sum £1,450 was received in response to our appeal for help. The rest of the money was provided by the few Christians meeting here, which has meant self sacrifice on the part of each one of us.

The building is a 17th century listed one, which was formerly the garage and stables of the Town Corn Mill. It is in a very neglected condition, and our first job after having plans passed for alteration, will be to repair the roof. It is stone built, water and drainage is there, but as yet there is no electricity on the site. The Church here is fully aware that we still need more money in order to make this property fit to carry on the Lord's work in this town, but we have faith that, as the Lord has helped us through the various congregations, He will continue to help us.

We intend to do the alterations as and when we have the money available, and hope to do a good part of it ourselves. Christianity began in a stable and we hope to do good work for the Lord in a converted stable.

We are truly grateful to all who have helped us either financially, or by letter of encouragement and by prayers. May we humbly ask for a continuance of this help.

John Thistlewaite & Mary Cox

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